
ACCESSIBLE COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor David Lyonette, Transport Portfolio

Responsible Director - Richard Alty, Director of Place

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek Member approval for the award of grant funding for the provision of accessible community transport services.
2. To seek member approval for further work to be undertaken to develop additional community transport capacity which better meets local needs; provides value for money; and can be sustainable in the longer term.

Summary

3. As part of a successful application for Local Sustainable Transport Funding (LSTF) submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT) in April 2011, funding was awarded to support the development of an accessible taxi pilot project. In response to other significant changes in the provision of and demand for transport services, a feasibility study was commissioned from JMP Consultants to consider the broader requirements of accessible community transport to meet identified local community needs. Additional funding was also identified to assist with the implementation. The results of the JMP survey and development of potential options are recorded at **Appendix 1** with recommendations and a full evaluation of the range of options recorded at **Appendix 2**.
4. Following the completion of the survey, the results and recommendations were shared with partners, local residents and community groups through a series of consultation events. The Council then invited local communities to submit applications for funding to develop accessible community transport services that met the needs of a particular community. The Community Transport Association (CTA) was able to provide assistance with tender applications, to interested community groups who wished to submit tenders. Evaluation criteria were sent to groups interested in submitting a bid to ensure that they could meet the requirements of the funding, particularly around community involvement and leadership, sustainability and deliverability.
5. Four bids for grant funding were received and have been evaluated by Darlington Borough Council and JMP Consultants. These are:-

- (a) The West End Bus for the Community “The Pink”; submitted by Darlington CVS t/a EVolution; applied for £43,500.
- (b) Equal Access to Taxi Services; Unlocking the Potential; submitted by Darlington Association on Disability; applied for £87,900.
- (c) Rural Transport services for the area to the North East of Darlington; submitted by Darlington Rural Transport Ltd (DART); applied for £30,000 capital and £18,000 ongoing subsidy.
- (d) Evening Community Transport Service for Hurworth; submitted by Hurworth Parish Council; applied for £16,500.

Recommendation

6. It is recommended that :-

- (a) Members approve the award of £43,500 grant funding to Evolution to implement ‘the Pink’ community bus service in the West End of Darlington and delegate to the Director of Place authority to agree the detailed arrangements with Evolution.
- (b) Members approve the award of £87,900 grant funding to Darlington Association on Disability for the provision of an accessible taxi service; develop a code of practice for taxi operators to improve taxi services for disable people; and develop a brokerage service to assist local people to find accessible transport services/vehicles; and delegate to the Director of Place authority to agree the detailed arrangements with DAD.
- (c) Members do not agree to award grant to the schemes from DART and Hurworth Parish Council in their current form. The Director of Place be directed to explore further with these organisations, utilising the Community Transport Association, other models that might resolve local community transport needs.

Reasons

7. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons :-

- (a) The application has been evaluated according to published evaluation criteria and the outcome is that a community transport service for the West End of Darlington presents the most sustainable and appropriate accessible transport solution to meet identified community needs.
- (b) The application has been evaluated according to published evaluation criteria and the outcome is that an accessible taxi service, code of conduct and accessible transport brokerage scheme presents the most sustainable and appropriate accessible transport solution to meet the needs of disabled people.
- (c) The proposals that have been submitted from DART and Hurworth Parish Council require further development work in order to better meet the key criteria of sustainability and deliverability.

- (d) The identified funding has been available to provide or support community (public) transport and it should be retained for this purpose as there is still a requirement to provide further accessible community transport services.

Richard Alty, Director of Place

Background Papers

- (i) Local Sustainable Transport Funding; Cabinet; 19 July 2011
- (ii) Supported Bus Services 2011 to 2014; Cabinet; 13 September 2011
- (iii) Supported Bus Services Implementation Options; Special Cabinet; 22 February 2012
- (iv) Accessible Transport Study - Report 1 Key Findings and Option Development
- (v) Accessible Transport Study - Report 2 Option Development and Appraisal Final

Sue Dobson : Extension 2277

S17 Crime and Disorder	No impact.
Health and Well Being	Reducing isolation has positive benefits for wellbeing; providing accessible community transport can have positive benefits to health and wellbeing through access to a wide range of services and opportunities.
Carbon Impact	Providing transport at a community rather than individual level may reduce the carbon impact depending on journey patterns
Diversity	The funding specifically seeks to better meet the transport needs of older and disabled people as well as those living in areas without other transport services (urban and rural)
Wards Affected	All
Groups Affected	Disabled people that require accessible vehicles; people living in the west End of Darlington; people living in Darlington's rural areas.
Budget and Policy Framework	This fits with the policy framework set out in the Local Transport plan and within the budgets available.
Key Decision	Yes
Urgent Decision	No.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	Supporting the development of accessible community transport contributes to the Perfectly Placed priority.
Efficiency	The bids have to set out how they will become financially sustainable within a 2 year period.

MAIN REPORT

Context and Information and Analysis

8. The Local Motion project funded from the Department for Transport's Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) included a proposal to fund a two-year accessible taxi pilot project to better meet the needs of disabled people. This element of the bid was included following discussions with the voluntary and community sector as part of the bid preparation process.
9. Since the bid was submitted in April 2011, ongoing discussions with the voluntary and community sector have identified that a lack of accessible community transport and information about potential transport options, compromises local people's opportunities to take an active role in their community. This raises the issue that there may already be significant unmet demand for accessible transport services for more local people.
10. In addition, there have been a significant number of changes with regards to transport provision in Darlington over the last 12-18 months.
11. On 13 September 2011, Cabinet decided to withdraw a number of supported bus service contracts from 2012. In the face of extraordinary pressure on Council budgets in February 2012 Cabinet took the decision to withdraw all funding from bus services, and the remaining contracts were terminated, with some services ending in June 2012 (evening and Sunday services and Glebe Road) and the remaining daytime services (16, 17/18 and 20) ending in December 2012. This has or will result in some communities having a limited bus service or no longer having a bus service. The effect of the changes has been or will be most felt by rural communities, and some urban communities such as the West End, Geneva Crescent and The Broadway.
12. The Council has also introduced a policy for the provision of transport for Adult Social Care users (Cabinet, 6 March 2012) and as this is rolled out there may be an increased demand for transport including public transport and community transport depending on the choices that people make. In addition the review of social care policy, in particular the eligibility criteria policy, (Cabinet 11 September 2012) may create new demand for accessible transport services.
13. The Council has also reviewed home to school transport eligibility criteria within the broader context of budget proposals with stricter criteria to be introduced in accordance with statutory minimum requirements and Government guidance by September 2013. Schools across the Borough, in response to the changes, and, to ease the transition, have agreed to continue to fund the home to school subsidised transport service for an additional year up until September 2014. Transport services need to take this potential new demand for transport into account if possible.
14. In the context of the changes to transport options for local communities, the original proposal for an accessible taxi pilot project, as written as part of the LSTF bid, was reviewed. With the inclusion of other funding streams, the remit of the project was broadened to include more diverse accessible community transport solutions.

