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## What is community transport?

- For those unable to use conventional public transport
- Flexible, on demand transport service
- Operates in urban and rural areas
- It's certainly not exclusively for older people



## What is community transport?

- A specialist service (for all)
- Delivering accessibility and social inclusion
- An integral part of the public transport network
- It would be missed!



## Community transport in Cheshire

- 5 Dial-A-Ride
- 16 Community Car Schemes
- Numerous flexible public transport services



## How is Community Transport provided in Cheshire?

- Mainly third sector providers – but not exclusively
- Funding from County and Borough Councils
- Funding provided mainly through annual grants



## Where does CT fit with corporate priorities?

- Local Transport Plan
  - Bus Strategy
  - Accessibility Strategy
- Transforming Cheshire
  - Route & Branch Review Programme
- Third Sector Strategy



## Community Transport Development

- Could existing arrangements be reviewed to make the experience from wishing to make a journey to arriving back home more attractive to users?
- Existing resources may well be busy, but are they efficient?
- How can we expand our base of users to include those currently deterred from trying to book their journey?



## Community Transport Development

- Could greater co-ordinated and integrated procurement of specialist transport across sectors and services increase capacity?
- Can performance monitoring, user involvement and forward planning, be improved and used as a tool?
- Are trends responded to, and projections made, of future needs?



## Community Transport Strategy

- Providing a framework for this development
- Providing stakeholders with a focus for thought
- Giving direction to current or potential service providers
- Encouraging new income streams



## Initial overarching vision: coordination

- To explore the benefit of encouraging development of a significant umbrella organisation as the key interface with the County Council (+ each District Council?)
- Agreements with local service providers?
- Key objectives:
  - generating economies of scale
  - sharing of specialist skills & expertise
  - whilst maintaining local identity



## Initial overarching vision: consistency

- Creative and dynamic contract arrangement with defined minimum requirements, for example:
  - Governance
  - Performance monitoring and targets
  - User engagement
  - Marketing and promotion
- Service specification not necessarily restricted to DAR or CT



## Initial overarching vision: delivery framework

- Contract that enables provider to respond to changes and to take advantage of new opportunities that arise within its duration
- Approach that attracts “buy-in” from those making separate procurement arrangements (e.g. NHS)
- Economies of scale may secure some “at risk” services
- Exploit external funding opportunities



## Business Appraisal Work

- Commissioned for 5 Dial-A-Ride service providers
- Position statement overview
- Future potential and issues
- To inform those organisations
- Also to inform implementation of the Community Transport Strategy



## Latest Key Development

- Tender exercise to renew the Chester, Ellesmere Port & Neston Dial-A-Ride & Women's Safe Transport Contract
- Award of contract to Ealing Community Transport Ltd.
- Tender specification based on numerous quality and performance measures, not just price



## Conclusions

- Cheshire has a commendable network of specialist Community Transport and demand responsive services
- There is an established record of commitment from County and Borough Councils, but this is facing increased pressure
- There is also a track record of commitment and dedication from service providers, and appreciation from service users



## Conclusions

- The Community Transport Strategy aims to capture the many strengths, whilst enhancing their sustainability through new ways of working.
- Expectations need to be managed, and any delivery programme will depend on the availability of financial resources.

