

Division(s):

CABINET – 17 APRIL 2012

SUPPORTING COMMUNITY TRANSPORT GRANT – PROPOSALS TO UTILISE FUNDING

Report by Interim Deputy Director for Environment & Economy (Highways & Transport)

Introduction

1. Community transport is a key priority for the county council given its importance in supporting the public transport network and enabling access for people who have greater mobility needs. This paper focuses on the proposals for spending the £514,000 one-off funding that we have received from central government to support the development of community transport services, within the context of our existing on-going support to the sector from our revenue budget.

Background

2. Public transport provision in Oxfordshire is widely considered to be good, with a strong rural bus network. Subsidised services have not been subject to the level of cuts experienced in other counties. However, public transport services are not accessible or appropriate to everyone and the council considers it important to enable as many people to access the services they need.
3. There is a range of local car and minibus schemes operating in communities supported by funding from the county council but as a whole the sector is less developed than other areas. The county council currently supports community transport in a number of ways; direct grant funding available to schemes (from Highways and Transport and the Big Society Fund); support and advice to schemes provided by Oxfordshire Rural Community Council (ORCC) under a service level agreement and; funding for Dial a Ride door-to-door services. Annex 1 sets out the detail of current council support to the sector and funding.
4. The addition of one-off funding from central government provides us the opportunity to stand back and consider more strategically how to maximise community transport provision and value for money from this funding at a time when we know that demand is increasing.
5. A cross-directorate scrutiny members' working group was set up, and meetings with this group have assisted officers in developing our strategic approach and formulating the proposals in this paper. A question and answer session on community transport was held at a meeting of the Growth and Infrastructure Scrutiny Committee, where members were able to question a panel of local stakeholders and officers from other local authorities.

6. Officers also discussed our general approach to community transport with a range of stakeholders; this work is outlined in Annex 1. Feedback from stakeholders on the proposals in this paper is presented in Annex 5.
7. As part of this work an evidence base has been developed, and a summary is provided at Annex 2. The full evidence base is available on request and a copy has been placed in the Members' resource centre.

Strategic Approach

8. Our analysis of existing community transport provision in the county and the cost of the various types of service provided (see Annex 1) has demonstrated that voluntary and community sector run schemes provide a valuable personalised service providing door-to-door transport. Furthermore voluntary and community sector schemes provide excellent value for money due to their not-for-profit status and use of volunteers: a relatively small investment in a scheme can provide a very high level of return in terms of the value of service it can offer.
9. Such schemes offer a high level of support for vulnerable people, which goes beyond transport, with many drivers carrying out tasks such as carrying in and putting away shopping, or accompanying people to their hospital appointments.
10. However, whilst voluntary and community sector schemes can be extremely flexible and responsive to local need, it is recognised that there is a continuing need for a service to cover trips that they cannot meet, because of factors such as lack of volunteer drivers, the absence of a scheme covering a particular locality, or a lack of suitably adapted vehicles for wheelchair users.
11. The new Dial-a-Ride service will provide this basic level of service to those who qualify on the basis of disability or mobility impairment. However, for those that cannot use public bus services, we would primarily want to encourage the use of community schemes wherever possible, because of their value for money and low cost per journey compared with Dial-a-Ride services. It should be noted that transport for eligible Social & Community Services clients to and from Day Centres will continue to be provided by the County Council's in house fleet transport.

12. The diagram below sets out how we propose to prioritise our development of community transport in Oxfordshire.

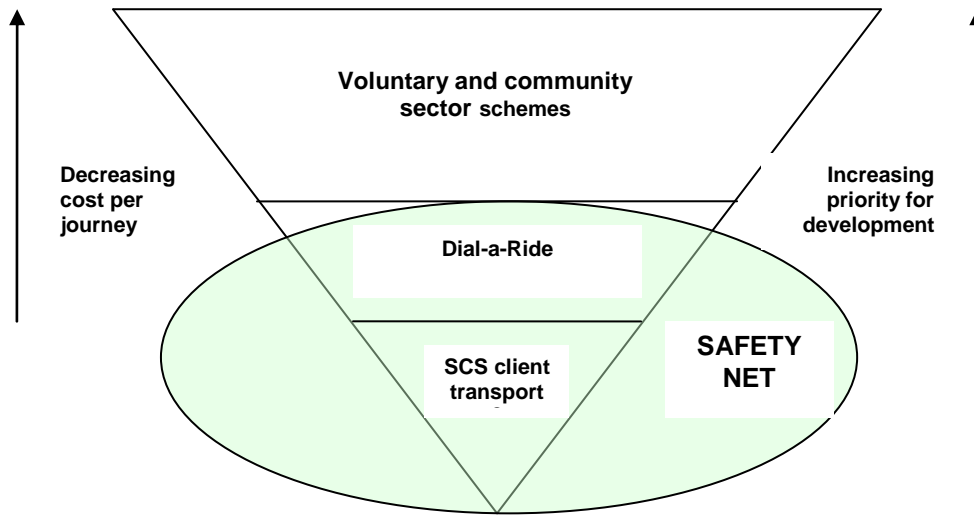



Figure 1: Value for money and priority for development

Funding proposals

13. **It is recommended that members should support Option A** set out in Table 1 below. Alternative options are also possible, provided the total excluding the £110,000 already agreed for dial-a-ride does not exceed £404,000.

Table 1 – Options for spending Supporting Community Transport Funding

		Package Option A	Package Option B	Package Option C	Package Option D
	Top-up for countywide dial-a-ride service (agreed by Cabinet 6 February 2012)	110,000	110,000	110,000	110,000
1	Reserve to top up dial-a-ride service in 2013/14	110,000	59,000	0	Members choose package, not to exceed £404,000.
2	Community engagement/business development role (split over 2 years) to stimulate bids	100,000	100,000	100,000	
3	Marketing and awareness campaign	35,000	50,000	70,000	
4	Surveys of need	10,000	10,000	10,000	
5	Grants to existing and new community transport organisations bidding under 'Big Society' framework	140,000	180,000	220,000	
6	Community car share pilot	6,000	4,800	0	
	TOTAL	511,000	513,800	510,000	


Less support for dial-a-ride, more for community transport

Rationale for Funding Recommendations:

Dial-a-Ride

14. It was agreed by Cabinet on 6 February that £110,000 of this funding would be put towards topping up the new dial-a-ride service in 2012/13 to ensure that minibuses are available in each district Monday to Friday from 9:00am to 17:00. There is an option to reserve more of this funding to be put towards dial-a-ride in 2013/14 (row 1 Option A in table above) to provide a service equivalent to that in 2012/13. Without it, the service may drop to a 3-day per week, 10:00 to 15:00 service. Option B in Table 1 suggests a sum of £59,000 to support dial-a-ride. Based on current prices, this would enable either a 3-day per week 9:00 to 17:00 service or a 5-day per week 10:00-15:00 service to be provided across the county. However, this would be a reduction over the current level of service which may not be acceptable if community schemes have not yet increased their capacity sufficiently.

Increasing the capacity of the community transport sector

15. It is proposed that the remaining funding is spent primarily on developing the community transport sector to help meet the growing demand. It is unlikely that the required increase in capacity can come from existing schemes alone: a strong programme of community engagement and business development is needed to stimulate the development of new schemes, particularly in areas where there is currently none.
16. Bids would be invited from, and grants awarded to community transport organisations through the Big Society grant funding process, and a sum would be transferred from the Supporting Community Transport fund into the Big Society fund for this purpose (row 5, Table 1). It is recommended that awards would be over a two year period. In line with the criteria for Big Society grants, a business case would be required to show that the additional service made possible by the grant is sustainable without further funding from the county council.
17. To support new schemes to come forward a new, two year, role is proposed which will stimulate new transport schemes in communities particularly in those localities where there is little or no community transport currently (see row 2, Table 1). The post holder will work closely with communities and town and parish councils to develop plans and support them in accessing funding for their projects. Annex 3 provides a description of this proposed role. This role would complement but not overlap with, the ORCC Community Transport Advisor role which the council will continue to fund in 2012/13 (based on recommendations to the Transport Cabinet Member Decisions meeting in Feb 2012). The ORCC role is more focussed on providing practical advice to existing schemes and supporting communities to undertake transport needs analysis. The level of funding proposed for this fixed term post is comparable to the funding we provide to ORCC for the Community Transport Advisor. It will also be important to work closely with Social and Community Services and the voluntary sector organisations they contract with as the day opportunities strategy is developed and the transport implications of this are known.

