

**TO: COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**ON: 12 JUNE 2001**

**Agenda Item No: 4**

**Title: HOSPITAL COMMUNITY TRANSPORT IN UTTLESFORD**

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### **Summary**

- 1 This report updates Members on the work undertaken by Uttlesford Community Travel (UCT) and recommends that UCT be given a grant of £30,000 in the year current year, £27,500 in 2002/03 and £28,000 in 2003/04 from the Community Transport budget and that the Council enters into a service Level Agreement (SLA) with UCT over three years.

### **Background**

2. Provision has been made in the revenue budget of £30,000 for community transport in Uttlesford
- 3 Following the decision by this Committee in June 2000, UCT are in receipt of a grant of £7,500 to provide a pilot hospital service to Addenbrookes for one year and a further £1,000 to be utilised to promote its existing services. The service runs on a daily basis from Swan Meadow car park and is operating satisfactorily. This was a one off grant, which related to the financial year 2000/01.
- 4 At the same meeting, Members recognised the complexity of the issues associated with transport problems in the community, particularly those associated with hospital transport provision and requested that officers work with UCT to try and help redress the balance. Discussions have been on going with UCT and confirm that there is an on-going issue related to transport to hospitals; this report identifies a way forward to meet a significant community requirement.

### **Current Service Provision**

- 5 UCT currently offers a number of dedicated services:-
  - (a) Book-A-Ride - this offers residents a door-to-door service throughout the country; it is a registered Charity, managed by paid UCT staff and operated by volunteers.
  - (b) Addenbrookes Hospital Service – this offers residents a dedicated service to and from Addenbrookes on a daily basis from Swan Meadow car park. It is managed by UCT and operated by paid UCT staff.
  - (c) Voluntary Car Service – this offers residents volunteer drivers to transport people from home to hospital and back, but being a recent innovation, the

number of volunteer drivers is still relatively small. It is managed by UCT paid staff.

- 6 Membership is available for all of the above services to any resident of Uttlesford who does not have their own transport and cannot access public transport, either because there is no bus service or due to a disability. The services are open to people of any age.

### Cost of Travel per scheme

- 7 Book-A-Ride charges are £1.90 for the first two miles and then 40p for every subsequent mile travelled.  
The Addenbrookes Hospital Service costs £6.00 for a return fare from Saffron Walden (Swan Meadow Car park) or £4.00 for a single journey.  
The Voluntary Car Service charges 35p per mile travelled.
- 8 Both the Book-A-Ride Scheme and the Voluntary Car Service are grant funded by Essex County Council. The Addenbrookes Hospital Service was made possible through the receipt of additional funding from both the Council and the Countryside Agency.

### Proposed Expansion of Hospital Service and Times of Operation

- 9 The Uttlesford District is large, with residents in some areas relating to one particular hospital, while other areas would normally attend another. UCT are prepared to arrange transport to any hospital requested, but would expect the majority of requests to be for the following hospitals:
- Addenbrookes Hospital, Cambridge
  - Essex & Herts Trust – includes Saffron Walden Community Hospital, Essex and Herts Hospital, Bishop Stortford and Princess Alexandra Hospital, Harlow
  - Mid Essex Trust - Broomfield Hospital, Chelmsford
  - Colchester Hospital
  - Epping Hospital
  - The London Hospitals (predominantly for specialist treatment)
- 10 The table below sets out the number of outpatients visits from Uttlesford to the above hospitals on an annual basis:- It demonstrates that residents are having to travel extensive distances from their homes, many of whom would not have direct access to either public transport or their own means of transport.

Hospital	No. of annual visits undertaken from Uttlesford
Addenbrookes	14,875
Princess Alexandra	17,286
Broomfields	8,889
TOTAL	41,050