15. In order to maximise the benefits of accessible community transport services to as many communities as possible, the funding was pooled and a process to award grant funding was developed.
16. However there were some key criteria that have been used throughout to steer this process, namely:
 - (a) The solutions must be community led – i.e. the proposals had to be developed by a community to meet its particular needs. The Community, if awarded funding, would then be responsible for delivering that service; i.e. the Council would not operate the services.
 - (b) The proposals would have to demonstrate that they would be sustainable in the longer term i.e. after the 2 years of potential funding through this grant bid, the service has a reasonable prospect of being self sustaining without the need for future Council subsidy.
 - (c) The services have to be accessible, particularly meeting the needs of disabled people, in line with the original LSTF bid.
 - (d) The proposals have to be deliverable and demonstrate how they will grow over a period of time through effective marketing and/or service development.
 - (e) Should any community transport scheme be determined to be fit to receive a pump priming grant, the Director of Place would continue to negotiate the detailed arrangements with the scheme applicant. This would include payment arrangements, any necessary due diligence and clarification of marketing and promotion support.

Funding Availability

17. A sum of £60,400 has been secured through the LSTF to develop and pilot an accessible taxi service for Darlington. Darlington has also received £37,100 (£18,550 in 2011/12 and 2012/13) from Government to support community transport in rural areas, alongside this funding is 6 days of consultancy advice to be delivered by the Community Transport Association (CTA).
18. Approximately £30,000 has been secured through a planning scheme for a land sale in Sadberge. This is allocated for the enhancement of public transport, which may or may not be put into a broader accessible transport solution, depending on the bids received and legal advice. Furthermore, an additional commissioning budget of £10,000 will be available. Therefore, the total potential budget for the two year pilot is £137,500.
19. The Council is able to supplement schemes in the form of marketing support until March 2015, as part of Local Motion. In addition there could be support for the purchase of new vehicles utilising the Dft's capital grant towards Public Transport Vehicles. A key element of any submitted bid for funding is a clear business case illustrating how the proposed new accessible transport service can be sustained in the longer term beyond March 2015.

Process

20. A clear structured approach has been taken to ensure that the proposals meet the key criteria of community ownership, sustainability, accessibility and deliverability. The process was as follows:

- (a) Appoint consultant to undertake feasibility work
- (b) Initial consultation to confirm key issues and opportunities to improve accessible transport provision – summarised in the first report ‘Key Findings and Option Development’.
- (c) Development of potential options and their appraisal, summarised in a second report ‘Option Development and Appraisal’ which was presented at workshops with stakeholders and local people.
- (d) Community groups developed proposals at workshops with the Community Transport Association
- (e) Submission of proposals to Darlington Borough Council
- (f) Evaluation of the proposals by Darlington Borough Council and JMP Consultants
- (g) Consideration by Cabinet of grant bids for funding.

(a) Appoint consultant to undertake feasibility work

21. A tender process was carried out in December 2011 to appoint a specialist consultant to undertake a Feasibility Study for Accessible Taxi and Community Transport Solutions in Darlington. JMP Consultants Limited was appointed in January 2012. The study was funded from the LSTF budget.

(b) Initial consultation

22. The aim of the initial stakeholder consultation was to understand current travel patterns, discuss issues and concerns around travel, and to establish what unmet needs and demands exist. A number of workshops were held on 14 and 15 February 2012, with people from organisations representing older and disabled people, and those living in rural communities. JMP also consulted with various ‘community service providers’ to determine the current provision of their service offer, organisation and business models, and to identify opportunities for partnership working. Potential new community transport solutions were explained to providers in order to establish whether they may be feasible for implementation.

23. The issues identified through the consultation and research are summarised below, and were used to draw out the key requirements of an accessible community transport solution in Darlington.

Issue	Requirement
Lack of accessible vehicles in the peak periods	Additional vehicle capacity in peak periods
Lack of a flexible service particularly for disabled people	Demand responsive service
Rural and urban isolation due to supported bus service withdrawal	Scheduled services for key journeys
Lack of customer focus and awareness (particularly of older people and those with disabilities) amongst drivers	Drivers trained to the needs of people with mobility difficulties; also require professional 'front of office' with good customer service
Poor image of previous 'Ring-a-Ride' service	Quality branding to ensure that the service is attractive to all groups of people for all trip purposes
Move towards localism	A community-led solution

24. Whilst the study has focused on rural areas, consultation has highlighted that there will be parts of the urban area which have significant numbers of older people, which will be left without a bus service by the end of the year.
25. The consultation confirmed views that have been expressed previously in consultation for the Local Transport Plan and as part of the Impact Assessment work for the MTFP.
26. Following these workshops JMP produced Report 1 – Key Findings and Option Development. (Further details in **Appendix 1**)

(c) Option Development and Consultation

27. The next stage was to develop a number of possible options. The findings from the research and consultation, alongside the aims and objectives of the study, indicated that the solution must demonstrate the following features in order to meet the needs of the key stakeholders:
- (a) Additional accessible vehicle capacity in peak periods:-
 - (b) Demand responsiveness;
 - (c) Scheduled services for key journeys;
 - (d) Quality branding to ensure that the service is attractive to all groups of people for all trip purposes;
 - (e) Potential for a community-led solution.

28. A second report was produced by JMP 'Option Development and Appraisal'. (Further details in **Appendix 2**). This described six potential options:-
- (a) Option 1 - Additional accessible vehicle
 - (b) Option 2 - Rural community transport scheme
 - (c) Option 3 - Expand Link2 to include Darlington
 - (d) Option 4 - Support voluntary car schemes
 - (e) Option 5 - Comprehensive accessible taxi and community transport scheme
 - (f) Option 6 - Combination of solutions
29. On 23 May 2012 three public consultation events were held involving participants who took part in the initial accessible community transport consultation. Local people were also invited to attend. The aim of the consultation workshops was to explore the potential of a range of accessible community transport solutions to meet identified community needs. The 6 potential options from the JMP study were presented at the public consultation events providing an opportunity for attendees to feedback.
30. A summary of the feedback from the consultation events was sent to those who attended the workshops. **Appendix 3** provides more detailed feedback from the three consultation workshops. The consultation identified community transport needs, potential community led accessible transport solutions and key delivery partners. Some of the key emerging themes are set out below:-
- (a) A clear need to increase the availability of accessible taxis at all times. This would help to better meet the needs of people using wheelchairs and those that are accompanied by a guide / hearing dog. In addition it could provide a service to other users who may wish to have support from drivers who have received additional training in meeting the needs of older or disabled people. DAD and Evolution.
 - (b) A service for people living in the West End of Darlington who currently have use of service 16 and 20. About 80% of current trips are made by concessionary pass holders i.e. predominantly older and / or disabled people. The service needs to be timetabled rather than having to make a booking. It needs to be able to cope with the current levels of demand i.e. 1000 trips per week, with capacity to grow. It needs to attract fare paying passengers to make it sustainable. West End Partnership.
 - (c) Services to provide transport to those communities that will not have public transport from December 2012. These include Sadberge, Bishopton, Great Stainton, Little Stainton, Brafferton, School Aycliffe and Neasham, and to a lesser extent Heighington (will still have service 1 to part of the village) and Hurworth (have a daytime but no evening service). Consideration needs to be given to how these communities could be served through either one solution with communities working together on a wider universal solution or a number of very small solutions that are targeted to local needs. The current numbers of people travelling by bus are very small. Association of Parish

