

## **Press Release from Buckinghamshire Council**

17 March 2021

# **Council secures Government cash for new rural local transport schemes**

Buckinghamshire Council has been successful in a bid for £1.85m from the Department for Transport's (DfT) Rural Mobility Fund over the next four years to introduce Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) in and around Aylesbury and High Wycombe.

DRT can be really effective where fixed route transport services don't always meet local community needs due to distance from bus stops, frequencies, journey times and connectivity to areas other than the town centres. DRT services offer greater flexibility, providing more tailored transport options closer to where people live and at a time that's more convenient to them.

People living in the rural and suburban areas of both towns (Booker, Downley and Wooburn Green in High Wycombe and the villages of Weedon, Hartwell, Aston Clinton, Weston Turville and Halton in Aylesbury) will be able to book transport from their homes into the centre of each town so they can get to work, go shopping, enjoy leisure facilities or get to the main stations for onward journeys.

The aim of the Rural Mobility Fund is to deliver transport solutions that work better for local residents and create improved connectivity for communities. The two schemes will also help support the future development of both Aylesbury and High Wycombe, reduce the pressure on local road networks and help reduce transport carbon dioxide emissions.

In preparing the bids, Buckinghamshire Council worked closely with local operators Arriva and Carousel to make sure the proposals would help enhance existing public transport options. The Council will now be working to implement DRT in both towns, in partnership with public transport operators, local businesses and Chiltern Railways.

Buckinghamshire Council Cabinet Member for Transport, Nick Naylor said he was really excited about the opportunities this funding would provide. "This is fantastic news for those Buckinghamshire residents in and around Aylesbury and High Wycombe," he said. "Schemes like this can also have a positive impact on climate change, air quality and levels of congestion which we know are issues for both towns."

Cabinet Member for Logistics, David Martin added: "Not only will this help to expand our public transport offering, it will also have a huge positive impact on residents' lives by providing more dedicated transport to shops, leisure and work places. If this proves to be a success, then we will be looking to expand to other areas of the County in the future."

## **Notes to Editor**

DfT requested expressions of interest for the Fund in February 2020 with Buckinghamshire Council submitted two bids, one for the rural/sub-urban areas around High Wycombe and one for Aylesbury. In total, the Council was awarded £1,114,000 for the Aylesbury proposal and £736,000 for High Wycombe.

The Aylesbury scheme will see six, 11-seater vehicles with Wi-Fi access and full wheelchair accessibility rolled out to boost accessibility to villages surrounding the town. The scheme, which will enable passengers to book through a mobile app, will improve the links to local villages as well as Stoke Mandeville Hospital.

The High Wycombe scheme will boost demand-responsive transport around the town. The Council will work with booking app providers to improve connectivity with the surrounding villages of Booker, Downley and Wooburn Green. The service, which is set to run between 6am-7pm Monday to Friday will help alleviate the social-isolation of older residents in particular, and provide better access to shops, healthcare, education and employment.