

## NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

## REPORT

TO: Social Work Committee	Subject: Transport
FROM: Jim Dickie Director of Social Work	
DATE OF COMMITTEE: 23 November 1999	
REPORT AUTHOR: R.Paul	
REF: RP/LMcA	

**1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To advise committee on the use of transport services by the Social Work Department, the current budget position and the nature of reviews currently being undertaken.

**2 HOW IS TRANSPORT USED**

Transport is used for three main purposes by the department

- ◆ To transport clients to and from various social care services provided by the Department and others
- ◆ To transport staff in fulfilling their duties
- ◆ To transport materials and equipment

The breakdown of the budget over these areas of activity is shown in Appendix I, from which it can be seen the major use is in relation to providing client transport.

**CLIENT TRANSPORT**

The department provides and supports a wide range of activities each day for community care and child care client groups. Many of the clients using these services require transport to and from home and some of the users are wheelchair bound necessitating the provision of buses with tail lifts. Many of the buses require an attendant in addition to the driver to provide additional assistance to clients.

Approximately 450 people with learning disability attend centres each day, 320 elderly people attend day care and transport is provided to 30 lunch clubs, in total over 3000 people each week obtain a meal at a lunch club. Organisation of the runs to ensure everyone's transport needs are met is complex and is subject to fairly constant change.

The department also provides transport to approximately twenty voluntary organisations to transport clients to and from services and clubs run by them for community care client groups, often in the evenings.

#### STAFF TRANSPORT

This relates to the provision of self drive vans/cars for use by operational staff in providing direct client service.

The Alert Mobile Attendants use the vans to respond to clients who have made alarm calls to the central switchboard.

Clients and supervisors involved in Community Service use the vehicles for transport to and from sites and in terms of Home Care services a limited number of vehicles are available to provide services where public transport is not available or the use of it is not viable.

The vast majority of staff travel is funded from the travel budget which is totally separate from the transport budget and does not involve the use of internally or externally hired vehicles. The travel budget reimburses staff for the use of their own vehicles or public transport.

#### TRANSPORT OF MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT

Transport is used by operatives of the disability resource centre for delivering and uplifting aids and equipment to clients homes. In many cases the operatives require to install the equipment at the time of delivery.

Meals require to be transported from the preparation centres to the distribution centres and internal transport provides this service.

### **3 HOW IS TRANSPORT MANAGED**

Internal Transport is provided to the Social Work Department by the Transport Department within Community Services.

The Transport Department is responsible for purchasing and maintaining vehicles, employing drivers and meeting the other costs of operating a vehicle.

The Transport Department levies a charge to user departments including the Social Work Department at a level sufficient to recover all costs incurred by the Transport Department.

The Social Work Department has been in discussion with staff within transport to break down their charges to an individual vehicle level or the cost of an individual run. This information now provides the level of detail necessary to carry out a value for money study.

The projected outturn expenditure shown in Appendix 1 has been built up from this recent information provided by Internal Transport.

Some transport is provided by private companies and this is referred to as externally hired transport.

#### **4 CURRENT BUDGETARY POSITION**

The annual transport budget for the Social Work Department amounts to £1,754,968 and this is split £1,432,432 for internal transport and £322,536 for external hires.

The historical budget is adjusted each year to reflect the necessary increases identified in discussions which take place between Central Finance and the Transport Department. These discussions ensure that the total income required by the transport department to recover all of its costs, are reflected in purchasing budgets of user departments.

As can be seen from Appendix 1 the budget set for the Social Work Department is insufficient to meet the projected outturn for the department which has been arrived at by costing each individual run and service being provided by the Transport Department together with the projected expenditure on external hires.

#### **5 REVIEW OF BUDGET**

The Social Work Department will review the transport budget to identify the reason for the variances identified in section 4. These cannot be explained from increased use of transport this year. The review will be carried out in conjunction with the Department of Finance and the Transport Department.

In addition a value for money study of the "Utilisation and Financing of Transport" is to be carried out by Internal Audit in conjunction with user departments and the remit for this study is attached (Appendix 2).

The Social Work Department has started a detailed analysis on how vehicles are used looking at utilisation, occupancy and routing. The study includes both services managed by the Social Work Department and those provided by the voluntary sector and this work will inform the value for money study.

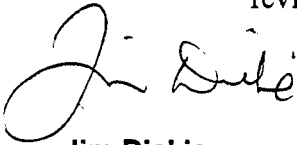
## 6 CONCLUSIONS

Transport is an important element in providing social care services and is a major area of expenditure. It is important that it is provided and used in the most effective and efficient way and to this end the value for money study is timeous.

## 7 RECOMMENDATIONS

Committee is asked to

- (1) Note the contents of the report.
- (2) Note that a future report will be brought forward on the outcome of the budget review and the value for money study.