18. Increasing awareness of community transport and enabling people to access it, stimulating interest from communities to develop new schemes, and attracting volunteers are key to growing the sector. £35,000 is proposed for a marketing and awareness campaign, to be commissioned and overseen by the community engagement/business development role (row 3 in Table1). This will strengthen the Oxtail information line, and build on relationships we already have with the community transport sector. The programme will include website improvements to provide location specific information based on post-code details, linked with information about a range of transport options. In addition, we would seek to work with stakeholders to raise the profile and need for community Transport schemes. Age UK for example, is keen to work with us to promote ways of meeting the transport needs of older people.
19. Community transport scheme coverage has been mapped (see Annex A), and factors likely to contribute to the need for a scheme, have been mapped across the county. This information, backed up by surveys of need, will be used to help target development where it is most needed. It is recommended that a sum is reserved to fund needs survey work (row 4, Table 1). Some of this could be made available to community transport schemes and prospective schemes to carry out needs surveys to support Big Society bids.
20. It is not possible to predict how many bids will come forward. Despite our best efforts, the response may be limited, and it may be necessary to redirect resources in order to meet needs in a different way. Therefore, this report recommends that there is a degree of flexibility in the funding arrangements and that money transferred into the Big Society fund could be redirected if insufficient bids are forthcoming. Cabinet are asked to delegate authority to the Cabinet Member for Transport to implement changes to the funding arrangements in response to this situation should it arise (see Recommendation B).

Community car share

21. Building on the success of Oxfordshire Carshare, the free-to-use database which links people together to share car journeys, and is part of the national Liftshare network, it is recommended to reserve some funding for piloting community carshare schemes. These would be based on community focused websites, using the Liftshare database, offering people the option of sharing car journeys only with individuals in their own community, or more widely within Oxfordshire or beyond, if they prefer. It could be used for regular or one-off trips, by people offering or seeking lifts, and could be very valuable for people without access to a car or public transport. In particular, it could help some older people make their own arrangements and reduce the burden on volunteer schemes or dial-a-ride.
22. Community car share schemes are shortly to be piloted by Liftshare in Somerset, and would cost about £400 per community scheme to set up, with a £400 ongoing licence fee. If a pilot was successful, this may be something that parish councils would choose to fund. It is proposed to fund the set up charges, plus two years' licence fees, and could be piloted in two or more localities.

Links to existing revenue funding for Community Transport and opportunities for future funding

23. It is important that this additional funding is not allocated in isolation from existing revenue funding for community transport. Currently a number of community schemes receive grant funding to support on-going revenue costs, which is allocated in line with the Bus Strategy. It is proposed that alongside the work to stimulate development of the sector we review our approach and criteria for providing on-going revenue support to community transport schemes to ensure that we are consistent.
24. In addition to the proposals set out in this report work is beginning to scope a wider project to ensure that council provided transport (and potential for work with partners) best meets local needs and delivers best value. This project aims to look at all transport provided in an area, and is expected to generate efficiencies which could be reinvested in community transport.

Views of stakeholders

25. An outline of these proposals (without a recommended breakdown of sums against each element as has been provided in this report) was sent to the following groups for comment: Oxfordshire Rural Community Council, representatives from all Oxfordshire district councils, Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils, Age UK Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire Unlimited, My Life My Choice, Oxfordshire PCT, South Central Ambulance Service, Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action, and Volunteer-Link Up. All comments received are listed in Annex 5, together with an officer response.

Financial and staff implications

26. The funding options presented have been developed in the knowledge that the funding available is one-off and therefore do not present any on-going financial obligations for the council. However it is likely that as a result of the additional funding the number of community transport schemes in the county will increase demanding a consistent and transparent approach to the allocation of the community transport revenue budget.
27. The task of securing and managing the community engagement and business development role, as well as managing the process of reviewing bids and awarding grants, can be covered from existing staffing resources.

Legal Implications

28. All successful bids for funding will be subject to a funding agreement and new schemes will be offered support and guidance in establishing themselves to ensure that all legal and insurance requirements are compiled with.
29. Any work that is commissioned to another organisation will have appropriate funding/commissioning arrangements in place.

Equality and inclusion implications

30. These proposals have been designed to maximise and sustain additional support to those groups which find it difficult to access public and private transport options. The detailed assessment of how these proposals will impact on specific groups in the community and mitigating actions are set out in the accompanying impact assessment.
31. Overall it is considered that this additional one-off funding will enable the Council to positively impact on several vulnerable groups.

Risk implications

32. The main risk associated with these proposals is that new schemes that are developed are not sustainable. The mitigation for this is the support and guidance proposed through the 'business development' role and the requirement for bids to be accompanied by a business case setting out council funding requirements for a period not exceeding 2 years.

RECOMMENDATIONS

33. **Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:**
 - (a) **agree the allocation of Supporting Community Transport funding according to package A, or other option preferred by Cabinet.**
 - (b) **delegate to the Cabinet Member for Transport any amendments considered necessary to the funding proposals according to take-up of funding and need.**
 - (c) **review our approach to the future allocation of revenue funding as a consequence of these funding proposals.**

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Interim Deputy Director for Environment and Economy – Highways and Transport

Annexes

Annex 1: The current picture of community transport in Oxfordshire

Annex 2: Evidence of growing demand/need for Community Transport in Oxfordshire

Annex 3: Community Transport: Community Engagement and Business Development Role Description

Annex 4: Service and Community Impact Assessment

Annex 5: Comments from stakeholders

Background Papers

Community Transport Evidence Base March 2012

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March 2012

The current picture of community transport in Oxfordshire

Dial a ride

34. Community Transport is transport provision which is undertaken by locally-organised, very often volunteer-led associations, acting for the good of their local community, and usually without a view to making a profit. In Oxfordshire, community transport is also taken to cover Dial-a-Ride services, which are wholly funded by the county and district councils, employing paid staff. These are bookable, demand-responsive minibus services for disabled and mobility-impaired registered members who cannot use, or who find it difficult to use public transport. There are currently approximately 2,800 registered users, making a total of 65,000 journeys a year. The service is not available for hospital appointments: 50% of journeys are for shopping, 15% for 'visiting', 4% for sightseeing, 2% for education, 1% for work, and 28% for medical or 'other' reasons.
35. While dial-a-ride coverage is currently uneven, with most provision in Cherwell, and none at all in South Oxfordshire, under new arrangements from 1 April (which in 2012/13 will be funded in part from £110,00 taken from the Supporting Community Transport funding), the service will be evenly spread across the county in terms of the number of buses per district council area operating Monday to Friday from 9:00 to 17:00, unless individual district councils choose to top-up the service in their area.

Minibus schemes

36. In addition to the council funded dial-a-ride service, there are some 13 community transport minibus schemes operating in Oxfordshire. These are limited in extent and not evenly spread, and generally provide bookable travel for their members to fixed destinations on certain days of the week - i.e. they are not taxi services available to take people to a range of individual destinations. A few minibus schemes provide timetabled local public bus services. They receive funding from a variety of sources, including local fundraising and fares.

Volunteer car schemes

37. There are also over 60 volunteer car schemes in Oxfordshire. These offer flexible, individual transport, often providing companionship and elements of care as well; for example, drivers will frequently accompany people to their hospital appointments or in some cases put shopping away. Their scope depends very much on the individual scheme: some exist only to provide trips to healthcare appointments, some only provide trips for residents of a particular parish, and some are more flexible than others about which clients are eligible. They also vary in scale, with some providing many more trips than others. Coverage of the county is therefore uneven and incomplete. Annex 2 includes the location and scope of car schemes (Figures 5 and 6). Funding arrangements vary, but most schemes charge or ask for drivers' expenses of up to 45 pence per mile.
38. With all car schemes dependent on volunteers, the ability to meet an individual booking depends on the availability and willingness of a volunteer to provide the particular trip requirement. Many schemes report difficulty in recruiting new

volunteers. The majority of schemes say they are able to meet demand, although it is not known how widely some of the schemes are publicised.

39. Information on community transport schemes is maintained by ORCC and published in a directory. This information is used by the county council's travel advice line, OXTAIL, which is promoted by healthcare and social services professionals. The county council also funds a Community Transport Adviser based at ORCC to provide an information, advice and support service for community transport services, and communities wishing to establish a new community transport service.
40. County council revenue spending on Community Transport breaks down as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2 – county council revenue funding for community transport

ORCC Community Transport Advisor post*	£26,290 OCC £18,195 Contribution from districts	To provide an information, advice and support service for community transport schemes, and to rural communities wishing to establish a new scheme.
Dial a Ride**	£268,954 OCC includes £110,000 from Supporting Community Transport grant funding + districts' top-up where applicable	Provision of one bus per day Monday to Friday per district area, between 9:00 and 17:00 + districts' top-up where applicable
Grants to community minibus schemes 2011/12	£2,721.34	Watlington CIC
<i>From Community Transport budget</i>	£5,665.73	Swindon Dial a Ride (Watchfield Shopperbus service)
	£1,500.00	Swyncombe Life Line
	£1,249.18	Readibus
<i>From Bus Subsidy budget</i>	£10,000	Faringdon Community Bus
	£5,800	Stanford in the Vale Community Bus
	£10,000	Villager (West Oxon rural bus services)
Grants to community car schemes 2011/12	£6015.42	Wantage Independent Advice Centre
	£2608.00	West Oxon Volunteer Link Up
	£1000.00	Cholsey Car Scheme
	£2000.00	Didcot Car Scheme
Support for Unlimited	£2000	As part of its remit, Unlimited provides 'Travel with Confidence' training (supported by Oxford Bus Company) to help disabled people to use public transport.

