

# Hardwick Community Bus Initiative

## Objectives

The overall objective of this project is to deliver the sustainable Community Transport Initiative (CTI) for Hardwick. This should address the issue of limited public transport provision at the southern end of the village and also contribute to the overall sustainability of the village by improving access to transport for other sections of the community such as residents with limited mobility and village groups.

The objective of this paper is to develop an outline for the operation of the Hardwick CTI and key issues such as the management of the Scheme, possible routes and service options. This paper will be presented for consideration by the Hardwick Parish Council and, subject to their authorisation, then delivered to South Cambridgeshire District Council to form the basis of finalising the Section 106 agreements with the respective developers.

## Background

Two recent Planning Applications (**S/1694/16/OL** and **S/3064/16/OL**) have included S106 funding for the provision and support of Community Transport for Hardwick.

Relevant points from these two applications are reproduced below to provide background for consideration of the recommendations made in this paper.

### **S/1694/16/OL - Agricultural field west of Grace Crescent, Hardwick CB23 7AH**

The applicant in this case is proposing the provision of a community vehicle as part of the package of measures to mitigate the impact of the development. Hardwick Parish Council has agreed to take ownership of the vehicle and the Section 106 funding would also include a contribution towards annual maintenance of such a vehicle for a five year period. This facility would provide an alternative to single occupancy car journeys for residents of the development as well as the wider village, enhancing the environmental sustainability of the scheme. The contribution of this community vehicle is considered to add to the opportunities for sustainable travel options for residents to access services and facilities as well as employment in larger settlements.

### **Highway safety and parking**

The provision of subsidised bus travel for a 6 month period is welcomed, more detail is considered necessary in relation to the community transport scheme. Whilst the Highway Authority has questioned the feasibility of operating a community bus, they support the proposal in principle as a means of improving such facilities. Given that the Parish Council expressed the wish to see such a facility and have expressed a willingness to manage this facility, it is considered that this matter could be addressed through the Section 106 Agreement.

**S106 Detail** A proposal has been put forward by Hardwick Parish Council to establish a new community transport initiative and which they would run between the village and key destinations.

Quantum **£45,000**

**S/3064/16/OL - Land south of 279 St. Neots Road, Hardwick**

The applicant is also proposing to contribute to the ongoing provision of a community vehicle secured as part of the package of measures to mitigate the impact of the development for 98 units at Grace Crescent (ref. S/1694/16/OL approved at the March 2017 meeting of the planning committee.) Hardwick Parish Council has agreed to take ownership of the vehicle and the Section 106 funding from this application would contribute towards annual maintenance of such a vehicle for a five year period, in addition to the five years secured as part of the Grace Crescent scheme.

This facility would provide an alternative to single occupancy car journeys for residents of the development as well as the wider village, enhancing the environmental sustainability of this scheme proposal further. The contribution towards this community vehicle is considered to add to the opportunities for sustainable travel options for residents to access services and facilities as well as employment in larger settlements, in addition to the regular bus service which also runs adjacent to the development.

**Highway safety and parking**

Whilst the Highway Authority questioned the feasibility of operating a community bus when this was secured as part of the Grace Crescent scheme, they supported the proposal in principle as a means of improving such facilities. Given that the Parish Council expressed the wish to see such a facility and have expressed a willingness to manage this facility, it is considered that additional funding to support the running of this facility should be secured via the Section 106 Agreement relating to this application, enhancing the environmental sustainability of the scheme.

**S106 Detail** A proposal has been put forward by Hardwick Parish Council to establish a new community transport initiative and which they would run between the village and key destinations. A contribution is to be secured from the recent application at Grace Crescent and this contribution will assist in the running costs for the service.

Quantum **£20,000**

## **Management**

There are a number of options regarding the management of the Community Bus Initiative, the three main alternatives being:

1. Direct management by the Parish Council.
2. A 'not-for-profit' company established to manage the scheme (similar to that for the Hardwick Sports & Social Club).
3. A Charitable body, specifically established to manage the Community Bus (similar to that adopted by the long standing and successful Histon & Impington Community Transport scheme).

When the Community Bus report from Councillor Cracknell was considered at the May meeting, there didn't appear to be any overt enthusiasm from within the Parish Council to follow option 1. Therefore options 2 or 3 appear to be the most likely approach, however, it would seem appropriate for the Parish Council to formally debate and decide upon this matter.

Should the Parish Council opt not to directly manage the Community Transport Scheme, then it is recommended that further work should be done to determine whether a 'not-for-profit' Company or a charitable body would be the most suitable option.

It is further proposed that whether the scheme is directly managed by the Parish Council or through an 'arms length' body, day-to-day operations should be conducted by a paid manager or administrator. This is a role that could possibly be shared with the management body for the proposed Community Centre.

If the 'arms length' management option is chosen then it is recommended that this should have a number of voluntary members drawn from the Community and Council, acting as Directors or Trustees of the Management body and overseeing the operation of the scheme.

