

## Appendix B

### A Community Transport Plan for Arun District Council 2022-26

**Community Transport provides a solution for those that aren't able, or struggle to access existing public or private transport. Community transport complements existing mainstream transport.**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

Community Transport provides transport for people who are unable or who struggle to access mainstream transport. It is designed to meet local needs and is used for a social purpose or community benefit, never for profit. It is widely accepted that social isolation and loneliness has a severe, detrimental effect on people's health and wellbeing.

As defined by the Community Transport Association:

*Community transport is about providing flexible and accessible community-led solutions in response to unmet local transport needs, and often represents the only means of transport for many vulnerable and isolated people, often older people or people with disabilities.*

*Using everything from minibuses to mopeds, typical services include voluntary car schemes, community bus services, school transport, hospital transport, dial a ride, wheels to work and group hire services. Most are demand responsive, taking people from door to door, but a growing number are scheduled services along fixed routes where conventional bus services aren't available.*

Community Transport has a positive impact on health, wellbeing and communities; it provides both social and economic benefits. Socially, its role in addressing loneliness and isolation and helping people to remain independent cannot be overstated. It supports people to get to health appointments, to get to the shops and access social activities to name but a few. Economically, it provides both paid and volunteer opportunities, gets people to retail outlets and high streets to spend money and saves public services money on some of their statutory services. The Jo Cox Foundation states in its highly respected report that;

*Loneliness has the same detrimental effect on someone's wellbeing as smoking 15 cigarettes per day. Someone who is isolated and lonely has a cost to the exchequer of an additional £6000 per annum in additional health support, as compared with someone who is engaged with their community.*

Community Transport allows people to stay connected with family, friends and their community and that's why it is vital to the wellbeing of individuals and communities.

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Arun District Council recognises the social and economic benefits of community transport supporting our local communities. Arun District Council also recognises that community transport prevents and reduces loneliness and social isolation for our vulnerable residents who are unable or struggle to access mainstream transport and helps them to keep their independence.

#### **2.0 Arun Vision- Priorities**

[Arun District Council's Vision for 2022-26](#) outlines how the District Council will make Arun a better place to live, work and visit as well as delivering public services. This is framed around 4 key themes:

- improving the wellbeing of Arun
- delivering the right homes in the right places
- supporting our environment to support us
- fulfilling Arun's economic potential

The plan and development of provision of community transport across Arun will contribute to 3 of these themes:

Supporting people who are isolated and lonely by transporting those who aren't able or struggle to access mainstream transport to access services, get to health appointment and supermarkets and connecting them with others will contribute to ***improving the wellbeing of Arun.***

Encouraging people to use Community Transport rather than their own vehicles and contributing to plans to provide electric vehicles and charging points will ***support our environment to support us.***

Providing employment and volunteering opportunities, community transport provision will contribute to ***fulfilling Arun's economic potential.***

The vision for this plan is **to provide an integrated and joined up community transport service for the residents and visitors of Arun** which is made up of:

- [Demand responsive transport](#)
- [Community Car schemes](#)
- Dial-a-Ride (see definitions)
- Good neighbour car schemes (see definitions)
- Travel Buddies (see definitions)
- Electronic vehicle car clubs (see definitions)

This integrated network will be developed by local community transport operators working together and in partnership with other organisations including Arun District Council, West Sussex County Council, Town and Parish Councils, Clinical Commissioning Groups/Primary Care Networks/GPs, and other community and voluntary sector organisations.

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A **better understanding of local people's community transport needs** will be needed to provide evidence for services to be developed to address gaps. This will be done by carrying out transport surveys with residents through Town and Parish Councils who know their communities well. Through this data/information collection exercise, the interconnectedness between neighbouring district and boroughs needs also to be recognised as people don't stop travelling at boundaries. Therefore, partnership working with neighbouring authorities will continue to be promoted.

For the sustainability of an integrated community transport provision, there will need to be **long term funding** committed, as chasing short term grant funding and relying on contributions will not create a long term, reliable provision. As well as this long term funding, community transport provision needs to be considered and included as part of plans for section 106/Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding as this will ensure that our new populations will be provided with sustainable community transport options.

Working with Voluntary Action Arun & Chichester (VAAC) and other organisations that use volunteers, this plan will promote volunteering and volunteering opportunities that support an integrated community transport provision.

This plan will provide a plan for ensuring there are enough community transport physical assets such as vehicles, depots and places to park vehicles.

### **3.0 Demographics & Local Insight**

The 2019 Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) confirmed that 158,700 people lived in Arun. It highlighted that Arun has a far older age profile compared to England with 29% aged 65+. 6400 older people and 3600 children (0-15) were living in poverty. It states that life expectancy had improved over the previous 15 years and that this was 79.8 years for men and 83.5 years for women. At the time of the 2011 census over 5000 people aged 65+ were Carers and 12,000 lived alone.