*Based on recommendations to Cabinet Member Decisions Feb 2012

** Based on recommendations to Cabinet Feb 2012

41. This Council's funding includes modest grants to some of the community transport organisations to support their ongoing costs. It is proposed to continue the current arrangement of making these small grants available. They are designed to enable wider participation in social, recreational and community activities. Particular beneficiaries of such schemes are elderly and young people who have no access to alternative means of transport. CT schemes are typically

able to deliver such mobility benefits very cost-effectively, and the Council sees value in supporting such community-led initiatives. These grants are approved individually by the Cabinet Member for Transport. It is also proposed to continue to support Unlimited, whose 'Travel with Confidence' programme helps disabled people to use public buses rather than becoming dependent on door-to-door transport for all trips. The travel advice line 'Oxtail' is provided within Social and Community Services, and we propose that this continues.

Stakeholder engagement

42. We have had discussions with stakeholders about community transport generally and these funding proposals. Officers held meetings with Age UK, representing older people, Unlimited representing physically disabled people including those with age related disabilities, and My Life My Choice, representing people with learning disabilities. These are the groups of people who are the main users of community transport.
43. The views of internal colleagues with an interest in community transport were also sought via the community transport strategy project team, which included membership from Social and Community Services, and Children, Education and Families. An outline of the approach proposed in this paper has been presented to, and was well received by, senior leadership teams from all directorates.
44. As part of the re-tendering exercise for Dial-a-Ride services, a survey of all registered members of the schemes was carried out. While this was specifically about Dial-a-Ride rather than community transport generally, it provided useful information about journey patterns and preferences among a group reliant on door-to-door transport. Feedback from this survey was reported to Cabinet on 6 February 2012.
45. To support this project, a survey of all community transport schemes in Oxfordshire was carried out, to get up-to-date information about their scope and scale, the demand for their services, and the support they needed. We attended a seminar run by ORCC for scheme coordinators, and met with ORCC's Community Transport Advisor and representatives from community transport schemes including West Oxfordshire Volunteer Link-up, Wantage Independent Advice Centre, and FISH Sonning Common. We are very grateful to these representatives for giving their valuable time to advise us. An extended meeting of the Oxfordshire Community Transport and Accessibility Transport was held specifically to discuss community transport strategy. This included district council representatives, ORCC, Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils, Oxfordshire PCT and South Central Ambulance Service, Community Transport Association, and Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action.
46. These discussions have proved informative in gaining a better understanding of the CT sector in the county but specifically in formulating the funding proposals in this report.

Evidence of growing demand/need for Community Transport in Oxfordshire

The ageing population

47. There is likely to be almost 2,000 more people aged 85 years and over in Oxfordshire by 2016. Almost half of this increase will be in rural areas. If recent demographic trends continue, the number of older people in Oxfordshire will increase substantially over the next 25 years, with the most significant increase in the number of people aged 85 and over. This age group is projected to more than double, from 14,200 in 2008 to 37,600 in 2033 – see Figure 2.

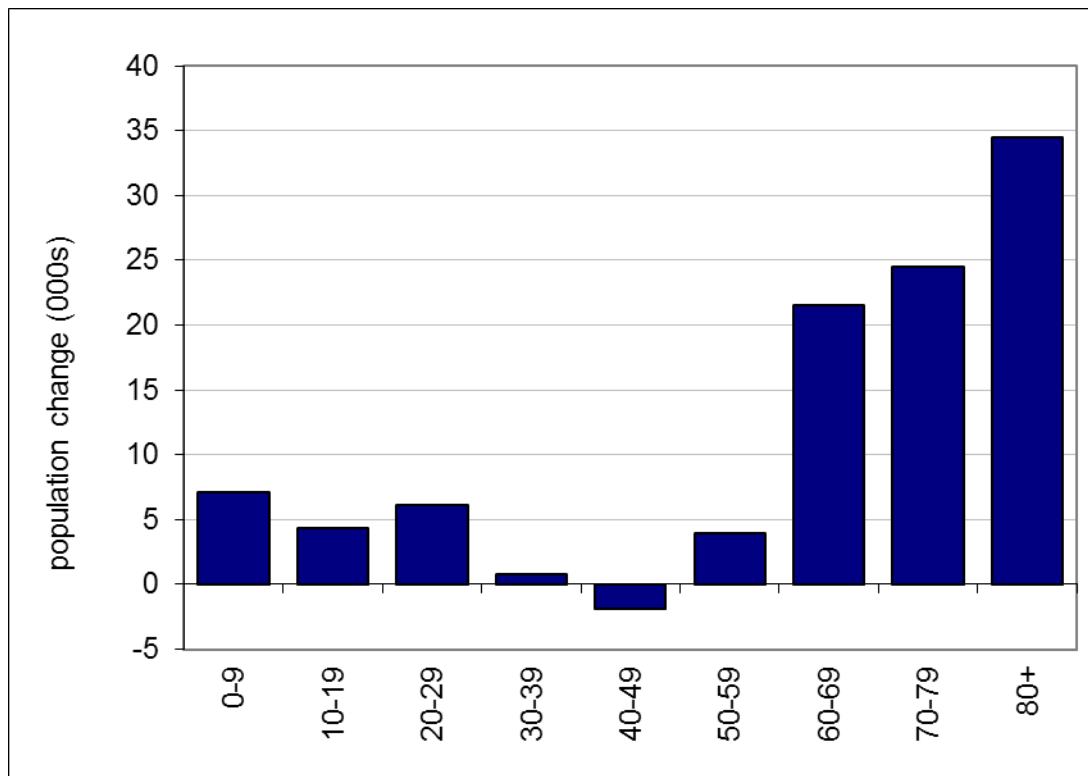


Figure 2: Oxfordshire's population change by age, 2008 to 2033

48. Older people, and the 85+ age group in particular, are more likely to be dependent than younger people on vehicular transport all the way from their door to their destination. This may be due to age related disability and ill health, walking difficulties, difficulty carrying shopping, fears about falling, or about personal security. Car ownership among the older population is much lower than in the population generally: 31.6% of pensioner households in the county do not have a car compared to 18% of all households (based on Census Survey 2001). By the age of 85 many people will have given up driving because of health problems or loss of confidence. For older people unable to drive, getting a lift can be more difficult as their circle of friends and family with cars gets smaller.
49. Even for those able to walk to a bus stop, people in the 85+ age group are more likely to be affected by lack of seating or shelters at bus stops, fear of falling while finding a seat on a moving bus, and fears about personal security.

50. This is not to deny that there are difficulties for able bodied younger people without access to a car, but they are more likely to be able to walk or cycle to their destination or to access public transport.

People with disabilities

51. Over 19,000 people in Oxfordshire claim Disability Living Allowance, which is available to people under the age of 65. More than 9,000 of these receive the higher rate of mobility award for the most severe mobility problems. In consultation we have done, groups representing disabled people said that they would prefer to keep their independence by using public transport, but many find this difficult. Disability covers a wide range of conditions, but people within this group are more likely to be dependent on door-to-door transport.
52. People over the age of 65 who need someone to help look after them because of physical or mental disability can claim Attendance Allowance: in May 2011 there were 14,625 people in Oxfordshire claiming this benefit, though this will not necessarily include all those who are dependent on door-to-door transport.

Access to services

53. Oxfordshire is the most rural county in the South East Region, and whilst it has a good network of public transport compared to many rural counties, some areas of the county score poorly on distance to services, according to the 2010 Indices of Deprivation. Access to hospitals is a particular problem, with more than half the county's wards containing households over 60 minutes away from a hospital by public transport. Long public transport journeys may not be feasible for older and disabled people (who would be able to make shorter journeys) due to changes, timetable limitations, and lack of toilet facilities.
54. Figures 3 and 4 give a picture of accessibility by public transport across the county, in terms of the number of residences more than 500m from a defined level of bus service.¹ Figure 3 shows ward areas, coloured according to the

¹ The level of service being tested for at each residential address is defined as follows:

- The address has one or more bus stops within 500m (straight-line distance);
- At least one of these stops has buses calling in three or more of the 5 following time slots:
 - Early morning (0600 to 0830)
 - Mid morning (0830 to 1059)
 - Lunchtime (1100 to 1529)
 - Afternoon (1530 to 1800)
 - Evening (1800 to 2200)

Bus services are only included in the analysis where the service runs each weekday (on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays) and the service runs all year around (not only in or out of school term-time).