**Jim Dickie**  
**Director of Social Work**  
**25 October 1999**

For further information on this report please contact . Ronald Paul, Head of Social Work Resources (TEL: 01698 332003)

Transport Budget Probable Outturn 1999/2000

PROJECTED EXPENDITURE	Internal Transport	External Transport	Total
<b>Client Transport</b>			
Adult Training Centres	784,741	134,944	919,685
Day Centres for Elderly	160,120	151,756	311,876
Childrens Services	28,713	124,035	152,748
Voluntary Organisations	187,126	2,350	189,476
Lunch Clubs	147,211	15,639	162,850
Shoppers Trips		6,255	6,255
Christmas and Summer Activities	20,000		20,000
	<b>1,327,911</b>	<b>434,979</b>	<b>1,762,890</b>
<b>Staff Transport</b>			
Alert Mobile Attendants	11,171	3,000	14,171
Community Service Orders (CSO)	31,742		31,742
Home Care	34,554		34,554
	<b>77,467</b>	<b>3,000</b>	<b>80,467</b>
<b>Transport of Materials and Equipment</b>			
Disability Resource Centre (DRC)	33,382		33,382
Miscellaneous projects	26,746		26,746
Meals on Wheels	31,993		31,993
	<b>92,121</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>92,121</b>
<b>TOTAL PROJECTED EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>1,497,499</b>	<b>437,979</b>	<b>1,935,478</b>
<b>BUDGET</b>			
Budgeted expenditure 1997/98	868,740	521,880	1,390,620
Adjustment 1998/99	365,967	(218,590)	147,377
Adjustment 1999/2000	197,725	19,246	216,971
<b>BUDGETED EXPENDITURE 1999/2000</b>	<b>1,432,432</b>	<b>322,536</b>	<b>1,754,968</b>
<b>VARIANCE</b>			
<b>PROJECTED OVERSPEND</b>	<b>(65,067)</b>	<b>(115,443)</b>	<b>(180,510)</b>

## NORTH LANARKSHIRE INTERNAL AUDIT

### VALUE FOR MONEY STUDY - UTILISATION AND FINANCING OF TRANSPORT

#### 1. Background

North Lanarkshire Council owns or leases approximately 1100 vehicles of various sizes and types. In addition, the Council casually rents some 400 vehicles. The predecessor Councils all had different arrangements for Transport, which were inherited by North Lanarkshire Council at its inception. While transport arrangements in general are controlled by the Transport Department within Community Services, there has never been a comprehensive review of the needs of the Council or the respective costs and merits of alternative methods of provision and control.

#### 2. Proposal

It is proposed that the whole of the transport operation be critically reviewed with the overall objectives of identifying and introducing the most efficient, effective and economical methods of providing and utilising transport throughout the Council's services. Certain aspects of the Transport Service, such as maintenance arrangements and methods of re-charge, are already being examined under the banner of Best Value by participation in an ADLO Benchmarking exercise. Accordingly, the VFM Study will concentrate on aspects not included in that exercise, to avoid duplication of effort. The study will be led by Internal Audit, with assistance from Transport staff and where necessary staff from user departments.

#### 3. Modus Operandi

##### 3.1 Factfinding

3.1.1 Catalogue the numbers and types of vehicles owned, leased and hired by the Council and their distribution over Departments.

3.1.2 Identify procedures in respect of:

3.1.2.1 Planning for departmental requirements and utilisation

3.1.2.2 Purchasing Vehicles.

3.1.2.3 Leasing Vehicles.

3.1.2.4 Hiring Vehicles as per departmental request.

3.1.2.5 Disposal of Vehicles.

3.1.2.6 Fuel Control and Usage

3.1.2.7 Purchase of Spare Parts.

3.1.2.8 Stores Control.

3.2 Compare the respective merits and costs of various alternative arrangements for:

3.2.1 Provision of Vehicles.

3.2.2 Fuel Control.

3.2.3 Purchase of Spare Parts.

3.2.4 Control of Stores

3.3 Make firm recommendations in respect of:

3.3.1 Provision of Vehicles.

3.3.2 Fuel Control.

3.3.3 Purchase of Spare Parts.

3.3.4 Control of Stores.

3.3.5 Provision of Management Information for Transport and user departments.

3.4 Present the proposals to the Director of Community Services for approval.

3.5 Oversee the implementation of the proposals as soon as possible after approval to maximise the benefits.

4 Anticipated Potential Benefits

4.1 Savings in Costs in respect of all functions.

4.2 Savings in Efficiency through disposal of unnecessary vehicles.

4.3 Improvement in Customer Relations between Transport and other departments.

4.4 Speedy provision of Management Information and Performance Indicators.