To support Arun's more vulnerable residents, anecdotally it is felt that there is good coverage of community transport across Littlehampton through Arun Community Transport's volunteer car scheme. There is positive feedback about the level of service and reliability of this scheme.

With regards to minibus provision, there are a number of local community transport operators that provide transport for local residents but there is a perceived additional need for a dial a ride service to support Arun's vulnerable residents to get them to health appointments, for shopping trips and social activities.

There is a lack of data to back up this anecdotal evidence and therefore CTS has started to conduct local transport surveys through Town and Parish Councils to understand better the accessibility and transport issues in local communities. Only a few have been completed to date but initial feedback from these are similar:

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- Most people own their own car
- Over half the people who responded are 65+
- Local bus services don't meet most people's needs – particular reasons include regularity of service and cost
- There are people in communities who are interested in becoming volunteer drivers
- People would use community transport for health appointments, shopping trips and social activities
- People are interested in community organised days out in a minibus

CTS has just taken on additional resource to progress these transport surveys to ensure that there is sound evidence to support service development.

#### **4.0 Current provision of Community Transport Operators:**

**Arun Community Transport (ACT)** was formed in 2018 following the failure of Sammy Transport after it merged with Arun Coordinated Community Transport. ACT provides a thriving volunteer car scheme running out of Dove Lodge Community Resource Centre in Littlehampton and is currently running this scheme across the Arun district and Selsey

As of September 2022, it has 1430 members, 19 drivers, three office volunteers and two escorts to support people on their journeys. With a salaried office manager coordinating the operations. Arun Community Transport uses a not-for-profit volunteer who owns his own minibus when minibus provision is required. Currently, they are running shopping trips.

ACT is actively working to develop a Wheelchair Accessible dial-a-ride service themselves. The expectation is that this would be an electric vehicle, and funding is currently being sought.

**Community Transport Sussex's (CTS)** is commissioned by WSCC to provide infrastructure support for community transport providers across West Sussex (see 6.0).

CTS's overall aim is help create an integrated network of community transport minibus provision delivering best practice for its communities. This will be achieved by community transport providers in Arun and across West Sussex adopting a shared vision of best practice while maintaining independent delivery and using their expert local knowledge of their area of operations. Its aim is to help create an integrated, robust community transport network across West Sussex that is economically and environmentally sustainable by c. 2025-2030.

Specifically for the Arun district, CTS provides a minibus dial-a-ride service from their Worthing depot into and across Arun.

CTS is also working in partnership with AgeUK BHWS, Royal Voluntary Service & MIND to deliver WSCC's Social Isolation contract to support people over 65 who are lonely and isolated. This includes, as well as other journeys, providing transport for clients to the Laburnham Centre.

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CTS, pre pandemic, started to have discussions with the local Primary Care Networks (PCNs) about helping patients get to their local surgeries and health appointments – this is being picked up again now we are coming out of the pandemic. Regarding health appointments, CTS has supported the vaccine programme with transport options and is also working with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) – now Integrated Care System (ICS) to provide transport for patients that don't qualify for the Non-Emergency Patient Transport Service (NEPTS).

There is a need to develop a base in Arun for vehicles to be stored and worked out of. CTS is in discussion with WSCC to develop a base at Drayton and work out of that and their Clapham depots. In the short term CTS is working with Arun DC and Freedom Leisure to base 2 vehicles at the Bersted Community Centre. Other outstation options across Arun are also being considered.

Both the providers above use the CATTs booking system and this will be useful for working across both organisations.

**Ormiston Six Villages Academy** provide minibus hire to community groups in the Westergate and Six Villages area.

[Five Villages - Community Minibus Association \(West Sussex\) \(westsussexminibus.org.uk\)](http://westsussexminibus.org.uk) supports their local area of Aldingbourne, Eastergate, Walberton, Yapton and Barnham by providing trips to Bognor Regis, Chichester, Worthing and other locations of interest. NB the website currently states that the service is suspended.

**Angelcare** are a domiciliary care company that have a wheelchair accessible vehicle that supports their clients. They help local residents around Arundel with medical appointments and have worked with CTS to arrange Vaccine and Non-Emergency Patient Transport Service trips for local people. Angelcare charge more than a community transport provider but not as much as a taxi. They have intimated that they may be interested in setting up a charitable arm to their operation. Though not strictly community transport they are socially minded and have been a useful resource.

[Pagham Residents Association](#) have 2 minibuses and provide various regular trips to shopping and social activities as well as larger outings. They do have an ambition to launch a regular dial a ride service with the support of CTS.

**Abbeyfield Ferring** is a not-for-profit society providing help at home, supported living and residential care for older residents living in the Ferring area. As part of their service they have a minibus so can transport people. Generally their transport runs from West Worthing to Littlehampton.

**Amberley and Slindon Village Bus** operates scheduled routes to Bognor Regis, Worthing, Littlehampton, Rustington and Chichester. Their vehicle is also available for private hire when not operating on these scheduled routes.

