

**OXFORD CITY COUNCIL  
EXECUTIVE BOARD**  
Date of meeting : 7<sup>th</sup> February 2005

Report of :	Strategic Director of Physical Environment
Title :	<b>Dial-A-Ride Service</b>
Ward :	All
Report Author :	Graham Smith
Key Decision :	No
Lead member :	Councillor Dan Paskins
Scrutiny responsibility :	Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Committee

## RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Board agrees to:

- 1) Authorise Oxford City Council to sign up to and participate in the Oxfordshire Dial a Ride Partnership, in accordance with the terms set out in the report.
- 2) Authorise The Strategic Director of Physical Environment to act on behalf of the City Council to sign an agreement with the County Council and other participating District Councils appointing the selected supplier to supply the specified Dial a Ride services.
- 3) Approve the City Council's contribution to the costs of this project as set out in Annex 1.

## 1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report invites the Committee to consider the City Council's future funding for the Dial-a-Ride (DAR) services currently operated by the Oxfordshire Council for Voluntary Action (OCVA). DAR services provide pre-booked door-to-door transport using fully accessible vehicles for people with mobility problems who would not easily be able to use conventional public transport.

## 2. COUNCIL'S VISION

- 2.1 The proposal supports the Council's vision by Improving Transport and Mobility and by Working With Others to develop and Deliver Shared Goals

### 3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 For many years the City Council has annually provided funding towards this service to the tune of £13,000 per annum. Our contribution being forwarded to the County Council each year for them to include with their own contribution.
- 3.2 The County Council have for the last year been investigating the existing service and planning for the future. It has been discovered that the existing method of providing the funding cannot be continued with and therefore the whole level of provision has been investigated. There are three District Councils, the City Council, Vale of The White Horse District Council and West Oxfordshire District Council all providing their own level of funding for differing levels of service in addition to the County Council.
- 3.3 It seemed logical to bring all interested parties together and pool the contributions and obtain a better level of service for all parties concerned. This has been done and culminated in a tender process for a better level of service.

### 4. CURRENT SITUATION

- 4.1 Regular meetings have taken place during 2004 between members of the *de facto* Partnership of Oxfordshire DAR funders (Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford City Council, Vale of White Horse District Council and West Oxfordshire District Council). Joint funding arrangements for both of the short-term contracts (1 April 2004-31 July and 1 August-31 March 2005) were agreed without dissent.
- 4.2 Officers representing the Partnership have continued to plan for the future of the DAR services as from 1 April 2005. They have agreed that the County Council should act as the lead Partner in co-ordinating arrangements. As a result County officers were responsible for drawing up tendering documentation as well as issuing tender invitations. Tender documentation was issued in early October with a return date of 2 November. Tenders returned have been evaluated and a detailed report together with recommendations placed before the 2<sup>nd</sup> December meeting of the County Council's Transport Implementation Committee. It was recommended and approved that the contract be placed with Walters Limousines with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2005 for an initial period of four years with the option of a further two year extension subject to satisfactory performance.

### 5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 A detailed budget forecast for the Oxfordshire DAR Partnership's expenditure for the next four years is set out in Annex 1 on the Confidential agenda.
- 5.2 This is the first time that a tendered contract for Dial-a-Ride services will

have been awarded and there are a number of imponderables about the financial implications arising from it because of the way in which the specifications have been drawn up. Fare income, 70% of which is to be paid over to the Partnership, cannot be estimated at this stage, although officers have specified a minimum payment by the operator of £12,000. Likewise the potential for hire income outside the contracted hours is entirely unknown. For that reason officers have drawn up two spreadsheets, shown in Annex 1 on the Confidential Agenda which demonstrate “worse-case” and “best-case” scenarios for the next four years’ expenditure, based on the prices tendered by Walters Limousines. They also show a division of financial revenue contributions between members of the Partnership.

- 5.3 Currently the other two District Council’s provide more funding than the City’s £13,000 per annum. Under the Worst Case Scenario there will an increase in cost to the City Council of £10,620.8. There is sufficient funding available in the Transport & Parking budgets to provide the additional funding required. This new level of funding will bring the City Council’s funding to the same level as the other two District Council’s.

## 6. THE STRUCTURE OF THE SCHEME

- 6.1 The tender specification requested prices for three operating periods,  
Option 1. 09.00 to 17.00 Monday to Friday  
Option 2. 09.00 to 18.00 Monday to Friday  
Option 3. 09.00 to 17.00 Saturday only.
- 6.2 The combined budget of the Partnership is such that only Option 1 could be considered. This means that the City will have call on a designated vehicle between the hours of 09.00 and 17.00 Monday to Friday.
- 6.3 The participating authorities will now have to draw up appropriate contract documentation under which the selected supplier will be appointed to provide the service. While the County are taking the lead in this regard, it will be important to ensure that each authority’s contract requirements are properly specified, and that they each hold an enforceable agreement with the supplier. Officers will be tasked to ensure these arrangements are properly put in place.

## 7. STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no staffing implications as a result of this proposal.

<p>THIS REPORT HAS BEEN SEEN AND APPROVED BY: Councillor Dan Paskins – Portfolio Holder – Planning and Transport Lindsay Cane – Legal and Democratic Services Sharon Cosgrove – Strategic Director Physical Environment. Emma Burson – Financial Services</p>
---

Background Papers: County Council Reports