

Record of decision taken under delegated powers by a council officer



Title:	Greener Futures - Improving Rural Mobility: An Ultra Low Emission Community Transport Fleet
Divisions Affected:	Mole Valley, Runnymede, Surrey Heath, Tandridge, Woking and Waverley
Key Decision:	Yes
Reason Key:	Over £1m; and Affects more than two Divisions of the County Council
Decision taken under delegation by virtue of:	<p>On 24 November 2020 Cabinet considered a report on 'Accelerating the introduction of ultra-low / zero emissions buses and community transport vehicles into Surrey'. Cabinet resolved:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the establishment of a Surrey Ultra-Low and Zero Emission Scheme that will accelerate the introduction of ultra-low and zero emission vehicles onto a range of bus and community transport services, inclusive of supporting industry investment be supported. 2. That the Surrey Ultra-Low and Zero Emission Scheme detail and implementation, once agreed by the Capital Programme Panel, be delegated to the Executive Director, Environment, Transport & Infrastructure, the Executive Director of Resources and the Director of Law & Governance in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport, including moving the required capital funding from the Capital Pipeline to the capital budget so that the programme can moved forward. <p>In respect to resolution 2, a decision to be taken under delegated powers by council officers is required.</p>

Summary

The Cabinet report of 24 November 2020 (Accelerating the introduction of ultra-low / zero emissions buses and community transport vehicles into Surrey), made the two resolutions as set out above. Subsequently, on 29 September 2021 Capital Programme Panel approved the business case to move £6.26m from pipeline to budget for the community transport ultra-low emission vehicle scheme.

Now agreement has been secured from the Capital Programme Panel, the Cabinet resolution requires that the final delegated decision be taken, including moving the required capital funding from the Capital Pipeline to the capital budget so that the programme can moved forward.

This is a record of that delegated decision.

Decision made

Decision made:

It was AGREED that:

1. That the Surrey Ultra-Low and Zero Emission Community Transport Scheme be approved, including moving the required capital funding of £6.26m from the Capital Pipeline to the capital budget so that the programme can moved forward.

Reasons for Decision:

This programme sits within the wider corporate Greener Futures project, and is designed to support Surrey's Community Vision for 2030 in the ambition to ensure that "Residents live in clean, safe and green communities, where people and organisations embrace their environmental responsibilities"

Surrey has a vibrant community transport sector ensuring that residents who cannot access the mainstream public transport network (buses and trains) can access key services such as health care. Traditionally community transport operators carry passengers using low floor or accessible minibuses via a door-to-door service.

To demonstrate Surrey's commitment to working with partners to embrace safer, greener communities, the County Council is committed to working with the community transport sector to help introduce zero and ultra-low emission vehicles across the community transport sector, and to help further reduce the carbon footprint of the overall transport network.

This decision follows the clear resolution from Cabinet to work towards the ambition of an ultra-low/zero emission bus fleet by 2030, supporting our Climate Change Strategy. This community transport programme is consistent with our response to the declared Climate Emergency and support the ambitions set out in the Council's new (draft) Surrey Transport Plan and Bus Service Improvement Plan.

The environmental impact of these vehicles will be significant and help to encourage a modal shift change within the community transport sector.

Decision taken by:	Katie Stewart, Executive Director, Environment, Transport & Infrastructure Leigh Whitehouse, Executive Director of Resources Paul Evans, Director of Law & Governance
Decision taken on:	1 December 2021
To be implemented on:	10 December 2021

Alternative options considered

Option 1: Do Nothing

PROS

Staff resource can be deployed on other programmes.

Funding can be invested in other services.

CONS

The County Council has declared a climate emergency and committed to a series of actions that are needed to achieve net zero carbon emissions, set out in the Climate Strategy.

It is a challenge for the community transport sector to formulate adequate capital budgets to fund vehicle replacement programmes. Without this investment from the County Council, the sector will struggle to keep up with the push to electrify their fleets.

The number of electric minibuses in Surrey will be inconsequential

We will be unable to contribute effectively towards our strategic priorities, providing greater sustainable transport options to residents in Surrey.

Not investing in a Demand Responsive Transport service will leave rural communities finding it increasingly difficult to access key services such as health and food shopping.

There could also be an increase in private car usage and modal shift to public transport options would not be achieved.

Non-investment would also see an increase in rural isolation and loneliness, having a negative effect on mental health wellbeing

Option 2: Deliver a limited number of phases in the work programme

PROS

Some environmental impacts and cost savings can be delivered for parts of Surrey.

The programme could be accelerated and delivered in a shorter timescale, but less improvements will be delivered as a result.

CONS

A reduced level of environmental benefits and cost savings will be realised. These may not be effective on their own and will not have the impact of a greater level of investment. This prevents a holistic approach being taken to the need to electrify the

community transport sector.

Not investing in a meaningful manner would deter the boroughs and districts of Surrey in match funding the transition to electric vehicles. If it is not a priority for the County Council then they may not feel the need to match our commitment.

Not investing in a Demand Responsive Transport service will leave rural communities finding it increasingly difficult to access key services such as health and food shopping.

There could also be an increase in private car usage and modal shift to public transport options would not be achieved.

Non-investment would also see an increase in rural isolation and loneliness, having a negative effect on mental health wellbeing

Preferred Option: Deliver all four phases of rural mobility and electrification of community transport as set out in the 24 November 2020 Cabinet report

PROS

By delivering all four phases of this work, this will help the Council achieve the Greener Futures agenda.

The programme of work would accelerate the Council's ambition to achieve net zero carbon emissions, with 46% emanating from the transport sector.

Closer working with our borough and district partners e.g. in relation to cooperation agreements will foster stronger relationships and efficiencies.

The investment in electric vehicles for the sector would demonstrate the County Council's commitment to a vital community transport network, alongside showing our residents that we are looking at viable, greener alternatives for our complete transport network.

In undertaking the development of a new Demand Responsive Transport service, the County Council can assess the viability of this type of service in rural parts of the county. Investing in a technology based trial in Mole Valley will help shape future services.

A multi operator approach to the Demand Responsive Transport service indicates that we want to engage with all key stakeholders to ensure an effective and efficient services whilst realising social value.

CONS

We will increase the number of assets we manage and will need to maintain the existing staffing numbers to do so.

Summary of any financial implications

The cost of proceeding with the community transport ultra-low emission scheme

(£6.26m) is included in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy. The scheme has been approved by Cabinet, and the detail agreed by the council's Capital Programme Panel. The Council will retain ownership and overall control of the assets it has purchased, and ongoing operating costs will be met by the community transport providers.

Declarations of conflicts of interest

None

Consultation/Process Followed

The Cabinet Member for Transport & Infrastructure was consulted.

Background Documents

Exempt:

Cabinet Report, 24 November 2020 (Ref 185/20):
Accelerating the introduction of ultra-low / zero emissions buses and community transport vehicles into Surrey

No