Source: Uttlesford Primary Care

- 11 UCT is currently in discussion with the Uttlesford Primary Care Trust (PCT) to try and further identify the number of patients who do not qualify for free hospital transport via the ambulance service and obtain the co-operation of hospitals to advertise the fact that there are alternatives provided by UCT.
- 12 ECC has indicated that it would be willing to permit UCT to provide the additional provision if it were able to demonstrate that sufficient additional funding had been obtained from another source. In addition, ECC recognises that there is the ability for UCT to expand its existing services to meet the increased demand of Uttlesford residents who are isolated and as a result, unable to access “conventional” means of transport.
- 13 Those wishing to travel to hospital would contact the UCT office in Great Dunmow, allowing at least 48 hours notice of their journey. The office could then arrange for either a Book-A- Ride vehicle or a voluntary car to make the necessary journey.
- 14 The means of transport would be based on the availability of each vehicle and the optimum cost of providing the service. Therefore, if one patient needed to go to a London hospital, the journey would be made in a voluntary car whereas if three or four people needed to go a hospital in Harlow, a Book–A-Ride vehicle would be utilised.
- 15 The service provided would not be specifically designated for hospital travel, but would be integrated with the existing Book-A-Ride and Voluntary Car Service.
- 16 UCT’s current hours of operation are from 9.30am to 4.30pm Monday to Friday; in order to accommodate increased usage it is proposing to extend the hours from 9.00am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday. The Addenbrookes service currently offers transport until 7.45pm to allow friends and relatives to return home at the end of visiting hours. It is proposed that a similar arrangement will be entered into for increased accessibility etc. for the other hospitals.

### **Other Factors that need to be taken into account**

- 17 There are a number of contributory factors that need to be taken into account if UCT are to operate an expanded service. The service would need to operate from larger premises as the exiting premises are insufficient for current demand and the office is in danger of breaching Health and Safety Regulations. By enabling UCT to rent larger office space, the Council would be both ensuring UCT’s compliance with statutory requirements and fulfilling its strategic objectives of improving the health of our community and ensuring better access for all in our community to services and jobs.
- 18 UCT has been approached by the owner of the premises in Stortford Road, Great Dunmow and has been offered the opportunity to expand by moving into the offices that have recently been vacated by Parentline on the top floor of the building. The owner has offered UCT reasonable terms when

considering the current market rate for renting office accommodation in the district.

- 19 The cost of leasing the new offices is £3,000 per annum at a fixed rent for a minimum of three years. UCT would also have to make adaptations in order to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act and would have to install a Stair Lift, which would require a capital investment of £5,000.
- 20 UCT would also experience additional costs in relation to increased maintenance for vehicles, increase in staff hours and the need to provide fax machines for each of its drivers in order to ensure that drivers received daily worksheets and in turn could reconcile the numbers of journeys made etc. at the end of every working day.
- 21 UCT has indicated that whilst all of its vehicles are in excellent working order, the increase in usage will have an impact on the annual servicing costs. These costs are estimated to be between £4,000- £6,000 per annum.
- 22 In addition, it will be necessary within the next three years, for UCT to initiate a replacement vehicle programme. To this end, it has requested that £6,000 per annum be earmarked as a reserve from the Community Transport budget over a three year period which could be utilised towards matched funding to purchase new or “nearly new” vehicles in three years time.

### **Summary of Proposals**

- 23 In essence, it is proposed that the Council grant fund UCT to continue the Addenbrookes service and introduce services to other hospitals that are utilised by Uttlesford residents. In order for this to occur, it will be necessary for UCT to lease additional accommodation, increase existing staff hours and establish a reserve to purchase new or “nearly new” vehicles in three years time.

### **Financial Implications**

- 24 Currently, the cost of providing the Addenbrookes service is subsidised through the grants that UCT receive. It is proposed that a flat rate is charged to each passenger to each hospital thereby enabling UCT to keep the fares low by way of the Council’s grant becoming a subsidy. UCT estimate that the cost of such a provision is £4,500 per annum and an increase in the hours of operation would cost an additional £7,000 per annum for staffing.
- 25 The current cost of using the various services provided by UCT are as follows:-  
Book-A-Ride: £1.90 for the first two miles, then 40p per mile thereafter  
Hospital Link: £6.00 return (Saffron Walden to Addenbrookes) or £4.00 single  
Voluntary Car Service: 35p per mile, including “dead” mileage
- 26 Members need to be mindful that there is no guarantee that the income generated will reach the predicted optimum level. The figures provided are based on the existing fares charged by the Volunteer Hospital Car service and historical data.