This excludes some bus services, but it is indicative of a service that allows a degree of flexibility and is useful for meeting a variety of appointments and other requirements.

Note that some wards may have good bus services running through them but have a high number of properties more than 500m from bus stops: this will result in them showing as having poor accessibility in this mapping.

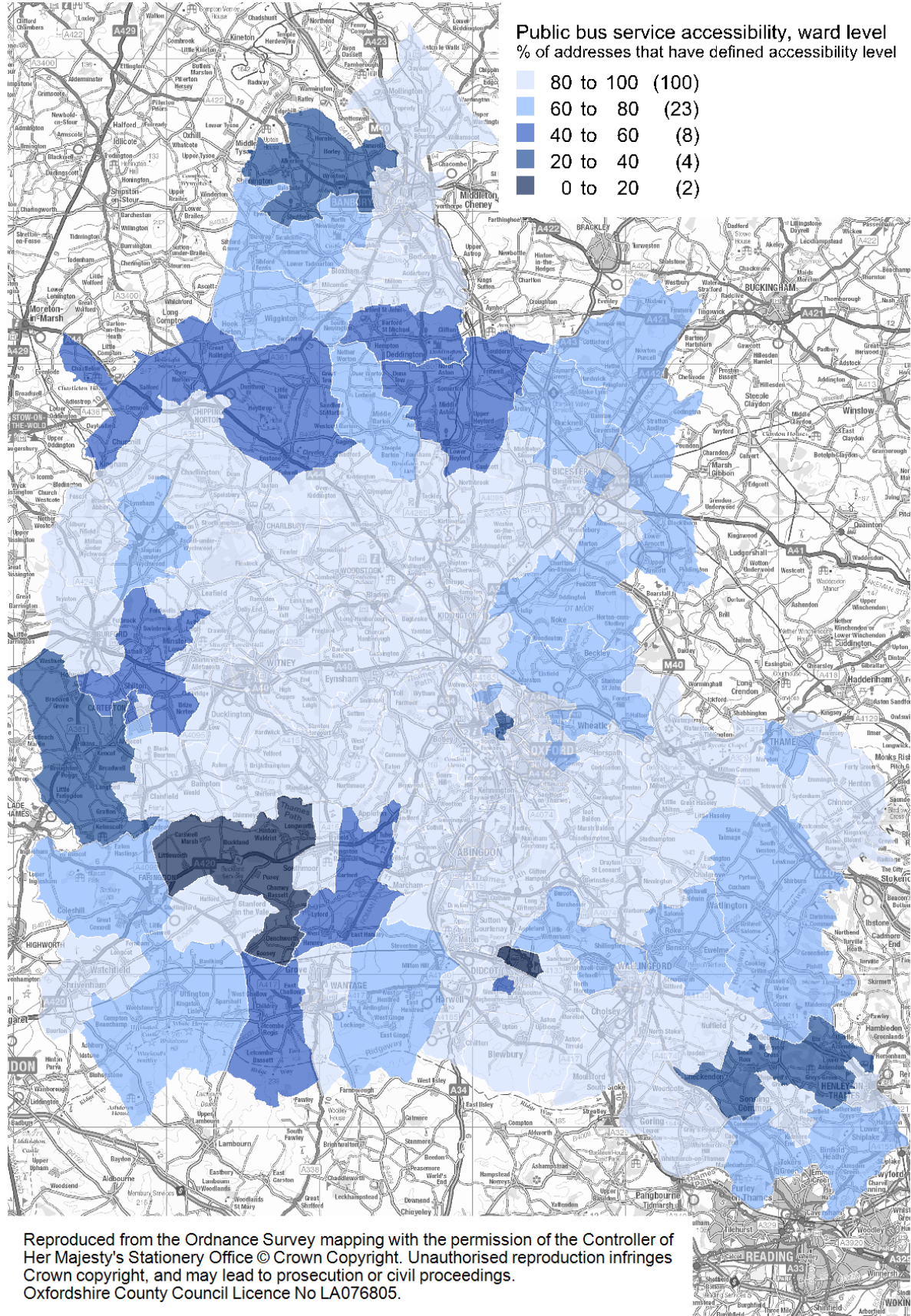
percentage of individual residential addresses within that ward that have the level of bus accessibility tested for. Figure 4 is based on the same data, but shows numbers instead of percentages. Dark areas of both maps indicate areas where fewer addresses have the level of bus accessibility being tested for (where accessibility is poorer). Note that this mapping shows some surprising results in urban areas: some of these may be as a result of higher density of residences just outside the 500m range, but nevertheless it is indicative of the potential number of people who might be unable to access a bus service, particularly where these areas coincide with high numbers of elderly people.

55. The ability to continue using public transport, or to start using it when they cease driving, will depend on where a person lives: in general access is poorer in rural areas but there are also some pockets of poor accessibility in urban areas.
56. People attending hospital outpatient clinics may qualify for non-emergency patient transport (NEPT), provided by South Central Ambulance Service on behalf of Oxfordshire PCT, if they meet certain medical criteria. During the course of 2012, the PCT will be moving to a more strict enforcement of their medical criteria. This means that there will be a growing number of people needing to find an alternative way of getting to hospital. An estimated 8,000-9,000 patient journeys per month are provided free of charge by the PCT, of which a little over 40% are thought to be 'walking patients' who may no longer qualify. Some of these will be unable to get a lift from friend or family and unable to use public transport, and will therefore be looking to voluntary car schemes.
57. The County Council's Integrated Transport Unit provides free transport to day centres for eligible Social and Community Services clients. Most of this is in specially adapted minibuses, but some of the trips are provided by taxi. There are currently about 1,200 eligible people, with around 4,100 trips being provided per month. With the proposed changes to council funded day opportunities and the increase in personal budgets, social care clients may instead choose to spend their personal budgets on individual activities of their choice, and many are likely to rely on bookable door-to-door transport to access them. Some may need specialist transport and staff trained to deal with particular disabilities.

Reducing social isolation

58. According to Age UK, transport is at the top of the list of concerns raised by older people. Being able to get about is vital to maintaining the ability to live independently. If older people are able to live independently and play a part in their community, it is not only a benefit to themselves and their families but to society generally. The need to get about is not just about accessing services: social activity, which includes shopping, is important in combating social isolation, which has been shown to cause mental health problems.

Figure 3: Public bus service accessibility based on % of addresses



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Figure 4: Public bus service accessibility based on number of addresses