It is anticipated that services such as vehicle maintenance and fuel supply would be contracted to appropriate (local where cost effective) specialists and that a number of vehicle drivers (who may be paid or voluntary, as determined by the Scheme management) will be required to deliver the services.

## **Routes/Services**

Given that the majority of the funding for the Community Transport Initiative will be provided by the Grace Crescent development, it is considered essential that the Community Bus provides an effective supplement to the current limited public transport services in the Southern part of Hardwick.

Particularly addressing the needs of this section of the Community, it is proposed that the Community Bus might deliver the following services:

## **Monday – Friday**

### **Morning**

1. A 'scheduled' 20 minute frequency shuttle departing from the Grace Crescent area stopping at St Mary's Church and feeding Citi4 services on St Neots Road.
2. A 'scheduled' 20 minute frequency shuttle departing from the southern end of the St Neots Road development, feeding Citi4 services on St Neots Road.
3. A 'scheduled' primary school shuttle departing from the Grace Crescent area stopping at St Mary's Church and returning to Grace Crescent area.
4. A 'scheduled' shuttle departing from the Grace Crescent area, stopping at St Mary's Church, Nisa, St Neots Road Development, feeding the Busway interchange at Oakington. (Southbound Busway services from Oakington connect to the Science Park, Cambridge City Centre, Cambridge Station and Addenbrookes Hospital outpatients. Northbound Busway services from Oakington connect to St Ives, Huntingdon and Peterborough.)

### **Afternoon**

5. A 'scheduled' primary school shuttle departing from the Grace Crescent area, stopping en-route at the Blue Lion, collecting children from the school to return to Grace Crescent area.
6. A 'scheduled' service collecting passengers from the Busway interchange at Oakington and delivering passengers to the St Neots Road development, Nisa, the Blue Lion and the Grace Crescent areas.
7. A 'scheduled' service collecting passengers from Citi4 services and delivering them to the Grace Crescent area.

## **Saturday**

### **Morning**

8. A 'scheduled' shuttle departing from the Grace Crescent area stopping by St Mary's Church and taking passengers to Citi4 services on St Neots Road.
9. A 'scheduled' shuttle departing from the southern end of the St Neots Road development, taking passengers to Citi4 services on St Neots Road.
10. A 'scheduled' shuttle departing from the Grace Crescent area, stopping at St Mary's Church, Nisa, St Neots Road Development, taking passengers to the Busway interchange at Oakington. (Southbound Busway services from Oakington connect to the Science Park, Cambridge City Centre, Cambridge Station and Addenbrookes Hospital outpatients. Northbound Busway services from Oakington connect to St Ives, Huntingdon and Peterborough.)

## Afternoon

11. A 'scheduled' service collecting passengers from the Oakington Busway interchange taking passengers to the St Neots Road development, Nisa, the Blue Lion and the Grace Crescent area.
12. A 'scheduled' service collecting passengers from Citi4 services on St Neots Road and taking them to the southern end of the St Neots Road development and the Grace Crescent area.

When not conflicting with the 'scheduled' services, outlined above, the Community vehicle should also be available to other village organisations such as the WI, Sports & Social Club, Scouts & Guides, etc. Whilst not yet finalised, it is anticipated that village organisations would be asked to provide their own driver (subject to Scheme approval) and to reimburse vehicle operating costs on a 'per mile' basis.

Subject to availability of drivers, it is hoped to be able to operate other ad hoc services to provide transport from the more remote areas of the village and to support those with limited mobility to access significant Village events such as the Church Fete, Christmas Bazaar, School Carnival, etc. Similarly, other Village wide services might be organised such as shopping trips and to provide access to nearby events such as the Cambridge Fireworks display, Strawberry Fayre, Festivals, etc.

## Finance

The majority of the funding for the Community Transport Initiative will be derived from the Grace Crescent development with additional funding from the St Neots Road development. These funds should be sufficient to implement and sustain the scheme until it has become established and self-sufficient. The proposed section 106 funding provides £25k capital for the purchase of a vehicle and a total of £40k to support operations.

There are a number of options for financing the vehicle – including outright purchase of either a new or pre-owned vehicle or some form of contract hire/lease.

- Initial investigations suggest that the cost to purchase a new vehicle, depending on size and specification, would be of the order of £30k (+vat). Therefore, unless additional funds can be identified to cover the additional capital cost of the vehicle, a proportion of the funds earmarked for ongoing operational support might need to be diverted from operational support to Capital.
- Alternatively, contract hire appears to cost approximately £200 to £300 per month plus an initial deposit and if this option is selected, then it would appear likely that it would be appropriate to reallocate a proportion of the £25k capital allowance to revenue to fund the rental and other ongoing operational costs.

## Vehicle Selection

There are a number of factors to consider when selecting a vehicle for the Scheme.

### Vehicle Size

- Smaller vehicles are generally considered to be easier to drive and hence might make it easier to recruit drivers (voluntary or paid). Larger vehicles have a greater number of seats and/or payload and may be more appropriate if demand for services is great and may be attractive to groups such as the village school or Scouts & Guides that may be interested in using the vehicle for trips.