Councils.

(d) Communities to work with the Community Transport Association on detailed proposals

31. The next stage of the process was for these community groups to work together in order to start to develop plans and business cases in order to bid for the grant funding available. It was recognised that some specialist expertise would be required to assist the groups in this process and as such the Community Transport Association's (CTA) 6 days of consultancy, was utilised. A 'leader' from each identified group was encouraged to involve whoever they needed in the development of their proposals, including potential operators, and these groups were invited to take part in a workshop hosted by the CTA, which took place on 25 and 26 July 2012, one for each of the options outlined above.
32. The CTA guided the groups through compiling the business case pro-forma and also went through the assessment criteria which would be used to evaluate the bids. The CTA were available to all interested community groups both prior to and following on from the workshops in order to give any advice needed for the groups to develop any aspect of their business cases.

(e) Submission of Bids

33. The deadline for submission of applications for grant funding was 24 August 2012. Four bids were received.

(f) Evaluation of proposals

34. The evaluation of all submitted applications was completed by 31 August 2012. Transport Officers with the expert assistance of JMP Consultants Limited evaluated the submitted tenders and the results are recorded at **Appendix 4**. Further clarification was sought for individual submissions as required.

(g) Consideration by Cabinet of Grant Bids

35. The aim was to award grant funding in October 2012 following a decision by Members to provide sufficient time for new services to be commissioned and operational from January 2013 to ensure continuity of accessible transport services. It is this report that forms the basis of that consideration.

Results of the Evaluation

36. Four bids for grant funding were submitted – see tables below. **A full separate copy of the four bids will be made available in the Members Room (Appendix 5).**

Bid	THE WEST END BUS FOR THE COMMUNITY “THE PINK”
Submitted by	Darlington CVS t/a Evolution
Application	£43,500
Summary of	The proposal is to sustain the existing demand for a scheduled

proposal	community bus service, and build additional community support for such a service through increased patronage and financial contributions from local people. It will be based on a highly visible scheduled service operated by Scarlet Band running through the West End of Darlington, daytime, Monday - Saturday. It would be governed through a joint venture between Evolution, the local Voluntary and Community Sector infrastructure organisation, and the West End Community Partnership, made up of representatives from the community, local businesses and ward councillors. The service will be branded and marketed through various channels within the local community.
Summary of evaluation	This proposal clearly demonstrated community support, through the evidence base of demand for such a service and its proposed governance arrangements. It has a clear branding and marketing strategy with recognition of the need to increase the numbers of fare paying passengers. The service would be deliverable through an existing operator that has a proven track record, as well as the expertise and knowledge of the local community. With an aging population and a large percentage of concessionary pass holders, sustainability will be dependent on donations and increasing the numbers of fare paying passengers and this will need to be carefully monitored. The service will operate using a low floor accessible vehicle, however in order to ensure that this is accessible for everyone there may need to be the provision of further bus stops along certain parts of the route with raised kerbs.
Recommendation	To fully support the application.

Bid	EQUAL ACCESS TO TAXI SERVICES; UNLOCKING THE POTENTIAL
Submitted by	Darlington Association on Disability
Application	£87,900
Summary of proposal	The proposal seeks to address 3 issues relating to taxi services for disabled people, namely the number of accessible taxi vehicles available; the quality of service that disabled people receive; and the lack of wheelchair accessible vehicles available for hire when they are most needed. To address the availability of accessible taxis particularly at peak times, DAD will provide, through a contract with an operator, an additional vehicle which can, to an extent, be controlled in favour of disabled people. In order to improve the quality of service that disabled people receive, the solution is to develop a code of practice with the intention of developing a Quality Mark for and with taxi operators in Darlington, which would include disability equality / etiquette training for operators and drivers. A detailed mapping exercise of accessible vehicles, including availability and type of vehicle will be undertaken and a signposting service provided by DAD and other organisations to assist disabled people find

	available transport services.
Summary of evaluation	DAD is a user led organisation and represents the views and needs of a geographically disparate group of people with a complex set of needs. Whilst the detail of the taxi service specification requires further work, the principle of increasing quality standards across the taxi trade has benefits for all taxi service users. The proposal has a clear marketing strategy and Evolution will provide additional expertise. DAD has set out a clear project plan with milestones and will undertake regular monitoring and evaluation of the service.
Recommendation	To fully support the application

Bid	RURAL TRANSPORT SERVICES FOR THE AREA TO THE NORTH EAST OF DARLINGTON
Submitted by	Darlington Rural Transport Limited (DART)
Application	£30,000 capital funding for a vehicle and £18,000 p.a. ongoing subsidy
Summary of proposal	The proposal is to purchase a minibus to provide a daytime community transport service for the rural communities to the north-east of Darlington (i.e. Sadberge, Bishopton, Great Stainton and Little Stainton). This would be operated by a community transport provider on the basis of 3 or 4 trips per day.
Summary of evaluation	The service is designed to meet the needs of a very small number of people and their current needs. Whilst the local community recognises that the lack of transport is an issue for some members of their community, it does not translate into support for the current bus service, and is therefore unlikely to result in increased patronage on a community transport service, unless the service specification better meets their needs. The bid clearly states that the proposal is not sustainable without an ongoing subsidy and this is one of the key criteria of the evaluation. Whilst the proposal identifies two methods of delivery, both of which could work, there needs to be further clarification on the detail. The proposed timetable meets the travel times of the people for a relatively small % of the rural population, but results in the vehicle being unused for significant parts of the day – the vehicle and driver could be used to serve other parts of the local community.
Recommendation	Whilst it is recognised that there is a requirement for some form of community transport to serve the needs of local people in this rural area, the current proposal is not financially sustainable beyond any initial grant funding. It is therefore proposed to work with DART, the Parish Councils and other community organisations to explore ways of reducing the reliance on a subsidy and providing a broader service to meet the needs of more local people.