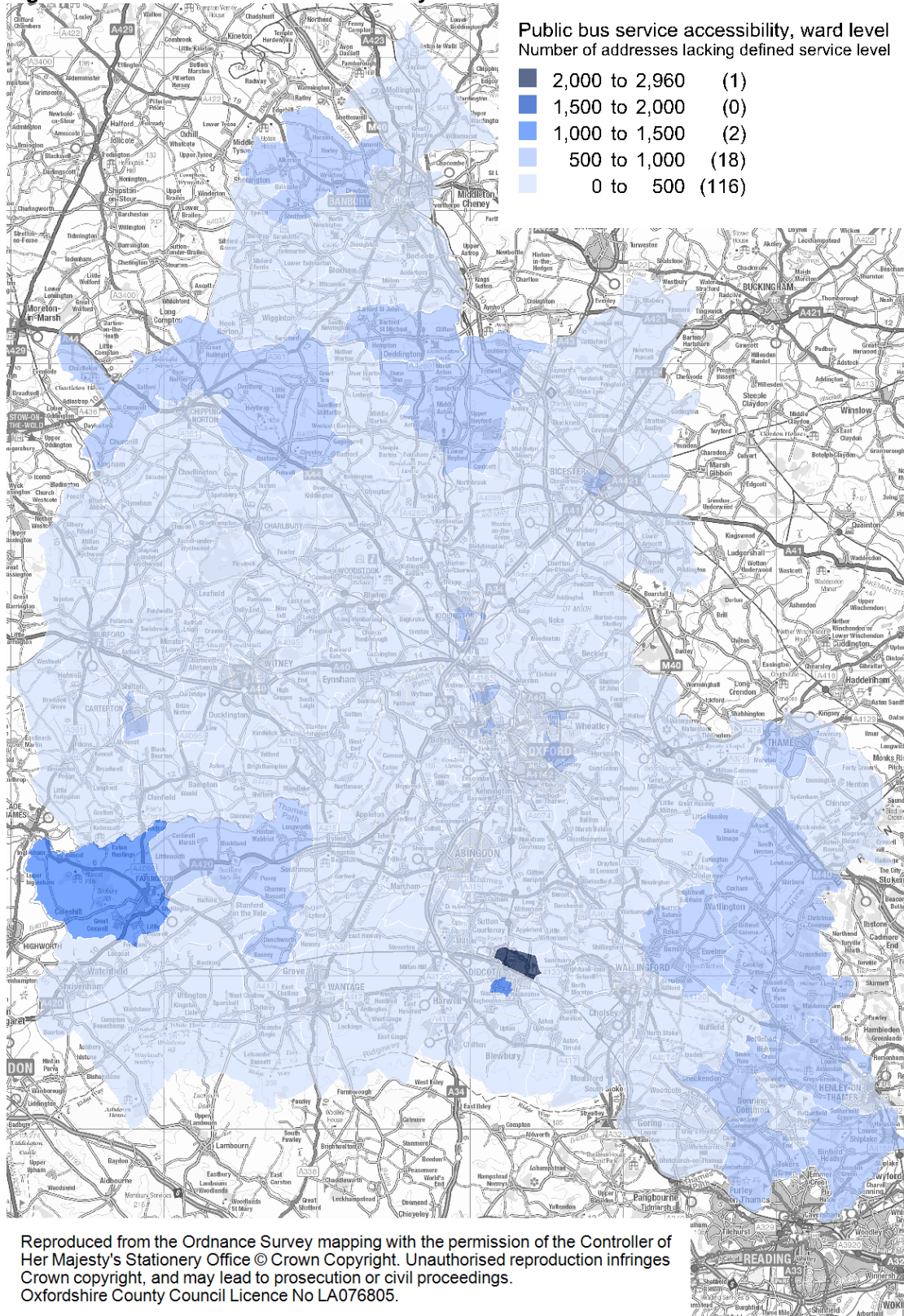


Figure 5 Volunteer car schemes providing trips for medical and healthcare purposes only

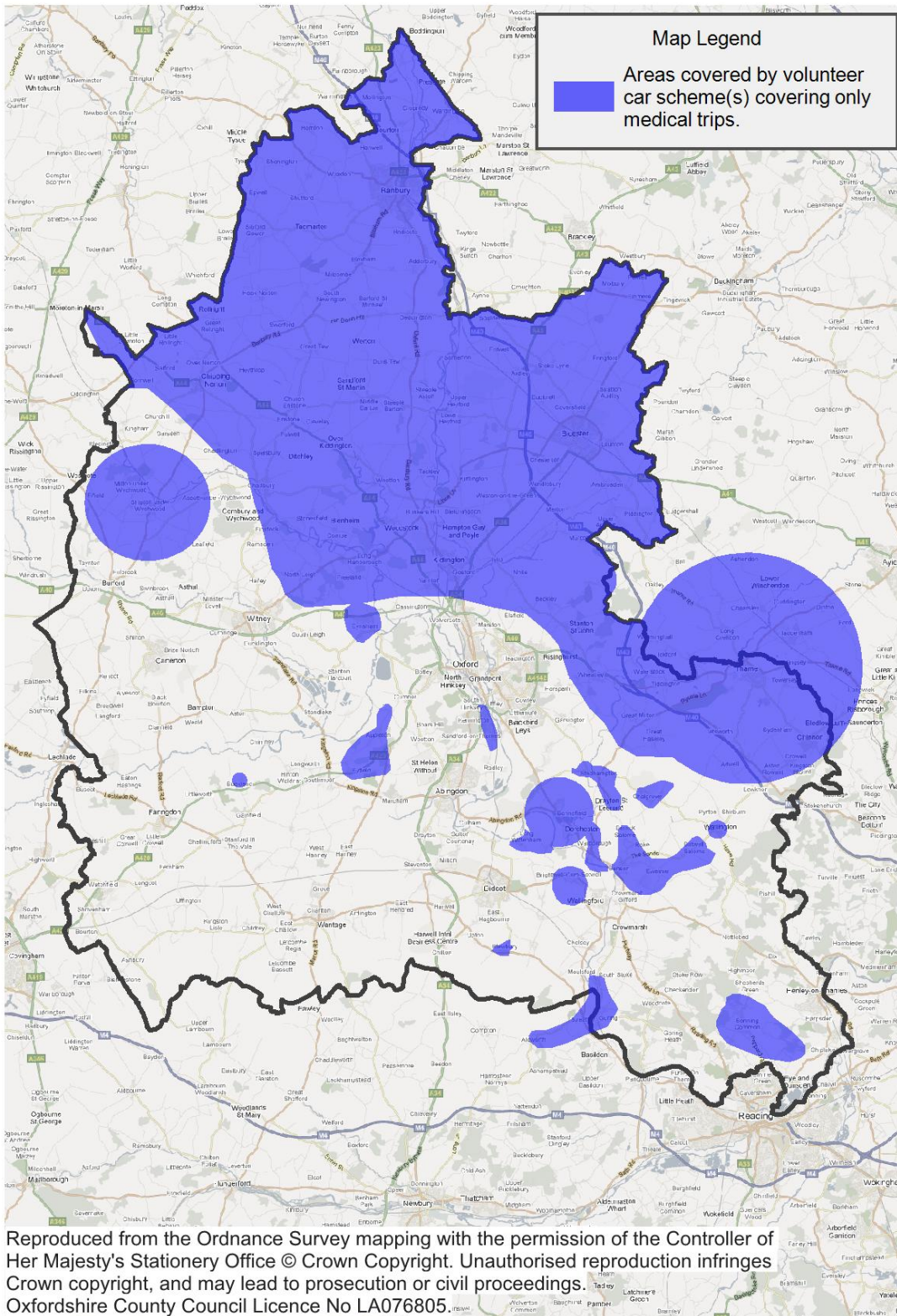
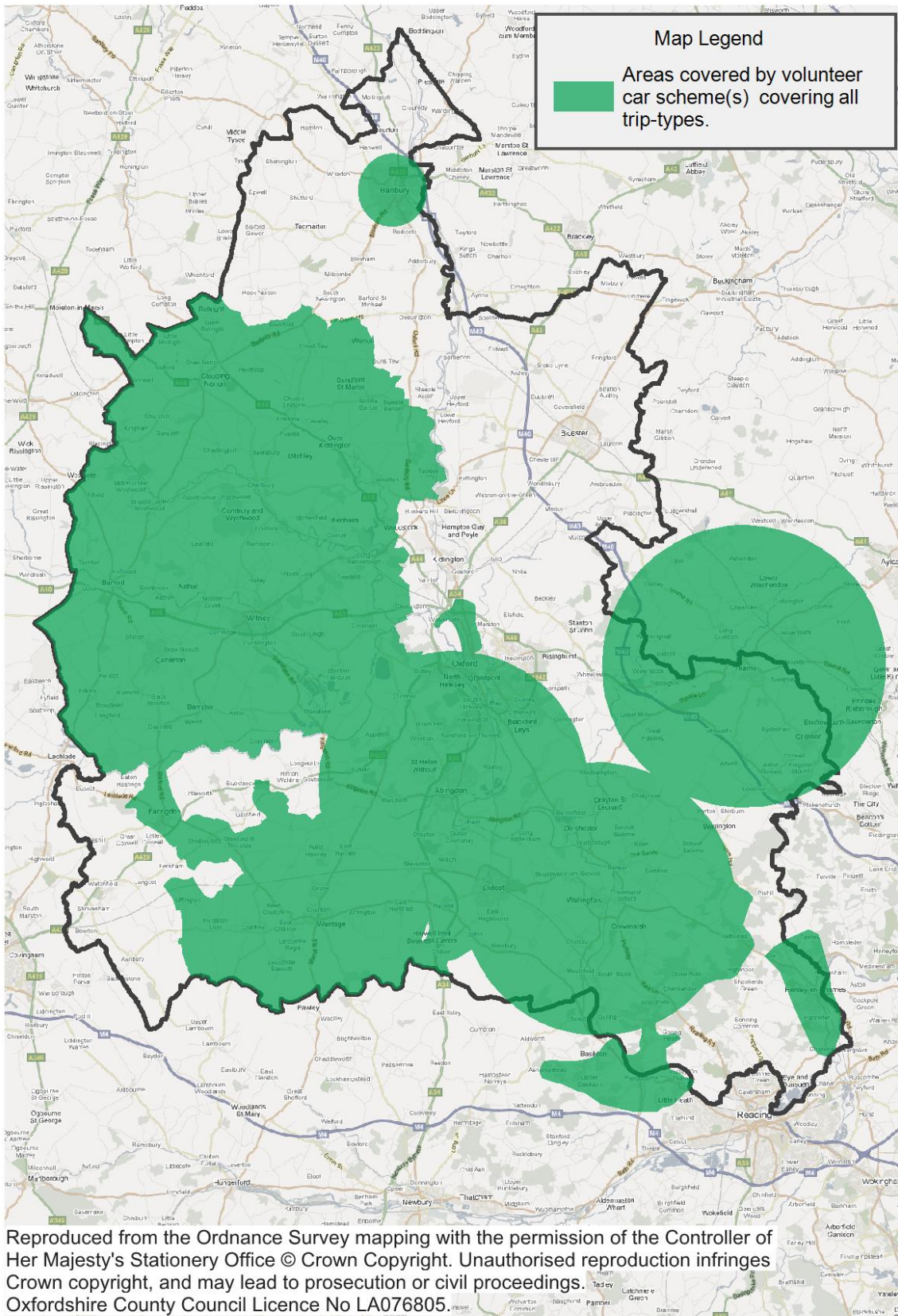


Figure 6 Volunteer car schemes providing trips for any purpose



Community Transport: Community Engagement and Business Development Role Description

MAIN OBJECTIVE:

To develop and grow the community transport sector in Oxfordshire, by encouraging and supporting the growth of existing community transport schemes and the development of new schemes.