### Vehicle Specification

- There are a number of factors to consider such as the number of seats, wheelbase length, roof height, how many wheelchair users might be accommodated and whether wheelchair access should be from the side or rear and by ramp or lift.

### Driver Licensing

- A minibus is classed as a vehicle with between eight to sixteen passenger seats and less than 3.5 tonnes. These vehicles can be driven by anyone with a driving licence issued prior to 1st January 1997, permitting driving of Group A (or B for automatic) vehicles, provided the driver is over 21 years of age and is not driving for hire or reward.  
However, as the Scheme will almost certainly need to recover at least a proportion of its operating costs either directly from passengers or indirectly through Village organisations, it will be classed as being used for hire or reward, albeit 'not for profit'.

### Operator Permits/Licensing

- Section 19 permits are either 'standard permits' for vehicles which are adapted to carry no more than 16 passengers (excluding the driver) or 'large bus permits' for vehicles which are adapted to carry 17 or more passengers. These permits may be granted to organisations that operate vehicles without a view to profit to transport their members, or people whom the organisation exists to help. Section 19 permit vehicles can't be used to carry members of the general public.
- Section 22 permits are issued to bodies concerned for the social and welfare needs of one or more communities. They operate vehicles without a view to profit and use those vehicles to provide a community bus service. Unlike section 19 permit vehicles, community bus services are 'local bus services' and can carry the general public. Local bus services are defined as services using public service vehicles for the carriage of passengers by road at separate fares on which passengers may travel for less than 15 miles.
- Vehicles adapted to carry 9 or more passengers (excluding the driver) may be used under a community bus permit.

- It should be noted that it is possible for schemes to have both Section 19 & 22 permits, however, vehicles must display the relevant permit and it is illegal to display both permits at the same time.
- A third option is that of licencing as a taxi operator, which might be appropriate for certain modes of operation.

Further work will be required to determine the appropriate size and specification of vehicle and the most appropriate operating Regime (i.e. permit/licence) for the Hardwick Community Transport Initiative.

## Proposed Resolutions

It is recommended that the Parish Council consider resolutions similar to those shown below:

The Parish Council resolves to:

1. Continue to support and pursue the establishment of a Community Transport Initiative (CTI) for Hardwick.
2. Support negotiations with the developers to secure the proposed Section 106 funding of £45k from Circle (Grace Crescent) and £20k from Hill (St Neots Road).
3. The Parish Council resolves to support the request for negotiations with the developers to incorporate flexibility regarding the allocation of S106 funding between Capital and Revenue costs for the CTI.
4. Take management responsibility for delivery of the Community Transport service.

Note: if resolution 4 is not passed, then resolutions 5, 6 and 7 become irrelevant.

5. Deliver a range of Community Transport services including operating one or more vehicles to transport members of Community organisations under section 19, and/or community bus services that are 'local bus services' and can carry the general public under section 22 permits.
6. Use the S106 funding to procure a vehicle for use by the CTI and to make the vehicle available, together with the S106 operational support funding, to facilitate delivery of the services.
7. Authorise and support further work to determine the appropriate size and specification of vehicle, vehicle funding arrangements and discussions with relevant organisations with a view to securing the necessary permits, licences, insurances, and other arrangements for the proper operation of the Community Transport service.

Note: if resolutions 4, 5, 6 and 7 are passed, then resolutions 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 are unnecessary.

8. Support the establishment of a management body such as a registered charity or a 'not for profit' Community Interest Company to deliver the Community Transport service.
9. Appoint Councillors (insert names) to assist in forming and subsequently act as trustees or Directors alongside others in the alternative management body.
10. Task the management body with delivering a range of Community Transport services including operating one or more vehicles to transport members of Community

organisations under section 19, and/or community bus services that are 'local bus services' and can carry the general public under section 22 permits.

11. Use the S106 funding to procure a vehicle for use by the CTI and to make the vehicle, together with the S106 operational support funding, available to the management body to facilitate delivery of the services.
12. Authorise and support further work to determine the nature of the management body, the appropriate size and specification of vehicle, vehicle funding arrangements and discussions with relevant organisations with a view to securing the necessary permits, licences, insurances, and other arrangements for the proper operation of the Community Transport service.

Report compiled by M Cassey, 23/7/2017

## Further Background Reading

There are a number of sources of information that readers may wish to reference for additional background information:

- 1.** S/1694/16/OL - Agricultural field west of Grace Crescent, Hardwick CB23 7AH  
<http://scams.moderngov.co.uk/mgChooseDocPack.aspx?ID=6779>
- 2.** S/3064/16/OL - Land south of 279 St. Neots Road, Hardwick  
<http://scams.moderngov.co.uk/mgChooseDocPack.aspx?ID=6844>
- 3.** Driving a minibus  
<https://www.gov.uk/driving-a-minibus>
- 4.** Section 19 and 22 permits: not for profit passenger transport  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/section-19-and-22-permits-not-for-profit-passenger-transport/section-19-and-22-permits-not-for-profit-passenger-transport>