Bid	EVENING COMMUNITY TRANSPORT SERVICE FOR HURWORTH
Submitted by	Hurworth Parish Council
Application	£16,500
Summary of proposal	Hurworth has a commercial daytime bus service but due to the withdrawal of the council subsidy no longer has an evening bus service. The proposal is to operate a scheduled community bus service, six evenings per week between Hurworth and Darlington, 3 trips in each direction.
Summary of evaluation	The specification does not include sufficient detail and there is limited project planning, with no clear milestones. The proposal does not demonstrate that it will be sustainable beyond the two years of grant funding and it is not clear that the costs are based on market rates. The evening bus service ended in January 2012 and it is not clear how many of the previous passengers still require an evening transport service or what potential unmet demand exists.
Recommendation	Whilst it is recognised that there is potential to develop a community transport service to serve the needs of local people in this rural area, the current proposal does not offer good value for money. It is therefore proposed to work with Hurworth Parish Council and other community organisations to explore ways of reducing the reliance on a subsidy and providing a broader service to meet the needs of more local people.

Financial Implications

37. The total amount of funding available is £137,500.

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
LSTF	£30,200	£30,200	£0
DBC (Commissioning)	£10,000		
CTA		£37,100	
Land receipt		£30,000	

38. The proposed allocation of funding is as follows:

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Evolution West End 'Pink' bus service	£5,425 (DBC)	£10,200 (LSTF) £14,950 CTA	£12,925 (CTA)
DAD Accessible taxi	£30,200 ¹ (LSTF) £3,597 (DBC)	£20,000 (LSTF)	

39. The total value of submitted bids was above the amount of available funding. The two successful bids require funding of £131,400, which would only leave a balance of £6,100. As the intention is to undertake further work with community organisations to try to

¹£34,103 additional capital funding from LSTF

develop solutions for the rural communities, additional funding has been identified from within the LSTF programme to help deliver the DAD accessible taxi project. The balance of funding (£978 DBC Commissioning, £9,225 CTA and £30k land receipt) is to be retained to support the development of a proposal to address other needs including those identified in the DART and Hurworth bids. In addition, further capital funding is available for the purchase of an accessible community vehicle if required. This funding will be available until 31 March 2013.

40. The projects aim to be self financing after two years. The Council will have no obligations to provide any further funding. The grant funding will be limited by legal contract and any further requirements for financial support will be the responsibility of the relevant community organisation.

Outcome of consultation

41. The results of consultation at the various stages of the process are included in **Appendices 1, 2 and 3**.

EQIA

42. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out on the proposal to award grant funding to accessible community transport services.
43. The purpose of any accessible community transport service is to address the transport needs of a particular community group, in this case those living in rural and urban areas of Darlington, who do/will not have a bus service with effect from 30 December 2012; and specifically disabled people that need to access an accessible taxi service. The target populations are therefore those that live in rural/urban areas that no longer have a bus service and disabled people across the Borough.
44. The individuals affected will be identified by the community groups who have submitted the bids. The bid pro-forma and assessment criteria require the bidders to identify those people who need to use accessible transport within the bid area. These identified people will be positively affected by the implementation of any accessible community transport.
45. It may be that a bid is not received for an area which will no longer be served by bus, and therefore the people living within this area, will not be positively affected.

Risks

46. There is little risk to the Council as services will not be operated or commissioned by the Council. The risks will lie with the Community organisation to manage their schemes and develop them into ongoing sustainable services. There is no guarantee of this but the Council will support through its Local Motion work the promotion and marketing of community transport schemes.

JMP Consultants Report 1 – Key Findings and Option Development

Section 7 is a summary of the key findings. The full report is available on request.

7 Summary

Demand for services

It can be concluded that there is already some demand for transport which is not met through current services, as well as demand which will be realised when all supported bus services are withdrawn by DBC.

In relation to the two groups which have been the focus of this study (older and disabled people, and rural communities) the key unmet demand for services is as follows:

Unmet demand from older and disabled people

- Accessible taxis available at any time of day for wheelchair users – taxis are currently considered too busy during peak times and not operating during non-peak times to provide a convenient service for users with particular access needs.
- Affordable, customer focussed service at off peak times for older people for shopping, health appointments etc. – service should aim to overcome the problems of long walking distances to bus stops and perceived discourteous drivers encountered on current bus and taxi services.

- Affordable, customer focussed service at all times for those who may be previously have been eligible for Adult Social Care services – service should ensure that drivers understand the needs of this group in terms of access, payment etc.

Unmet demand from rural communities

- Affordable service to key work / education destinations such as Rockliffe Hall, Morrisons and colleges at peak times and for early / late shifts.
- Affordable service between Darlington and villages which will lose their bus services through DBC cuts, namely Neasham, Low Dinsdale, Sadberge, Bishopton, Great Stainton, Stillington, Whitton, and School Aycliffe.

In addition, the proposal to reduce the home to school transport to the statutory minimum requirement is likely to increase demand for an affordable service amongst those families who do not meet the new criteria and do not have access to alternative transport.

Hence the consultation undertaken has established that there is cross over between the unmet demand from older and disabled users and those in rural communities.

Therefore, a combined solution is likely to assist in creating a sustainable service.

Appraisal of current services

A summary of the service and operating regime offered by standard public transport operators and the community transport groups consulted as part of the study is provided in **Table 7.3**.

Table 7.4 summarises the weaknesses of the each of the current transport services and the opportunities for each in terms of potential solutions.