OUTCOME:

A greater number of community transport trips of a high quality standard, to a greater number and range of customers (including those with disabilities), across a greater area of the county and to a wider range of destinations.

TASKS:

- To work with existing community transport schemes to explore ways in which they can expand their service in terms of capacity, coverage, and provision for people with a range of disabilities.
- To support schemes wishing to expand, including helping them to develop bids for the county council's Big Society Funding, as well as seeking funding from other sources.
- To develop and implement a programme of community engagement in areas where there is a need for new community transport schemes, stimulating interest in communities and supporting them in developing new schemes. This will include helping them to develop bids for Big Society Funding.
- To develop and implement marketing activities to promote awareness of and involvement in community transport, and encourage take-up of new schemes.
- To work closely and coordinate activities with the Community Transport Advisor (currently based within Oxfordshire Rural Community Council), and coordinate community engagement activities closely with the wider work of county, district, town and parish councils, keeping local county councillors informed of activities in their area.
- To coordinate activities with other organisations with an interest in community transport, developing partnerships where possible to help deliver growth in community transport capacity.
- To carry out surveys or assist communities to carry out surveys to establish the need for community transport in targeted areas.
- To work closely with the council's volunteering infrastructure provider to encourage volunteering for community transport.

The postholder will be expected to work closely with the Assistant Public Transport Officer and other colleagues at Oxfordshire County Council, including Social and Community Services. They will also work closely with the Community Transport Advisor, who is currently based at Oxfordshire Rural Community Council, and whose role is described below.

Community Transport Advisor (currently based within ORCC)

The Community Transport Advisor's role will be primarily focused on supporting and working directly with parish councils and community transport scheme coordinators.

Their main activities will be to:

- Provide an on-going information, advice and support service for community transport schemes including information, advice and training on:
 - Opportunities to benefit from new and existing funding or other support initiatives, e.g. the Octabadge scheme.
 - New legislation or other policy developments affecting CT operations.

CA9

- Effective community transport operational practice.
- Recruitment and support of volunteers.
- Produce a Community Transport Directory providing information about CT and appropriate other services available within the county including vehicles available to other groups ('Brokerage').
- Investigate and document local needs including facilitation and analysis of local transport needs surveys.

They will also provide support to and work closely with the Community Engagement and Business Development Role, to:

- Promote the concept and possibility of community transport provision particularly in villages where an existing transport service is threatened or withdrawn.
- Provide advice and community project development support to rural communities wishing to establish a new community transport service in response to an identified need.
- Liaise effectively and work in partnership with local authorities and transport operators.

Service and Community Impact Assessment

COMMUNITY TRANSPORT – STRATEGIC APPROACH AND FUNDING PROPOSALS

Lead Officer: Joy White

Purpose of the Assessment: This document is an equality assessment of the impact of the proposed spending of £0.5 million of one-off government grant for supporting community transport on the communities of Oxfordshire, with particular reference to groups of people who share protected characteristics.

Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 (“the 2010 Act”) imposes a duty on the Council to give due regard to three needs in exercising its functions. This proposal is such a function. The three needs are:

- the need to eliminate any conduct which is prohibited by or under the 2010 Act;
- the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who
- share any of the protected characteristics listed in section 149(7); and the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

Complying with section 149 may involve treating some people more favourably than others, but only to the extent that that does not amount to conduct which is otherwise unlawful under the new Act.

The need to advance equality of opportunity involves having due regard to the need to:

- remove or minimise disadvantages which are connected to a relevant protected characteristic and which are suffered by persons who share that characteristic,
- take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and which are different from the needs other people, and encourage those who share a relevant characteristic to take part in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such people is disproportionately low.
- Steps to meet the needs of disabled people which are different from the needs of people who are not disabled include steps to take account of a person’s disabilities.

The need to foster good relations between different groups involves having due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

These protected characteristics are:

- Age (people of different age groups)
- Disability (e.g. physical or sensory impairments, long-term illnesses and conditions, hidden impairments such as a heart condition, frailty, learning disabilities or mental health problems)
- Gender (men/women) and Gender Reassignment
- Ethnicity (including Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic groups, Gypsies & Travellers)
- Religion/belief (different faiths, including people with no religion or belief)
- Sexual orientation

- Marriage/civil partnerships
- Pregnancy & Maternity

Summary: This proposal aims to use one-off government funding to improve the availability of transport particularly for those people who do not have access to a car and cannot use public transport, walk or cycle to their destination. The people most likely to fall into this category are older people, in particular in the higher age groups, and people with disabilities.

Some of the funding would be put into supporting the new county-wide dial-a-ride service, while a larger amount would be put into developing and stimulating the community transport sector, which includes community minibus and volunteer car schemes, to provide more trips. Community engagement activity would be targeted at improving capacity in localities where there is considered to be most need, based on existing scheme availability, as well as demographic and other factors, backed up by surveys of need. This would seek to prevent people from being disadvantaged as a result of their location of residence.

These proposals have been designed to maximise and sustain additional support to those people who find it difficult to access public and private transport options. Overall it is considered that this additional one-off funding will enable us to positively impact on several vulnerable groups.

Consultation

Public consultation has not been carried out on these proposals, because they are merely about spending one-off grant funding and have no foreseeable negative impacts. However, the strategic approach on which the proposals are based, has been influenced by discussions with stakeholders and surveys of dial-a-ride users and community transport scheme coordinators. Further details on stakeholder engagement are provided in Annex 1.

Risks

The main risk associated with this proposal is that it will not have the desired result: any additional capacity may be insufficient to meet increasing demand, and may not be financially sustainable. If this is the case, then an increasing number of elderly and disabled people may find themselves without transport in future years. However, this would not be worse than a 'do nothing' option of maintaining the status quo (based on the 2012/13 dial-a-ride level of provision). Mitigations for this risk are as follows:

Risk:	Mitigations
<p>Proposals fail to increase and sustain the increase in capacity to provide transport for people who do not have access to a car and cannot walk, cycle or use public transport to their destination (mainly older and disabled people).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposals are designed to maximise possible supply of new schemes and volunteers, including a new Community Engagement and Business Development role to grow the community transport sector in Oxfordshire (new and existing schemes) and support for piloting community carshare schemes to build on the success of Oxfordshire Carshare. • The process of assessing bids and the support provided as part of the proposals will ensure that enhancements to existing schemes, and new schemes, are planned to be financially sustainable. • Recommendations include money to be set aside to help support dial-a-

	<p>ride in 2013/14 as community transport capacity is unlikely to significantly increase before then.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will seek to ensure that future reviews of council provided transport take needs into account, and that efficiency savings arising from reviews are targeted, in part, to improving accessibility for older and disabled people. This includes allocating money to surveying needs, to use as a basis for targeting development where it is most needed (along with needs analysis work planned as part of monitoring new proposals for dial-a-ride). • Our wider transport policies and strategy will seek to ensure that as many people as possible can walk, cycle or use public transport to their destination for as long as possible, thus delaying the time when they become dependent on community transport or dial-a-ride.
<p>People may not be aware of the range of transport options available to them, or feel confident enough to use them</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A marketing and awareness campaign is proposed to increase awareness of community transport and how to access it. • Work is also planned with stakeholders (including Age UK) to raise the profile of of community transport schemes. • For people who feel they could (with some experience) use a standard easy access low floor bus, 'Travel with Confidence' training is offered via OCC's specialist travel planning service called OxTAIL.

Alternative approaches

The following alternative approaches or areas of spend could have been recommended, but were not, for the reasons given.

