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Annexe 1



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22 August 2005

Dear Gill

COMMUNITY TRANSPORT IN WAVERLEY

At its meeting on 15 July 2005 the County Council's Local Committee (Waverley) considered a report on the future of community transport in the borough. The "Hoppa" community transport operation, which receives financial support from both County and Borough Councils, will face severe financial pressures after the termination of its current Countryside Agency funding in March 2006.

The identification of alternative funding – estimated to be in the region of £145,000 plus vehicle depreciation – is a priority. The Committee is strongly in support of the role "Hoppa" can play in achieving LTP objectives and resolved to:

"Call on the Executives of Surrey County Council and Waverley Borough Council to recognise the potential of Hoppa for meeting transportation needs in Waverley, including access to health services, and to increase the year-on-year funding to Hoppa to cover the shortfall which will be experienced in 2006/07."

I would therefore ask that you give urgent consideration to this request and hope that you will feel able to respond positively. I attach, for your information, a copy of the relevant report and minutes.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Povey'.

Dr Andrew Povey
Acting Chairman – Local Committee (Waverley)

Co:

Mrs Helen Dixon, Surrey County Council – Executive Member for Transport
Mr John Robins, Waverley Borough Council – Executive Member for Communities





SURREY

COUNTY COUNCIL

THE FUTURE OF COMMUNITY TRANSPORT IN WAVERLEY

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL
LOCAL COMMITTEE IN WAVERLEY
15th July 2005

KEY ISSUE:

To report on the situation of Waverley 'Hoppa' Community Transport and other planned initiatives in community transport for Waverley.

SUMMARY:

A report was presented to Surrey's Local Committee in Waverley in September 2004 on the future of community transport. Comments from the Local Committee were passed back to the Executive. This report discusses the current operation of Waverley Hoppa and its intended further plans for expansion to provide additional community transport. The Hoppa service would like to expand to fill some of the gaps within the public transport network.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Local Committee – Waverley should ask:

1. The Local Transportation Director together with the Local Transport Plan Task Group to consider possible funding to assist with the project in Farnham for the Hoppa service for 2006/7.
2. The Executives of Surrey County Council and Waverley Borough Council to consider increasing the year-on-year funding to Hoppa to cover the shortfall which will be experienced in 2006/07.

Report by: Tracey Webb

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: Local Committee papers 10 September 2004

1. INTRODUCTION and BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Waverley Hoppa Service was originally funded primarily by the Countryside Agency under the Rural Bus Challenge. This was administered through the County Council. Support is provided by both Waverley Borough and Surrey County Councils.
- 1.2 In the last two and a half years Waverley Hoppa has achieved a robust infrastructure of modern offices with experienced staff and vehicles specifically provided with all the required equipment. The service exists to provide the community with a facility that is lacking from the current commercial public transport system.
- 1.3 A significant number of achievements has been made in 2004. In April staff moved to a new call centre and headquarters, which also provide training and conference facilities. In June the new call centre was formally opened by Damon Hill. The aim of this was to celebrate the establishment of a permanent site and to raise the profile of Hoppa within the community.
- 1.4 A marketing consultant has been engaged to maximise the awareness of groups and users in the local community of Hoppa and its availability.
- 1.5 In 2004 passenger trips have risen to 48,000, which is a 22% increase on the previous year. The more that Hoppa spreads its services into the community the better range of services will be available and the more money will be available to continue to support the less financially viable aspects of the service. The service is very flexible and able to adapt to changing demands. An example of this is an additional service that is to be provided for the Hoppa Shopper using Godalming because of increased demand. However, due to a lack of take-up of the facility in the Cranleigh area the service has been reduced from five days to three. Usually an eight-week trial period is used to assess the viability of a service. If demand were to increase in the Cranleigh Villages area, this service would be reviewed and if appropriate the increased.
- 1.6 Safe Routes to School projects linked with Hoppa have been introduced with the help of the County Council's Safe Routes Officer. Working together with both Waverley Borough and Surrey County Councils and Rodborough School, funding was given to provide a service for schoolchildren attending extra-curricular activities on which they would normally have missed out due to the absence of an available bus service.
- 1.7 There are currently 1512 people registered with Hoppa and 1030 use the service on a regular basis. Over 150 organisations are registered with Hoppa to date and contract the vehicles from as little as once a year to every day use.
- 1.8 The types of services currently run are:

- **Hoppa Shoppa** – regular door-to-door shopping service available on demand from outlying villages into the nearest of the four shopping centres in the borough.
- **Hoppa Ranger** – two wheel chair-accessible multi-passenger vehicles taking clients to venues within Waverley and by arrangement to other venues. Currently limited to office hours, this highly flexible door-to-door service operates as a car-share scheme. Some examples are taking children to school and disabled people to work and/or daycentres.
- The third type of service offered is called **Hoppa Tourer**, which is designed for voluntary groups, day centres, schools, clubs and families to hire a minibus with driver. The minibus can go to a centre such as a theatre or other place of interest. The vehicles can be hired on a regular or one-off basis. Contracts with local businesses are being discussed concerning staff bank-and-ride or staff door-to-door services. These types of contracts hold the potential to increase revenue substantially.