Table 7.3 Service and Operating Regime of Current Transport Providers

Transport provider	Nature of service	Accessible vehicle details	Method of booking	Payment for individual journeys
Bus	Standard scheduled service	All buses are now low floor	n/a	User, considered affordable
Train	Standard scheduled service	n/a, though many stations have step free access	n/a	User, considered affordable
Taxi operators	Standard flexible service	11 accessible taxis, 9 private hire and 2 hackney carriages	Through operator or booking agent	User
Darlington Borough Council	Defined journeys under eligibility criteria	10 accessible council owned mini buses, though potentially more through providers on framework including half of DDYCA minibuses used for council contracts	Referral based on eligibility criteria	Social care budget
Darlington District Youth and Community Association	Defined journeys under council framework and other bookings to local groups	8 accessible minibuses	Through Council framework or direct for group bookings	Darlington Borough Council and individual groups
Durham Link2	On demand accessible dial-a-ride bus service with eligibility criteria	All accessible minibuses, total number unknown	Through telephone based Travel Response Centre	User (concessions free)
Little Red Bus Network	Scheduled bus service and demand responsive services using minibuses and cars	Some accessible vehicles, total number unknown	Through website application	User
Tees Valley Community Transport	Minibus brokerage service to connect users to minibus owners / operators (includes Little Red Bus)	All accessible minibuses, total number unknown	Through website application	User
Friends of Darlington Memorial Hospital	Volunteer driver scheme	None	Through travel co-ordinator, based on eligibility criteria	NHS / donations
Age UK	Volunteer driver scheme	None	Through travel co-ordinator, following registration	User for mileage
Town Mission	Volunteer driver scheme	None	Through travel co-ordinator	Town Mission
Women's Royal Voluntary Service	Volunteer driver scheme	None	Through travel co-ordinator, through council framework	Darlington Borough Council (social care budget)

Table 7.4 Issues and Opportunities of Current Transport Providers

Transport provider	Current issues / weaknesses	Opportunities for solution
Bus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Withdrawal of supported bus services leaving travel demand unmet • Drivers and journey experience perceived as sub-standard particularly for disabled and older users • Cannot guarantee capacity for disabled users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unmet demand from supported service withdrawal could provide demand for community transport solution • Bus driver training planned with LSTF funding, with support offered from disability groups • Arriva 'low floor guarantee' planned for Routes 2 and 11 with LSTF funding
Train	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only available in some areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing of services and facilities to Heighington and Dinsdale to assist with rural accessibility
Taxi operators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived to be not enough accessible vehicles to provide convenient service for disabled users • Perception that operators do not like to travel to rural areas and collect disabled users • Some drivers reported as not particularly helpful to older or disabled users • More expensive than other modes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to monitor calls for accessible taxis from disabled users in order to establish demand in both peak and off peak periods • Expressed content to price up any demand responsive or scheduled community transport service
Darlington Borough Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only available for defined journeys • Inefficient use of vehicles outside of peak times, typically 10.00am – 3.00pm • Council is reviewing eligibility for services meaning further unmet demand may be created 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unmet demand from review of eligibility could provide demand for community transport solution • May be potential to use Council vehicles as part of community transport solution
Darlington District Youth and Community Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inefficient use of vehicles during day • Recent lack of funding has constrained investment in fleet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Association is keen to utilise vehicles better and potentially expand operation as service provider
Durham Link2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not currently available in Darlington • In some rural areas, trips may exceed five mile limit • Only runs until 6.00pm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service aims to meet needs of rural and disabled users, hence potential to extend network to cover Darlington
Little Red Bus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not currently available in Darlington • Not all vehicles are accessible • Mix of demand responsive and scheduled service provision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for Network to be extended to cover Darlington, however already covers a large area • Leading European funded pilot study to provide infrastructure and pool resources for community transport
Tees Valley Community Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not currently available in Darlington • Demand responsive transport for general public (e.g. rural users) less well developed; if it was developed, vehicle availability may become a problem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be potential to extend service to Darlington, although other operations in adjacent areas appear more developed in meeting the needs of those in rural areas
Friends of Darlington Memorial Hospital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vehicles are not accessible • Serves specific journeys to hospital and limited by eligibility criteria • Currently seeking travel coordinator (full time post) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remain as part of solution given NHS benefit in reducing non-attendance of appointments
Age UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vehicles are not accessible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remain as part of solution as affordable taxi for older users

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aimed towards older users 	
Town Mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vehicles are not accessible • Mainly serves specific Town Mission journeys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remain as part of solution as affordable taxi for older users
Women's Royal Voluntary Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vehicles are not accessible • Aimed towards older users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remain as part of solution as affordable taxi for older users

JMP Consultants Report 1 – Option Development and Appraisal

Section 3 of the report summarises the Options and section 4 summarises the high level appraisal. A full copy of the report is available on request.

3 Option development

Budget available

Disabled people

A sum of £60,400 has been secured through the LSTF to develop and pilot an accessible transport service for Darlington.

Rural

Darlington has received £37,100 (£18,550 in 2011/12 and 2012/13) from Government to support community transport in rural areas and is proposing to use this grant and associated consultancy advice to develop proposals for rural villages.

Other

Approximately £30,000 has been secured through a planning obligation for a land sale in Sadberge. This is allocated for the enhancement of public transport, which may or may not be put into a broader accessible transport solution, depending on the findings of the feasibility work.

Furthermore, an additional commissioning budget of £10,000 will be available.

Therefore, the total potential budget for the two year pilot is £137,500.

Way forward

Given the limited resources available, it is important to ensure that any recommendations are based around existing opportunities and are 'mainstream', rather than freestanding new initiatives. These will be based on established structures, make best use of existing resources and are right for the local needs of Darlington.

Therefore, there are a number of possible options that either 'bolt-on' to existing provision or bring an additional dimension. There are opportunities to work with existing organisations or to seek an involvement from other parties.

These options are explored in more detail below.

Key elements of a community transport solution

There are two important elements to the operation of an accessible community transport service that must be considered, namely:

- Back of office functions (booking, systems, administration etc); and

- Delivery of transport services (vehicles and drivers).

Desirable features for solution

The findings from the research and consultation, alongside the aims and objectives of the study, indicate that the solution must demonstrate the following features in order to meet the needs of the key stakeholders:

- Accessible vehicle capacity in peak periods;
- Accessible demand responsive service;
- Scheduled services for key journeys;
- Quality branding to ensure that the service is attractive to all groups of people for all trip purposes;
- Potential for a community-led solution.

First and foremost, additional capacity of accessible vehicles is required in the peak periods. This would meet the needs for a demand responsive accessible taxi service in the peak periods. This additional capacity could also potentially provide the means for a demand responsive service which would meet the off-peak needs of those in rural communities, as well as providing an

accessible service for those with mobility problems.

Building on this, it would be beneficial to run some scheduled services for rural communities affected by the supported service cuts (such as Sadberge, Neasham and Bishopston), in peak periods for work and college trips and in the off-peak for shopping trips into Darlington. This could help supplement or underpin a demand responsive service. This feature would allow the villages to keep their 'bus service', which was a key factor raised as part of consultation. It would also retain a sense of certainty and independence for those in rural communities.

The solution must be branded and marketed to encourage use by all types of people for all journey purposes. If this is achieved, the previous problem with the stigma of the Ring-a-Ride service should be avoided, which should assist with creating the demand for a sustainable service.

Finally, to achieve the aims of the study, the solution must have potential to be community-led. This will be important in fostering ownership of the service and enabling any revenue to be pumped back into improving the scheme, to the benefit of the local communities. It may also increase the potential of securing additional funding to support the service in the longer term.