Alternative approach	Reasons why not recommended
More spending on Dial-a-Ride	Dial-a-ride has a high cost per journey and more trips can be provided for less money by the community transport sector. In the current financial climate, and in the face of increasing demand, it is important to maximise capacity with the available funding.
Implementing a central booking system for	Based on advice from ORCC's Community

community transport across the whole county.	Transport Advisor, Many of the community transport schemes in Oxfordshire are unlikely to want to be organised in this way and would prefer to remain locally focussed. It is also not clear how a central booking service would be funded in the future.
Developing schemes aimed more at younger people in rural areas with limited transport options, e.g. jobseekers, young people, people on low incomes.	There is a less pressing need among these groups – the ageing population is of greater concern in terms of numbers, and it is felt that younger, able bodied people generally have more transport options available to them: even though their options may be limited and difficult, they are more likely to be possible.

Impact on customers:

The policy has an impact related to age and disability, gender, pregnancy and maternity, and religion or belief. These are discussed below:

Age and disability:

Dial-a-ride and most community transport schemes provide door-to-door transport which many people with disabilities or mobility impairment, including those with age-related disability and mobility impairment, need to get about. While these proposals would not increase the capacity of council provided dial-a-ride services, they are aimed at increasing the capacity for door-to-door services provided by the community transport sector. If successful, this is a positive discriminatory use of the funding towards older people and disabled people of all ages.

However, while the dial-a-ride service uses special vehicles, enabling passengers who cannot transfer from wheelchairs to use the service, most of the volunteer car schemes and some of the community transport minibus schemes do not have suitably adapted vehicles. This means that as the number of people who are unable to transfer from wheelchairs increases over time (which it will, assuming they remain the same or greater as a proportion of the general population of Oxfordshire), and assuming dial-a-ride capacity does not increase, there may be a greater number of such people without access to transport.

The dial-a-ride service also uses drivers specially trained in a variety of mobility and disability needs, whereas many volunteers may lack training, experience or confidence to provide the level of support needed to some customers.

The proposals will not have a negative effect on younger people without disabilities, because they do not involve a reduction in any other services. Some existing community transport schemes are not restricted to older or disabled people, and the award of funding to community transport schemes would not be contingent on restrictive eligibility criteria being in place.

Risks	Mitigation
More people requiring wheelchair accessible door-to-door transport unable to travel.	<p>Enhancements to existing community transport schemes and the development of new schemes that provide wheelchair accessible transport, would be encouraged through the community engagement/business development role. Bids which include the provision of wheelchair accessible transport would be considered favourably.</p> <p>Dial-a-Ride service will be monitored to note unmet demand. This information will be shared with district and county officers via a cross authority working group. All local</p>

	<p>authorities will have the potential to increase resources via the dial-a-ride contract.</p> <p>For people who feel they could (with some experience) use a standard, easy access, low floor bus, 'Travel with Confidence' training is offered via OCC's specialist travel planning service called OxTAIL.</p> <p>Our wider transport policies and strategy will seek to ensure that as many people as possible can walk, cycle or use public transport to reach their destination for as long as possible, thus delaying the time when they become dependent on community transport or dial-a-ride</p>
Potential drop in level of support to people with complex mobility needs or particular disabilities due to unavailability of trained staff.	MIDAS industry-standard training will be available to community transport schemes through the Integrated Transport Unit in 2012/13. Training is also available commercially and schemes would be encouraged through the bidding process to ensure that volunteers and any paid staff were fully trained.

Gender, Pregnancy and maternity:

Since the proposals do not involve a reduction in public transport there is unlikely to be a significant impact on pregnant women and people with young children. However, since these people may qualify temporarily for dial-a-ride services, and would not qualify for some existing community transport schemes, there may be a slight reduction in availability of door-to-door transport for them as the balance shifts away from dial-a-ride provision towards community transport schemes.

All services would be required to operate without gender discrimination. However, it could be argued that the risks highlighted under Age and Disability disproportionately affect women, as there are more women than men in Oxfordshire, particularly among older age groups and fewer older women drive cars.

Risks	Mitigation
Women may be more disadvantaged by changes in service provision	There is no bias in the provision of this service. It is booked on a first come first served principle.
Women may feel uncomfortable using the service if all the drivers are male and/or they have specific support requirements	Staff managing and delivering this service will be of either sex allowing flexibility All staff will be provided with training in supporting individuals with particular needs.
It is possible that pregnant women and people with small children would find it harder to access door to door transport in future.	Community transport schemes would be encouraged to apply flexible eligibility criteria that cover temporary difficulties in using public transport.

Religion or belief:

Current dial-a-ride services are focussed on Monday-to-Friday provision, as are most community transport schemes. It is possible that people whose faith and beliefs require them to participate in religious observance on such days could use these services to access places of communal worship, whereas people who have such a requirement on Saturdays or Sundays could not.

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Some volunteer-led car schemes may be able to meet needs for journeys to places of worship at weekends, and it is believed that many faith communities will be likely themselves to have in place arrangements to bring disabled or mobility-impaired worshippers to such weekend gatherings.

Risks	Mitigation
Absence of a DaR service or community transport at weekends and evenings could prevent people practicing some faiths or beliefs whilst others have a service.	Consultation with existing Dial-a-Ride users shows little demand for service to religious observance beyond core days for services. It is possible however that enhancements District Councils might choose to make could extend Dial-a-Ride services in to evenings and weekends. Volunteer led community car schemes and local networks- accessed via OxTAIL travel advice line - can advise alternate solutions.
DaR staff and volunteers may not be sensitive to perceived barriers/ or may not understand belief behaviours.	Dial-a-Ride staff will receive equality & diversity based training, and community transport schemes would be encouraged to ensure that volunteers and any paid staff were similarly trained.

Other protected groups

It is not believed that this policy has any impact on gender re-assignment, race, marriage and civil partnership or sexual orientation.

Impact on providers:

The proposals in this paper would impact positively on the not-for-profit community transport sector, allowing existing schemes the possibility of expanding, and enabling new schemes to start up. As there is strong and growing demand for community transport, it is unlikely that this expansion will lead to a reduction in demand for the services of any existing schemes.

Comments received from stakeholders

ANNEX 5

<u>Comments</u>	<u>Officer response and clarification</u>
Comments from Oxfordshire Community Transport and Accessibility Partnership	
A comprehensive over-arching holistic countywide “connecting people to services” strategy is urgently needed as a context within which any County Council strategy should sit.	This will be developed as part of a further project to review all the transport provided by the county council.
The OCC funding strategy has omitted health related journeys, yet these are the type of journeys that most car schemes concentrate their services on. It was felt strongly that the involvement of the PCT and the coverage of health related journeys should be included in the proposals. In addition transport to day centres, which is a growing problem, should also be included.	Developing the community transport sector will improve the availability of transport for a range of purposes, including transport to healthcare appointments and to day centres. The wider review of transport will include consideration of healthcare related transport.
The Partnership endorsed the proposal to seek to promote new CT schemes or expand existing provision to meet identified unmet needs. The establishment of a new source of start-up funding via the OCC Big Society Fund was welcomed.	We are pleased that this is endorsed.
It would be helpful to have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a breakdown of the total funding available against the project proposals put forward. All the proposed uses of the “just over £0.5 million” need to be explained. • further details of the criteria for grants available for CT e.g. who can apply and maximum and minimum grants available 	<p>The cabinet report contains a table of options with proposed sums against each element.</p> <p>It is proposed that the grants are awarded through the Big Society fund. The overall criteria will be the same as for other Big Society bids. Bids must have the support of local Members.</p>
If the appointment of a Community Engagement and Business Development Officer was agreed by the OCC Cabinet, this should be located within ORCC, given that the officer will need to work in close co-operation with ORCC’s Community Transport Adviser (CTA).	The person engaged to carry out this function will be largely based in the community and will be required to travel around the county. We have still to consider the options for this post but will ensure they work closely with the Community Transport Advisor based in ORCC, and that they are managed effectively, wherever their base is located, to ensure best use of their time and the delivery of their objectives.
Comments from Oxfordshire Rural Communities Council	
We welcome and endorse the view of the OCTAP that a comprehensive over-arching holistic countywide “connecting people to services” strategy is urgently needed as a context within which any County Council strategy should sit. The draft strategy prepared by the OCTAPO for discussion in May 2011 should be re-visited in the light of the useful work that has recently been carried out within OCC. This should be done in close consultation with the members of the OCTAP and other key stakeholders. We would be pleased to be involved in facilitating the process.	Comments noted. See above.
We welcome the proposal to seek to promote	Comment noted and welcomed.