- 27 The differential between the services is mainly the result of using paid drivers on Book-A-Ride, but, subject to a suitable subsidy, UCT could arrange a standard rate for each trip, perhaps 35p per mile, irrespective of the transport used. Therefore the Council would be helping to subsidise the service.
- 28 The table below sets out realistic but estimated costings based on the Council offering UDC a three-year grant utilising monies from the Community Transport budget and an estimate of the possible income that could be derived from offering the hospital services. Members need to be mindful that there is no guarantee that the predicted income will be achieved but it is considered that the minimum grant requirement would be sufficient to guarantee an extended hospital service.

<b>Expenditure Item (a)</b>	<b>Year One £</b>	<b>Year Two £</b>	<b>Year Three £</b>
Extended Hospital Service – Fare Subsidy	5,000	6,500	7,000
Additional Staffing Costs	7,000	8,000	9,000
Accommodation Costs	3,000	3,000	3,000
Stair Lift Adaptation	5,000	Nil	Nil
Equipment costs, e.g., fax machines, computer packages	2,000	2,000	2,000
Additional Servicing	4,000	5,000	6,000
Earmarked reserve for replacement vehicle fund	6,000	6,000	6,000
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>32,000</b>	<b>30,500</b>	<b>33,000</b>
<b>Predicted Income (b)</b>	<b>Year One £</b>	<b>Year Two £</b>	<b>Year Three £</b>
	2,000	3,000	5,000
<b>Minimum Grant Requirement (a)-(b)</b>	<b>30,000</b>	<b>27,500</b>	<b>28,000</b>

## Conclusions

- 29 UCT are clearly committed to providing accessible and affordable transport to residents of Uttlesford who are unable to access other transport, or through isolation resulting in a lack of public transport. It has recognised the needs of

those requiring transport to and from hospitals and is already committed to providing a service to Addenbrookes. There is the ability to expand its existing services, subject to suitable additional funding being made available.

- 30 UCT has demonstrated via the PCT that there are 41,050 outpatient appointments made by Uttlesford residents on an annual basis, many of whom do not qualify for hospital transport and do not have access to a car. The number of outpatients only represents those receiving services from the NHS and does not incorporate any private referrals.
- 31 The Council has an opportunity to demonstrate effective partnership working with both the Voluntary Sector and the PCT by grant aiding the proposed scheme. The Council should enter into a three-year Service Level Agreement (SLA) with UCT, thereby providing on-going security for UCT and an effective monitoring arrangement for the Council as is currently undertaken with recipients of grants of over £5,000 from the Voluntary Organisation Support Grant Scheme.

**Recommended that**

- (a) the Council offer UCT a three year grant utilising the Community Transport budget of £30,000 in the current year and £27,500 in 2002/03 and £28,000 2003/04 of which £6,000 is earmarked annually as a reserve for the replacement vehicle fund
- (b) the Council enter into a three-year Service Level Agreement with UCT

**Background Papers:** Community Services Report – June 2000 & Correspondence from UCT.

**Agenda Item No:** 14

**Title:** 2000/01 ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES SUB-COMMITTEE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

**Author:** Nick Harris (01799) 510313

**Summary**

- 1 This budget monitoring report considers the provisional outturn for 2000/01 against the 2000/01 Revised Budget, based on financial information as at 9 May 2001 before closing the accounts. A further updated report on the overall position will be presented to the Policy and Resources Committee on 19 June 2001. Work to close the accounts will continue through the summer and the statement of accounts will be presented to the September meeting of the Resources Committee.

## **Basis of the Report**

- 2 The report is based on data within the Council's Financial Management System to 9 May 2001. Directors and Heads of Service have been asked if they are aware of any significant variations, including any that may not be in the figures produced to date.

The table in the attached Appendix 1 to this report shows the following data;

- 2000/01 Revised Budget (adjusted for previously approved virements)
- 2000/01 Profiled Budget (adjusted for year end postings)
- 2000/01 Expenditure to the 9 May 2001 including accruals to date
- 2000/01 Expenditure expressed as a % of the 2000/01 Profiled Budget
- Notes to explain any apparent discrepancies

## **Analysis of Variations**

- 3 The figures represent a provisional picture of the 2000/01 expenditure before all year end adjustments and checks have been completed. At this stage the Environmental Services budget as a whole appears overspent by approximately £44,000. The main components of this overspend relate to Refuse Collection (£30,000) and Recycling (£22,000). All other variations will be considered as part of the closing of the accounts.

Background Papers: None

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