1.9 To improve the quality and service of community transport across the borough and to promote a more coordinated approach, training programmes are provided for drivers of mini-buses of all types. Quality training is available throughout the borough utilising a nationally accredited training programme established by the Community Transport Association.

1.10 Waverley Hoppa achieved charitable status in June 2004. An operator's licence was granted to enable Hoppa to extend its services. The first of these was to provide a shuttle service for the Haslemere Christmas Market.

2. ANALYSIS AND COMMENTARY

2.1 Waverley Hoppa Community Transport will need to be the provider of an important service to Waverley, especially its rural communities, for those who are lacking in transport facilities.

2.2 The Mission Statement for Waverley Hoppa is as follows:

"We will work in partnership with others to improve the provision and accessibility of transport services to all those with a mobility disadvantage in Waverley. Thus, we aim to promote personal independence and social inclusion by complementing existing public, voluntary and statutory transport services."

2.3 It should be noted that the transport objectives of Hoppa fit with the new objectives for LTP (Local Transport Plan 2). The objectives state:

"We aim to increase the usage of our community-based transport services, concentrating at this stage on people with a mobility difficulty, older people,

young people, pre-pension age, and those who live in areas not served adequately by public transport.

- 2.4 When funds are available Hoppa aims to extend into areas where community transport is the ecologically preferred alternative to the more traditional methods, as well as to those people who simply need transport that is safe, reliable and affordable.
- 2.5 Hoppa's aims fit with the Government requirement that all future transport should be sustainable and affordable to all.
- 2.6 Waverley Borough Council provides limited funds to support the current operation of HOPPA. It is likely that this will be in the region of £10,000 for the financial year to 2005/06.
- 2.7 On 1st January 2005 a significant increase in fares was implemented to ensure that the fiscal objectives for the year would be met.
- 2.8 A project developing all the ideas and types of operation is being developed in partnership with Farnham Town Council. This has developed from the Urban Safety Management Project which is being carried out by TRL for the Town Council. Major employers have been approached in Farnham to provide staff park and ride and staff transport. This project will be discussed at the Farnham Transportation Task Group.

3. CONSULTATIONS

- 3.1. The Waverley Local Strategic Partnership has commissioned a further report into the areas where there are current concerns about community transport and this, with the research carried out in 2001, will cover a substantial proportion of the borough's population who have been contacted for their views.
- 3.2 It is suggested that any project to be developed in Farnham should be discussed with the neighbouring authorities including Hampshire County Council

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The funding currently provided by the Countryside Agency is due to end at the start of the next financial year, i.e. 2006/07. This coincides with the replacement of a large part of the fleet. The funding for 2005/06 will be administered by SEEDA since the Countryside Agency no longer exists. This financial support will cease in March 2006. The replacement of the funding and additional shortfalls, totalling £145,000 plus vehicle depreciation, is a priority.

- 4.1 It should be noted that no funds have been allocated in 2015/06. A separate joint bid between Waverley LTS and Hoppa was made to the LTP group in December 2015. If this bid is unsuccessful members could ask the LTP Task Group to reprioritise funding from the local bid for 2015/06.

5. CONCLUSION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 If the Local Committee were to fund initiatives as part of the Hoppa contract this would fit within the parameters looked at in the County Council's Best Value Review and would not be outside the remit of the Local Committee.
- 5.2 To fund the shortfall for Hoppa would be an ongoing commitment that the Local Committee could not make. It is recommended that a request is made to the Executive to consider increasing the funding currently made to Hoppa.

Extract from the draft minutes of the meeting of Surrey County Council's Local Committee (Waverley) on 15 July 2005.

55/05 THE FUTURE OF COMMUNITY TRANSPORT IN WAVERLEY (Item 13)

The Committee welcomed the opportunities for maintaining and extending the provision of community transport but members were concerned that transport to hospital (both the Royal Surrey County and Frimley Park Hospitals) was not given sufficient prominence. Amended recommendations proposed by officers were accepted.

Resolved to:

- (i) Ask the Local Transportation Director to develop a proposal for the Local Transport Plan Task Group to identify funding to assist with the project in Farnham for the Hoppa service for 2006/7.
- (ii) Call on the Executives of Surrey County Council and Waverley Borough Council to recognise the potential of Hoppa for meeting transportation needs in Waverley, including access to health services, and to increase the year-on-year funding to Hoppa to cover the shortfall which will be experienced in 2006/07.