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<p>new CT schemes or expand existing provision to meet identified unmet needs, by means of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the establishment of a new source of start-up funding via the Big Society Fund • the funding of a Community Engagement and Business Development Officer (CEBDO). 	
<p>ORCC's long-standing community development experience has shown that the effectiveness of offering financial incentives for new initiatives is significantly diminished without the support of a development worker to encourage and guide local community organisations on how to develop good quality provision and to access grants available.</p>	<p>Agreed.</p>
<p>Any CEBDO should be located within ORCC in order to complement and expand our existing community support service, which is held in high regard by local community groups and by partner agencies. There would be no practical sense in locating such a similarly focussed post in another organisation. Close partnership working and productive synergy with the activities and policies of the County Council need not be impaired by out-sourcing.</p>	<p>Comment noted, but given the challenge to increase the capacity of community transport, it is vital that we select the person/provider with the best potential to deliver results, which means we need to consider a range of people/providers. Whoever we appoint, they will be required to work closely with the Community Transport Advisor currently based within ORCC.</p>
<p>We note the statement that in connection with applications to the Big Society Fund "schemes must show that they are sustainable without future additional funding from the county council". This could be detrimental if a community scheme were to wish to tender for the provision of a subsidised bus service.</p>	<p>As we cannot currently commit to additional revenue funding for community transport, we should not be awarding one-off grants for improvements that depend on <u>additional</u> future revenue funding. This does not mean to say that schemes that currently receive grants from revenue budgets should be disqualified for Big Society grants to improve or expand their provision, or that schemes which receive Big Society grants will be prevented from receiving any future grants from revenue funding that the council may decide to award or bid to provide contracted services.</p>
<p>We support the statement that "The over-riding principle is to focus our efforts on developing sustainable voluntary and community sector car and minibus schemes" so long as the word "financially" is omitted – this is too specific and is covered by "sustainable" along with a number of other aspects of sustainability which are just as important.</p>	<p>Agreed that 'sustainable' should cover other aspects of sustainability besides financial sustainability.</p>
<p>We support the statement that "resources should be put both into support for existing schemes, and into community engagement to develop new schemes in areas where they are needed." But would add to this the following: "Alternatively drivers need to be found in a wider area than current schemes recruit. This leads to the formation of hubs where remote drivers serve their community under the 'hub scheme'."</p>	<p>Agreed that recruitment of volunteer drivers is vitally important to achieving increased capacity. The proposed community engagement and marketing campaign will seek to increase volunteering across a wider area, and expansion of existing schemes will be encouraged where possible.</p>

<p>We endorse OCTAP's view that the involvement of the PCT and the coverage of health related journeys and transport to day centres should be included in the OCC proposals.</p>	<p>Noted. See above.</p>
<p>While we commend the wish to see the piloting of community lift share schemes, these schemes are aimed at addressing some additional issues and agendas which are different from those being addressed by the CT strategy. We need to be clear as to whether and how these elements can usefully fit together.</p>	<p>Community lift share schemes have real potential to develop informal lift giving, linking people up who might not otherwise come into contact, and making informal lifts more widely available for some types of trip, e.g. weekly shopping. They are also likely to benefit a wide range of people in the community, thus complementing volunteer car schemes which tend to be focussed mainly on helping elderly clients. A community liftshare website could potentially be used to publicise community transport and help recruit volunteer drivers in a community.</p>
<p><u>Comments from Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils</u></p>	
<p>Paragraph 3 should make it clear that the actual amount now available for grants is £140,000, not £0.5 million, as the remainder is committed to supporting the Dial a Ride scheme in the county, and also to fund the post referred to in paragraph 9.</p>	<p>The briefing note does go on to list all the elements of spending from the total amount, although it does not give figures for each – this is because we are giving members more than one option of how to divide up the money between the elements.</p>
<p>It is not clear whether bids to provide transport to health facilities is included or not; this could be significant, as quite a large proportion of such transport is used for these purposes, rather than just 'getting about'.</p>	<p>Developing the community transport sector will improve the availability of transport for a range of purposes, including transport to healthcare appointments. Most of the existing car schemes provide the majority of their trips for people attending healthcare appointments, and we will be encouraging these schemes to grow. The forthcoming wider review of transport will include consideration of healthcare related transport.</p>
<p>In paragraph 9, I would like to see specific mention of parish councils, as they will clearly be involved, not least in publicising any schemes, and have some powers in relation to community transport, resources permitting.</p>	<p>Liaison with parish councils will be a key part of engaging with communities and where parish councils are keen to be involved and help with publicity etc., we will ensure that we work with them.</p>
<p><u>Comments from West Oxfordshire Volunteer Link-up</u></p>	
<p>I think it would be naïve of the County Council to think that voluntary transport schemes can be completely financially sustainable, especially as you say there is a growing demand for door-to-door transport, which requires bespoke services that take time and cost a significant amount in telephone costs, etc. I do feel that there will always be a need for some financial support from the county council to enable organisations to function, that cannot be passed on to the client.</p>	<p>As schemes grow beyond a certain size, it is likely that there will be some increase in their ongoing costs. While the council cannot currently commit to an increase in revenue funding for community transport schemes, there are no plans to reduce the amount of revenue funding for community transport. The wider review of transport will look at possible ways in which additional funding could be made available from savings made elsewhere. Schemes will also be encouraged to seek funding from other sources.</p>
<p>I think that the development of 'Good Neighbour Schemes' could be used to help new community transport to develop, particularly in rural communities, where the need is great.</p>	<p>This has been a useful way of getting car schemes started in some communities, and will be explored as part of the community engagement work.</p>
<p><u>Comments received from Oxfordshire</u></p>	

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Unlimited	
The positive point is the topping up of the Dial-a-Ride Scheme.	Noted.
The lack of detail makes it difficult to assess the benefits of the proposals particularly in the amount each would cost.	Noted. Detailed implementation will be drawn up for the various elements of spending.
Previous experience with a similar scheme with TFA failed. People showed no interest in attending meetings in some areas and very little in others. There was no outcome.	The full time community engagement post, and a professional marketing campaign will help to raise awareness and interest.
The assumption that there are many volunteers in the community waiting for this opportunity to come their way is not taking into account the outcry about libraries where many small communities were expressing concern about the lack of volunteers.	Volunteering for driving is not directly comparable with volunteering to help in libraries, and is likely to appeal to a wider range of people, as driving is something most people are already familiar with. Also it is likely to be more flexible for the volunteer – drivers are able to fit their volunteer work around other commitments, whereas helping to run a library might well involve commitment at fixed times.
Existing successful schemes have expressed difficulties in recruiting volunteers. Expansion to these schemes seems unlikely.	See above. The marketing campaign and community engagement will reach a wide range of potential volunteers, including those who are not normally targeted. The proposals focus on volunteer led schemes as these are seen to be more sustainable and have the potential to facilitate a greater total number of journeys than directly funded provision could.
The Big Society has not captured the imagination of the general public.	Intensive community engagement is needed, to make people aware of what community transport is, why it is so important, and how they can help. Our proposals include this.
More people are abandoning their cars and using buses because of the price of fuel so are unlikely to use their cars to take strangers to the shops.	Particularly in rural areas, car ownership is not likely to diminish significantly, though drivers may well reduce their mileage in response to increasing fuel costs. Volunteer drivers can be reimbursed for vehicle expenses incurred in providing trips, up to the maximum set by Revenue and Customs, which is currently 45 pence per mile. Almost all car schemes reimburse drivers for expenses.
Sustainability is an unknown factor and cannot be guaranteed in the present climate of rising costs.	This is a fair comment, but alternatives which do not make use of volunteers freely giving time are likely to be affected more severely by rising costs.
None of these proposals make definite provision for wheelchair users. This is a section of society whose needs are often neglected.	Bids will be encouraged from schemes wanting to expand their range of passengers, e.g. through vehicle adaptations which allow them to carry passengers who need to travel in their wheelchair.
People are retiring at a later age (the source from which you expect to draw your volunteers) to combat the effect of rising prices and to maintain their standard of life.	The number of people aged 65+ who are economically active in Oxfordshire is increasing and is higher than the average in the South East. However, nationally, Disability Free Life Expectancy has increased, as has the proportion of life spent free from a limiting chronic illness. This suggests that even though retirement age is moving later, the 'window' in which retired people

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	are likely to be able to volunteer may be correspondingly moving later.
We feel that the money should have been used for keeping the present Dial-a-Ride service at the maximum level possible with the funds available.	Community transport is more likely to meet the growth in demand than a council provided Dial-a-Ride service, due to the much lower cost per journey. Putting money into growing the Community Transport sector and making more people aware of it, is considered to be an investment for the future, helping to ensure that more of the increasing population of older people in Oxfordshire are able to get about. Also, the grant money is one-off so any increased capacity that is gained from spending it on Dial-a-Ride cannot necessarily be provided in future years.