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## TAXI VOUCHER SCHEME

### 1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the operation of the Taxi Voucher Scheme.
- 1.2 The scheme is a Discretionary Service

### 2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The scheme was introduced on 1 April 2002 as a replacement for the Dial-a-Ride service, to respond to the needs of special groups within the community who are unable to use conventional forms of public transport. It provides users with a number of vouchers, in £2.00 denominations, which can be surrendered as part or full payment for fares incurred whilst using Taxis licensed in the Rochford District.
- 2.2 The admission criteria for the scheme are:-
- Applicants must be resident in the Rochford District.
- Applicants must be in receipt of at least one of the following:
- Attendance Allowance (higher level)
  - Disability Living Allowance (mobility component)
  - War Pension (mobility supplement)
- or be blind or partially sighted.
- Confirmation is required that the applicant is unable to use conventional forms of public transport and does not have a vehicle of their own.
- 2.3 Wheelchair users receive an additional voucher allocation of 50%.
- 2.4 Successful applicants pay a £6.00 annual registration fee.
- 2.5 The budget allocation for 2005/06 is £106,000, and includes a contribution from Essex County Council of £21,700 for this financial year.
- 2.6 The Essex County Council contribution is subject to a minimum of there being 80 users and 4000 journeys per annum and these conditions have been met and exceeded!
- 2.7 Members determine the amount of the quarterly voucher issue.

### 3 SCHEME USAGE

- 3.1 The number of voucher recipients has continued to grow since the scheme's introduction, and the number of users as at 1 November 2005 was 444 Non-wheelchair users, 72 Wheelchair users, totalling 516 users.
- 3.2 Vouchers are issued quarterly and are valid for three months. New applicants join the scheme on the first day of each month and receive an apportioned number of vouchers, which are valid until the next quarter date. Issues to 1 November 2005 are shown below:-

Quarter Commencing	Value per Non-Wheelchair user	Value per wheelchair user	Total value
1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter	£72	£108	£34,740.00
2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter	£72	£108	£36,360.00
3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter	£72	£108	£39,528.00
<b>Total</b>			<b>£110,628.00</b>

- 3.3 Voucher redemption's currently total £57,336.00. A redemption rate of about 52%, but this is an increasing trend and in 2006/7 is likely to be around 70%.

### 4 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The above usage statistics together with comments from the Customer Survey were reported to the Environmental Services Committee earlier this year and would indicate that the objectives of the scheme are being satisfied.

### 5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Projections indicate that if the standard quarterly issue is maintained for 2006/07 at 36 vouchers (£72), with Wheelchair users receiving 54 vouchers (£108), until 31 March 2007, the Council's budgetary provision will be adequate for the year and perhaps create a small surplus if the redemption rate does not increase significantly. This would be rolled-over into the following financial year

### 6 RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**
- (1) That the current number and value of vouchers issued be maintained for 2006/07.
  - (2) That budgetary provision of £106,000 (including an estimated contribution from Essex County Council in excess of £21,700) be set for the 2006/07 financial year.

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**Background Papers:-**

None

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