Option 1

Additional accessible vehicle

The first option is to purchase or lease a new accessible vehicle to provide the additional capacity that is required by people with mobility difficulties in the peak periods. This additional vehicle may also provide some off-peak functions, such as a demand responsive accessible service and/or the provision of limited scheduled services for rural communities.

A proven vehicle for this type of service is based on the Renault Master minibus, with eight seats and a rear ramp for wheelchairs. These vehicles are tried and tested and being used on Link2 services in County Durham and on Call Connect services in Lincolnshire, providing for the needs of both disabled passengers and rural communities.

The cost of the 8-seat Renault Master is approximately £34,000.

This vehicle would be placed in the hands of an existing operator (either commercial or voluntary sector), operating to a specification agreed by interested parties. This could be undertaken under a contract or service level agreement. The vehicle would not be permitted to be used on other school contract work, being reserved to meet peak period requests for transport that cannot be met at the

moment. Arrangements for the taking of bookings would need to be made.

Option 2

Rural community transport scheme

This option involves the provision of a robust and dynamic 'community-based' transport scheme, aimed specifically at meeting the needs of the rural (and certain urban) areas that have needs not met by the mainstream bus network.

It would involve either the purchase of a new dedicated vehicle, or the deployment of an under-utilised existing vehicle or vehicles.

The vehicle is likely to be a 12 to 16-seat accessible minibus, mainly providing scheduled services between the villages and Darlington town centre. If a new resource is provided, then peak and off-peak journeys could be provided. If using spare capacity in existing vehicles, then it may only be possible to operate off-peak journeys. In between the scheduled journeys, there may be opportunities to provide limited accessible dial-a-ride journeys for people with mobility difficulties who are unable to use conventional bus services. However, single occupancy journeys should be avoided.

If only making timetabled journeys, there will be no requirement for a booking facility. If demand responsive elements are included,

then an arrangement for the taking of bookings will be needed.

This option could be delivered by an existing or new community-based organisation, either as a free-standing service or linked to existing provision in or around Darlington. In Darlington, this might include DDYCA or a new organisation or federation of community transport providers organised by one or more rural parish councils. Outside of Darlington, there might be opportunity to 'bolt-on' to existing community-based transport schemes in neighbouring areas, such as Tees Valley Minibus Brokerage or Little Red Bus in North Yorkshire.

In any of the above instances, there may be scope to utilise existing vehicles that have spare capacity, such as those of DDYCA or Darlington Borough Council's in-house fleet.

Linking with existing schemes also offers the potential to utilise the infrastructure and systems already in place (including booking office, telephone number and administrative procedures).

A high level view of the potential role of a number of organisations in Darlington and neighbouring authorities in terms of the two key elements of a community transport scheme (i.e. back of office functions and delivery of transport services) is outlined in Table 3.3, to illustrate the options for this

solution. A solution could involve any combination of these.

Table 3.3 Potential role of service providers

Solution element	Example provider
1). Back of office functions (booking, systems, administration)	Evolution Link2 Little Red Bus Tees Valley Community Transport Taxi trade Community Interest Company
2). Delivery of transport services (vehicles and drivers)	DDYCA Link2 Little Red Bus Tees Valley Community Transport Taxi trade Car scheme providers Community Interest Company

Linking with existing provision may well offer a lower cost solution. However, a weakness of such an approach may be the lack of community ownership and the perception that the solution will not adequately meet the needs of people in Darlington. This may be particularly true on the basis that travel data held by DBC shows that Darlington is quite self contained in terms of trip-making.

The cost of this option could vary significantly, depending on whether a new vehicle is purchased and whether services are provided off-peak only or do encompass the peak too.

A new minibus may cost £45,000 - £50,000. Operating costs might be of the order of £35,000 pa, if a full time driver is employed.

Option 3

Expand Link2 to include Darlington

Link2 is a dedicated service that operates across County Durham to meet those needs not met by the conventional bus network. It is essentially a pre-booked dial-a-ride service, which uses accessible minibuses. Bookings are made via the County Council's dedicated Travel Response Centre.

Operating to the north of Darlington, it would be straightforward to expand Link2 southwards to serve the entire Darlington Borough area. Based on the current model of provision (30,000 households per vehicle), it is estimated that two vehicles would need to be purchased to adequately extend operation to serve Darlington. These would be able to offer a mix of scheduled and flexible services, both meeting the needs of groups (say travelling from villages to the town centre) and individuals wishing to make on-demand journeys.

An agreement could be entered into for Durham County Council to arrange and deliver the entire service, including purchase of the vehicles, procurement of an operator(s) to run the service, and the taking of bookings. Alternatively, Durham County Council could

undertake the back-office and bookings aspects of the service, with the vehicles and operator(s) arranged locally with Darlington.

Under any of these alternatives, it would be open for any existing operator to have the opportunity of providing the service. This could include commercial taxi or bus providers, voluntary sector organisations or DBC's in-house fleet.

Provision of Link2 in the way it is provided in County Durham would involve the purchase of 2 vehicles (£68,000) and annual operating costs of about £70,000. There would also be an additional cost involved for the taking of bookings by County Durham's Travel Response Centre. Some of the cost would be off-set by fares revenue, and there may be scope to use any spare time in vehicle schedules to meet times of excess demand in County Durham, again reducing the cost of operation in Darlington.

Option 4

Support voluntary car schemes

There are currently four voluntary car schemes operating in Darlington, namely:

- Women's Royal Voluntary Service;
- Age UK;
- The Friends of Darlington Memorial Hospital (FoDMH); and
- Town Mission.

These schemes predominately support older people and those without transport, to access health appointments and other key services.

Volunteer drivers are paid mileage for the trips they provide to the clients of the car schemes. With the exception of the FoDMH scheme (which is supported by the NHS), the end users pay for their journey. Passengers must pass certain eligibility criteria, be referred by Adult Social Care, or register with the scheme in order to use these services.

This option would involve providing additional support to these organisations (perhaps in the recruitment and vetting of volunteers, or in more comprehensive co-ordination of activities) to extend these schemes to help meet the unmet needs of people in rural communities. However, as the schemes utilise the volunteer drivers' cars, this option would not cater for the needs of people in wheelchairs or with significant mobility difficulties. This could be overcome by the provision of a pool accessible vehicle that would be driven by volunteers instead of using their own cars. However, this may not be attractive to volunteers who are more comfortable driving their own cars and prefer to use those to gain the mileage expenses which help them to keep their cars on the road. For this option to be feasible, significant support would be needed to build capacity amongst existing voluntary car scheme providers and to encourage co-ordination of

their activities. An organisation such as Evolution might play a part in capacity building and developing a centralised approach to volunteer CRB and insurance checks.

