

Agenda Item

Executive Board

7 February

DP/KC



Sidmouth summer bus service 2007

Summary

The Council provided £5000 towards the cost of the 2006 Sidmouth summer bus service. A request has been received for a contribution towards the 2007 scheme.

Recommendation

That consideration be given to request for financial support towards the cost of the Sidmouth summer bus service 2007 and whether this support should be conditional on fares not being charged.

a) Reasons for Recommendation

In order for the organisers of the Sidmouth summer bus service to progress their plans they need to establish the source and level of potential incomes.

b) Alternative Options

None considered.

c) Risk Considerations

That without sufficient support, either through grant aid or the imposition of charges, a valued local service would be lost.

d) Policy and Budgetary Considerations

A provision of £5,000 has been made in the draft estimates for 2007-08 presently being considered by the Council.

e) Date for Review of Decision

To be reviewed on an annual basis.

1 Main Body of the Report

- 1.1 Over 14,000 trips were made on the two free summer bus services operated in Sidmouth in 2006. This was double the number of the previous year when a single service was run.
 - 1.2 The free service costs just over £23,000 and was financed from contributions made by the Town, District and County councils together with sums from the Sustainable Development Fund and Sidmouth Businesses.
 - 1.3 Questionnaires returned show a large percentage (85%) of those carried were aged 60 and over, a result which is perhaps to be expected from a survey undertaken outside of the main family holiday period, in September. The survey further revealed the majority of those travelling on the service (72%) were visitors to Sidmouth.
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- 1.4 The report prepared by the working party involved with the project is attached – Appendix A.
- 1.5 Looking forward to the 2007 summer season the working party propose to operate a service similar to last year, using two buses on an extended circuit which combines the two previous routes. The service is planned to run from early July through to the end of September, with a break for the folk festival week in August. The anticipated cost is again £23,000.
- 1.6 The 2007 project will not receive finance from the Sustainable Development Fund which contributed one-off funding last year to establish the Peak Hill/Salcombe Hill extension to provide access to the AONB. To replace the lost £6,000 consideration is being given to charging, and from a simple fee structure a sum of £10,000 is considered realistic.
- 1.7 The Council is being asked to consider providing financial support for the 2007 service and to advise whether that support should be conditional on fares not being charged. Sidmouth Town Council is proposing to up their support for the service next year to £7,000.
- 1.8 The service is not currently an eligible service, as defined by the Travel Concession (Eligible Services) Order 2002. However in the event of the operator introducing charges and meeting the other conditions set out in paragraph 3 of the Order then they would be entitled to seek reimbursement for income foregone from carrying concessionary buss pass holders free of charge. This provision would apply to East Devon pass holders only in 2007 and from 2008 to any holder of a pass issued by a Travel Concession Authority in England.

Legal Implications

There are no apparent legal implications requiring comment.

Financial Implications

The financial implications are as per the report

Consultation on Reports to the Executive

None

Background Papers

- Letter from Sidmouth Town Council dated 20 December together with a copy of the working party report (appendix A), questionnaire and survey results

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Corporate Director - Economy

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