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**Littlehampton Ambulance Car Service** is a volunteer scheme for people attending hospital or clinical appointments at Worthing, Southlands, Chichester London and other hospitals in the South.

**Willow Green Surgery – Patient Link** is a voluntary transport service for patients of Willow Green Surgery in East Preston who need help getting to appointments at the surgery, local hospitals, clinics and health centres.

There are a number of other Community Transport Providers that provide transport support to their local people. These include Good Neighbour Schemes, Volunteer Schemes linked to GP surgeries and more. It is important to contact and communicate with all such schemes to ensure we create an integrated network and to understand what is being provided and where there are gaps.

#### **5.0 Development Opportunities**

Anecdotally, there has been an increase in the need to support our vulnerable, isolated residents as well as an increased interest in environmentally friendly transport options. These have seen the demand for community transport increase.

The initiatives below provide opportunities to support the development of an integrated community transport network across the Arun district:

**Volunteers** are key to the success of a thriving integrated community transport network. We will need to be innovative about how people are encouraged to volunteer across the network. Working smarter across the sector, such as sharing volunteers with other community and voluntary sector organisations and other sectors that use volunteers, is a development opportunity that will need to be considered.

To ensure that new communities are well served and able to access services and opportunities, community transport provision should be considered at the earliest development opportunity. Community Transport proposals need to be drawn up in advance of development proposals so that they are available when **Section 106/CIL** is being considered. An example from another area in West Sussex (Thakeham) is provided in Appendix 1.

Through the Non-Emergency Patient Transport Services' (NEPTS) agreement that CTS is commissioned to deliver, [a map](#) of community transport providers involved in this provision has been produced. This includes many (but not all) community transport providers and so is useful as it gives an indication of the gaps in provision. Where there are gaps, CTS will work with current providers to ascertain if they would like to extend their reach and if not work to provide a transport solution for that area. This, along with evidence collated in the Transport Surveys (see section 2.0) provides evidence for service development.

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CTS is working with WSCC to develop a number of [Demand Responsive Transport](#) pilots. These will provide alternatives to car journeys, feed people to existing bus and train services and provide support to those that aren't on mainstream routes. It is hoped that one of these pilots will be in the Arun district.

CTS is working with Arun DC and Freedom Leisure to develop an outstation at Bersted Community Centre as a base for two vehicles which will reduce the need to use vehicles for CTS trips from their Worthing Depot.

#### **6.0 Infrastructure Support**

CTS is contracted by WSCC to provide infrastructure support to other Community Transport Providers across West Sussex. This support includes:

- Regulatory and compliance advice
- Development of fleet management policies
- Vehicle leasing
- Access to training opportunities
- Support with bidding for school runs and other funding opportunities
- HR advice
- Access to the CTS Development Team

CTS and Voluntary Action Arun & Chichester (VAAC) have developed an Arun and Chichester Community Transport Forum. This forum has proved extremely useful and creates the opportunity for local community transport providers to network and share ideas. This is crucial to developing an integrated transport provision across the district.

#### **7.0 Funding**

There are a range of funding options for Community Transport Providers across Arun. These include:

- WSCC Voluntary Transport Grant
- District and Borough Councils funding and community grants
- Opportunities to gain income from WSCC SEN home to school transport bids
- Fares
- Excursions
- Group Hire

All these offer short term funding options. For a safe, reliable and sustainable community transport network to be developed, longer term funding needs to be committed so that there can be longer term planning and development.

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#### **8.0 Conclusion**

The overall vision of this plan is to develop a thriving, integrated community transport provision across the Arun district so that no one is disadvantaged by not having access to safe, affordable, accessible transport.

This vision will be achieved by community transport providers working together to achieve their ambitions, identifying any gaps in provision and issues and working together to address those.

#### **9.0 Action Plan**

An Action Plan to ensure the delivery of this Community Transport Plan will be developed once this Community Transport Plan has been approved.

The Action Plan will be overseen and monitored by the Group Head of Wellbeing and Communities on a regular basis to ensure Arun District Council's commitment to sustainable community transport.

#### **Definitions**

**Dial-a-Ride** is a service where a trained driver will pick up from your door in a wheelchair accessible minibus and help you get from A to B in as smoothly a way as possible. It's mostly used to get people to social activities, to local shops, medical appointments and to visit friends and family.

**Good neighbour car schemes** are set up and run by local volunteers who offer help and support to other people in their local area.

**Travel Buddies** is a scheme that involves matching volunteers with local people who need help with getting out and about. This helps people maintain a level of independence as well as providing respite for loved ones/carers. Volunteers can accompany the client on a bus or train to visit friends and family, go on a shopping trip or to medical appointments which would normally require a designated carer.

**Electronic vehicle car clubs** allow individuals and communities to access to a personal electric vehicle without being tied to ownership. They are usually membership based schemes operated by community groups or private organisations where vehicles are available for short term hire.