This option would probably have the lowest cost, but require the greatest amount of time and energy to take forward. There would be some costs in providing a telephone booking facility; the other main cost would be in paying a mileage allowance.

Option 5

Comprehensive accessible and community transport scheme

This option incorporates Options 1 and 2 and involves the purchase of an additional accessible vehicle, together with the 'buying-in' of additional vehicle resources (either purchase of a further vehicle or use of spare capacity within existing providers). Through these two elements, the service will meet the needs of people with mobility difficulties, by addressing the capacity problems faced at peak times, as well as providing scheduled services for certain areas.

It would be important for a sufficient number of vehicles to be available to ensure that it is truly demand responsive service, ensuring that users are not put off from using the service due to vehicle availability problems. It is considered that at least two accessible community transport vehicles would be needed to cover Darlington Borough.

The following aspects of service development are envisaged:

- Purchase of a suitable new accessible vehicle to provide additional supply in the peak periods (as outlined in Option 1);
- Devise a service schedule for this vehicle, including availability at peak times for people with mobility difficulties, and timetabled elements to meet other needs off-peak.
- 'Buy-in' additional capacity from taxi or bus operators through contracts or through agreements with other community transport providers (or indeed DBC's in-house fleet);
- Develop a clear business plan for the development of the accessible community transport scheme, which will also set out how the organisation will underpin its activities with other work (e.g. DBC contracts, wider Tees Valley activities, County Durham contracts, NHS work, transport for other local organisations).
- Once established, it may be possible to look at how other organisations might become involved, such as voluntary car schemes.
- Establish appropriate bookings and administrative arrangements.

This option could be delivered in a number of different ways, ranging from the establishment

of an entirely new community transport operation to linking into an existing provider.

It could involve the purchase and control of one or two dedicated vehicles, or the use of spare capacity of existing vehicles alongside purchase of one new accessible vehicle. Therefore, there will be a range of potential costs.

Vehicle purchase may be £34,000 (one vehicle), £68,000 (two smaller minibuses), or £85,000 (one larger and one smaller minibus).

Operating costs will depend on the amount of paid driver time needed, the extent to which vehicles are used, and the level of back-office support required. The more the operation can be integrated with other existing provision, such as existing contract work, the more these operating costs will be minimised.

Option 6

Combination of solutions

A final option is the implementation of a combination of the options or the implementation of more than one option (and perhaps at different timescales for example).

This would be subject to costs, whether the combination would meet the needs of the community and the presence of an appropriate community champion to take leadership of the initiatives.

Final note

It is expected that in all options, costs would be offset to some extent by any fares revenue (or other revenue) that is generated. However, a business case would need to be developed to determine the breakeven point and whether it can be achieved within the two year funding window for the LSTF.

JMP has had some specific discussions with certain stakeholders / community interest groups relating to the potential scope and delivery of detailed schemes (that reflect one or more of the six options presented). These discussions will be revisited at the next stage of the study, during consultation on the options, to inform the development of a service specification and model of delivery for the preferred scheme.

4 High level appraisal of options

Essential criteria

The identification of desirable features for an accessible transport solution for Darlington points towards a clear set of criteria that can be used to assess the delivery options:

- Potential for community-ownership in Darlington;
- Accessible vehicle resource in peak periods;
- Scheduled services, particularly for rural communities;
- Responsiveness of accessible provision;
- Inclusive branding and marketing.

There are other key deliverability criteria that should be used to appraise the options:

- Ease of implementation (in terms of putting appropriate arrangements and agreements in place, supporting or setting up organisations and systems, and co-ordinating different players or activities);
- Ability to meet all needs (i.e. people with disabilities and rural / urban isolation);
- Cost (in terms of the affordability within the budget available for this project);

- Ability to access on-going funding opportunities to help sustain service provision in the long term; for example, a 'community-based' solution may have the ability to attract funding that is not available to public or private sector organisations;
- Relative potential for long term sustainability, considering levels of on-going costs, likely revenue (based on the presumption that users pay a reasonable fare) and the ability to draw on on-going funding in the longer term.

Table 4.4 provides a high-level appraisal of the delivery options (i.e. what the five options could offer) against each of the essential criteria.

Table 4.4 High level appraisal

	Potential for community ownership within Darlington	Accessible vehicle resource in peak periods	Scheduled services	Accessible demand responsive	Inclusive branding / marketing	Ease of implementation Scale 1-3 (1 most difficult)	Ability to meet all needs (disability and rural/urban isolation)	Cost (Low, Medium, High)	Ability to access on-going funding	Relative potential for sustainability Scale 1-3 (1 least sustainable)	Comments and Red, Amber, Green (RAG) Assessment
Option 1 Additional accessible vehicle	√	√	X	√	X	3	X	Medium	√ / X Depends on how it is delivered (community based offers greater eligibility for funding)	2	Meets the demand for a responsive service for those with mobility difficulties only. Easy to implement. Low-medium chance of achieving long-term sustainability; cost would not be underpinned by contracts in peak periods. Fares would have to be realistically priced to match the cost of provision.
Option 2 Rural community transport scheme	√	X	√	Limited	Potentially	1	X	Medium	√ / X Depends on how it is delivered (community based offers greater eligibility for funding)	3	Off-peak scheduled services to isolated areas. The potential for demand responsive services is limited. Greater potential for long-term sustainability assuming realistic fares are charged to match journey costs.

	Potential for community ownership within Darlington	Accessible vehicle resource in peak periods	Scheduled service	Accessible demand responsive	Inclusive branding / marketing	Ease of implementation Scale 1-3 (1 most difficult)	Ability to meet all needs (disability and rural/urban isolation)	Cost (Low, Medium, High)	Ability to access on-going funding	Relative potential for sustainability Scale 1-3 (1 least sustainable)	Comments and Red, Amber, Green (RAG) Assessment
Option 3 Expand Link2 to include Darlington	X	√	√ Potentially, though not currently central to service specification	√	√	3	√	High	X	1	Accessible demand responsive, but limited potential for the provision of scheduled services. Not a 'Darlington solution'. Managed by Durham CC. Costly due to the need to purchase two accessible vehicles; poor sustainability score due to overheads and availability of vehicle due to lack of contracts to underpin.
Option 4 Support voluntary car schemes	√	X	X	X	X	1	X	Low (without accessible pool vehicle); Medium (with accessible pool vehicle)	√	3	Car-based solution; current schemes provide a very specific need (predominately older people, but not those with significant mobility difficulties or for health appointments). Potentially difficult to bring together four schemes with different but very specific agendas. Potential for sustainability if reasonable fare is charge to cover the volunteers cost of operating their vehicle.

