

# HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

## Decision Report

<b>Decision Maker:</b>	Executive Lead Member for Universal Services
<b>Date:</b>	10 July 2023
<b>Title:</b>	Local Transport Fund
<b>Report From:</b>	Director of Universal Services

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### Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to set out the arrangements for the local administration of the Department for Transport Local Transport Fund grant issued to all Local Transport Authorities.

### Recommendations

2. That the Executive Lead Member for Universal Services approves the continued use of the methodology set out in this report for allocating the Local Transport Fund (LTF).
3. That the Executive Lead Member for Universal Services gives authority to spend and enter into contractual arrangements (in consultation with the Head of Legal Services) with qualifying local bus operators in Hampshire in accordance with the approved methodology up to the value of grant awarded to the County Council by the Department for Transport (DfT) to be funded from the LTF.
4. That if the LTF is not wholly utilised in offsetting the shortfall in revenue experienced by the operators of tendered local bus services, the Executive Lead Member for Universal Services delegates authority to the Director of Universal Services, in consultation with the Executive Lead Member for Universal Services to spend and enter into contractual agreements with transport providers for any claim that meets the DfT criteria outlined in Appendix One of this report.
5. That authority is delegated to the Director of Universal Services, in consultation with the Executive Lead Member for Universal Services, to award and administer any subsequent tranches of LTF (or successor funding streams that have the same terms, conditions and objectives) that may be awarded to Hampshire County Council, up to the value of such awards and in accordance with the terms of the award.

## Executive Summary

6. This paper seeks to continue the approach that the County Council has applied to the funding issued by DfT for the support of bus services since the outset of the Covid-19 pandemic.
7. This follows on from a report taken to the Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment on 28 August 2020, setting out the proposed arrangements for how government funding, aimed at supporting the local bus industry, would be applied in Hampshire.
8. Since this time, the County Council has continued in its role as the link between DfT and operators of tendered bus services and has administered all government grants in line with the mechanisms set out in August 2020.
9. Given the change to the internal structure of Hampshire County Council in January 2023, this paper is being brought to Decision Day to ensure that the authority is still in place for the County Council to administer LTF, and any potential successors to this scheme.

## Contextual information

10. It is proposed that the same methodology approved for the original Covid-19 Bus Service Support Grant funding be applied to the Local Transport Fund.
11. This methodology is as follows:
  - identify the percentage each eligible contract (those which operated within the period) makes up of the total spent on eligible services per annum; and
  - apply this percentage to the LTF to calculate an allocation per contract.
12. A small-scale informal consultation was carried out with the local bus operators who provide the majority of the authorities' contracted services which ensured that this methodology was fit for purpose.
13. This process was also audited by Southern Internal Audit Partnership in summer 2020 to ensure it was fit for purpose.
14. If the amount of LTF exceeds the claims for lost revenue from Hampshire's local bus operators, then it is proposed that any remaining funding is allocated as per the permitted uses of LTF outlined in the DfT Terms and Conditions of the Local Transport Fund (Appendix 1 of this report).

## Finance

15. The table below sets out the instalments of LTF that have been received to date.

Date	LTF Grant
April – September 2022	£891,619.00
October – December 2022	£445,809.50
January – March 2023	£445,809.50

April – June 2023	£461,992.38
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## **Performance**

16. Payments have been made to operators following submission of a form demonstrating the lost revenue they have experienced based on comparable pre Covid-19 data.
17. This process is subject to an audit to ensure that all funding allocated and payments made to operators are carried out within the terms and conditions of the grant agreement.
18. Operators are subject to terms and conditions for how this funding is spent which are set by the DfT.

## **Consultation and Equalities**

19. A small-scale informal consultation has been carried out with the local bus operators who provide the majority of the authorities' contracted services. This ensured that the methodology was fit for purpose for all stakeholders.
20. The decisions within this report will have a neutral impact on those people with protected characteristics as they propose continuing with the current process of supporting local bus providers and are not anticipated to lead to changes to services.

## **Climate Change Impact Assessments**

21. Hampshire County Council utilises two decision-making tools to assess the carbon emissions and resilience of its projects and decisions. These tools provide a clear, robust, and transparent way of assessing how projects, policies and initiatives contribute towards the County Council's climate change targets of being carbon neutral and resilient to the impacts of a 2°C temperature rise by 2050. This process ensures that climate change considerations are built into everything the Authority does.
22. These tools are not relevant to this decision as they are not built to measure the carbon emissions of a public transport service over a private vehicle.
23. Public transport offers an alternative to individuals travelling in a private car thus can help reduce carbon emissions on Hampshire's roads.
24. Work will be undertaken to ensure that services are well publicised and promoted within their relevant communities to ensure that as many people as possible benefit from their positive climate credentials.

## **Conclusions**

25. The continued administration of this government grant stream in Hampshire meets both the priorities of the DfT and the County Council.

26. This support has been vital for the stability of Hampshire's bus services since March 2020 and continues to make an important contribution to the finances of the bus sector today.

**REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:**

**Links to the Strategic Plan**

<b>Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:</b>	yes
<b>People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:</b>	yes
<b>People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:</b>	no
<b>People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:</b>	yes

**Other Significant Links**

<b>Links to previous Member decisions:</b>	
<u>Title</u> <a href="#">Covid-19 Bus Provision and Payments-2020-08-28-EMETE Decision Day (hants.gov.uk)</a>	<u>Date</u> 28 Aug 2020
<b>Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives</b>	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>

**Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents**

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
None	

## **EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:**

### **1. Equality Duty**

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

### **2. Equalities Impact Assessment:**

The decisions within this report will have a neutral impact on those people with protected characteristics as they propose continuing with the current process of supporting local bus providers and are not anticipated to lead to changes to services.