	Potential for community ownership within Darlington	Accessible vehicle resource in peak periods	Scheduled service	Accessible demand responsive	Inclusive branding / marketing	Ease of implementation Scale 1-3 (1 most difficult)	Ability to meet all needs (disability and rural/urban isolation)	Cost (Low, Medium, High)	Ability to access on-going funding	Relative potential for sustainability Scale 1-3 (1 least sustainable)	Comments Amber, Green, Red Assets
Option 5 Accessible community transport scheme	√	√	√	√	√	2	√	Medium or high (depending on make-up of the scheme)	√	2	Best option in meeting all or on the needs through the s potentially qu more difficult than other op depending on operating mo issues could provision is in other existing services.
Option 6 Combination	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Depends on t combination o

5 Summary

Desirable features for solution

The key issues that were identified from the research and consultation were used to draw out the key requirements of an accessible community transport solution in Darlington. In summary, these are:

- Accessible vehicle capacity in peak periods;
- Accessible demand responsive service;
- Scheduled services for key journeys;
- Quality branding to ensure that the service is attractive to all groups of people for all trip purposes; and
- Potential for a community-led solution.

Option development

The identification of these key requirements led to the development of five high-level options, namely;

- Option 1: Additional accessible vehicle;
- Option 2: Rural community transport scheme;
- Option 3: Expand Link2 to include Darlington;
- Option 4: Support voluntary car schemes;

- Option 5: Accessible community transport scheme.
- Option 6: A combination of options

Option appraisal

An appraisal of these high-level options has been undertaken, based on the following essential criteria:

- Potential for community-ownership in Darlington;
- Accessible vehicle resource in peak periods;
- Scheduled service;
- Accessible demand responsiveness;
- Inclusive branding and marketing.
- Ease of implementation;
- Ability to meet all needs (i.e. people with disabilities and rural / urban isolation);
- Cost (in terms of the affordability within the budget available for this project);
- Ability to access on-going funding opportunities;
- Relative potential for long term sustainability, considering high-level costs, likely revenue (based on the presumption that users pay a realistic fare) and ability to

draw on on-going funding in the longer term.

Conclusion

The appraisal demonstrates that Option 5 (accessible community transport scheme) will best meet the aims of the study and the requirements of the key stakeholders. A number of different models of providing this exist. As such, costs might range from medium to high and the ability to implement will depend on how well the operation can be integrated into existing provision. The affordability and more detailed specification of the solution will be determined in the next stage of the study.

Next steps

- Consultation on the initial options and appraisal to confirm the conclusions of this report; and
- Develop a model of delivery and service specification of the preferred scheme.

Summary of ideas from Accessible Community Transport workshops²

Following the workshop sessions on 23 May 2012 there appears to be a number of clearly defined needs and some possible solutions that are being discussed. These can be summarised as follows:

1. A clear need to increase the availability of accessible taxis at all times. This would help to better meet the needs of people using wheelchairs and those that are accompanied by a guide/hearing dog. In addition it could provide a service to other users who may wish to have support from drivers who have received additional training in meeting the needs of older or disabled people.
2. A service for people living in the West End of Darlington who currently have use of service 16 and 20. About 80% of current trips are made by concessionary pass holders i.e. predominantly older and/or disabled people. The service needs to be timetabled rather than having to make a booking. It needs to be able to cope with the current levels of demand i.e. 1000 trips per week, with capacity to grow. It needs to attract fare paying passengers to make it sustainable.
3. A service to provide transport to those communities that will not have public transport from December 2012. These include Sadberge, Bishopton, Great Stainton, Little Stainton, Brafferton, School Aycliffe and Neasham, and to a lesser extent Heighington (will still have service 1 to part of the village) and Hurworth (have a daytime but no evening service). Consideration needs to be given to how these communities could be served through one solution with communities working together or a number of very small solutions which may be difficult to sustain financially. The current numbers of people travelling by bus are very small.

The next stage is for these communities to start to develop plans and business cases in order to apply for funding. It is recognised that some specialist expertise may be required to assist in this process. Therefore it is proposed to have 3 sessions, one for each of the options outlined above, with leaders of these communities. It is proposed to invite the Community Transport Association to host these sessions, which we plan to hold later in June.

Invitations will be sent to the following organisations as ‘leaders’ for these sessions:

1. Accessible taxis – Darlington Association on Disability and Evolution
2. Timetabled service for the West End – West End Partnership
3. each of the Parish Councils

Each ‘leader’ organisation will be able to involve whoever they need to in the development of their proposals. The sessions will also include Officers from the Council who can provide assistance and advice on External Funding (how and where to bid for funding and developing business cases); Social Enterprises and different models for operating services for local communities; and Sustainable Transport (operation of transport services, concessionary fares).

² Information sent to all attendees following the workshop

As there is a limited pot of funding, the different schemes may have to compete against each other for the available funding. Therefore each session will be held in private, so that ideas can be developed.

Details of the criteria for the assessment of the bids will be circulated and discussed at the sessions, but they will follow the criteria set out in the two reports produced by JMP which have already been made available on the Council website and at the workshop event.

Results of the Evaluation - the evaluation criteria were as follows:-

- (a) Community ownership and delivery (15%) – demonstrate community support for the scheme and how the community will support delivery.
- (b) Service specification clearly meeting identified needs (20%) – Including staffing and resourcing requirements; administration and systems; service type and hours of operation; vehicle type; driver training and customer care.
- (c) Inclusive marketing and branding (5%) – marketing and branding strategy.
- (d) Cost and affordability (20%) – cost breakdown; fare structure; concessions; expected revenue.
- (e) Deliverability (20%) – project plan; resource/skill requirements; effective leadership; relevant experience.

Future Sustainability and Funding (20%) – Business Model.

Evaluation of Tenders: - Accessible Community Transport													
Best Value Tender Analysis Matrix													
PRICE /QUALITY %	20%	80%										% SCORE	Rank
			15	20	5	20	20	20					
CONTRACTOR	Tender £	Weighted %	Score	Score	Score	Score	Score	Score	TOTAL	ADJUS.D %			
Score from 100									Weighted				
A - DAD	£87,900.00	3.7543%	7.50	10.00	3.33	10.00	10.00	10.00	50.83	40.67%	44.42%	2	
B - WEST END	£43,500.00	7.5862%	10.00	13.33	4.17	13.33	16.67	6.67	64.17	51.33%	58.92%	1	
C - DART	£66,200.00	4.9849%	5.00	6.67	1.67	6.67	6.67	3.33	30.00	24.00%	28.98%	4	
D - HURWORTH	£16,500.00	20.0000%	2.50	3.33	2.22	3.33	3.33	1.67	16.39	13.11%	33.11%	3	
Lowest Tender	£16,500.00								100				