



Title of Report:	Correspondence
Committee Report Submitted To:	Council Meeting
Date of Meeting:	29 June 2023
For Decision or For Information	FOR DECISION

Linkage to Council Strategy (2021-25)	
Strategic Theme	Cohesive Leadership
Outcome	Council operates as one effective and efficient corporate unit with a common purpose and culture
Lead Officer	Director of Corporate Services

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	
Included in Current Year Estimates	
Capital/Revenue	N/A
Code	N/A
Staffing Costs	N/A

Screening Requirements	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	EQIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	Yes/No	Date:
	RNA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	DPIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:

1.0 Purpose of Report

The purpose of the report is to present correspondence for Members' consideration.

2.0 The following correspondence has been received:

2.1 **Dr Julie Harrison, Permanent Secretary, Department for Infrastructure, dated 22 June 2023** (copy attached)

2.2 Background

The following Notice of Motion was agreed by Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council on 4th April 2023:

"I call upon this Council to show its support for the North Coast Community Transport a non-profit making organisation and registered charity that provides affordable transport to individuals and groups and rural transport in general, by writing to the department for Infrastructure requesting that these services be properly funded in a timely manner and sustaining this crucial service."

Council further resolved that a Council delegation and the Transport Manager at North Coast Community Transport meet with the Permanent Secretary to discuss funding for community transport.

On behalf of the Mayor, Councillor Steven Callaghan, this request was corresponded to the Permanent Secretary on 14 June 2023 for consideration. A letter of support from the former Mayor, Councillor Ivor Wallace to the Department for Infrastructure, was also issued, for information.

2.3 Correspondence received

The enclosed correspondence is the response from Department for Infrastructure,

Extract:

In order to consider the implications of the budget allocation, and what, if any, mitigating measures can be taken, a public consultation was launched seeking views on the equality impacts of the Resource Budget for 2023/24 and of potential decisions on expenditure across the department, including what the impact of ceasing to fund Community Transport would be, if such a decision was taken.

The consultation document can be accessed at:

- <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/consultations/dfi-resource-budget-2023-24-equality-impact-assessment-consultation>

*Responses which had been received by **12 June 2023** are being used to inform remaining decisions to be taken on the department's initial Budget allocation of 2023/24. Any further responses received before the consultation closes on **7 August 2023** will be used to inform further mitigation measures and reallocation of any additional funding available during 2023/24. This was communicated to North Coast Community Transport and other community transport providers in a meeting on Monday 5 June 2023.*

While it is important that we consider the evidence provided from the consultation to understand what further decisions can or cannot be taken, I am mindful that it would have been unreasonable to expect community transport providers to wait until 12 June to provide them with a decision on future funding after 30 June. I can therefore confirm that funding is continuing to be provided at 2022/23 levels until the end of July 2023. This will enable them to continue providing transport services, while we analyse the consultation responses.

We also intend to review Community Transport provision for the longer term to ensure that we are maximising both value for money and outcomes, through our investment in these key services.

I am sorry that I cannot provide greater clarity at this stage but as you will see from the consultation it is important that we assess the implications of the decisions that would need to be taken, and indeed those that cannot be taken, to cut funding in the absence of a Minister.

I have asked Stuart Wightman, the Director for Public Transport Operations to meet you to discuss the current position with funding for community transport. Stuart will be in touch to arrange a suitable time and date.

3.0 It is recommended that Council consider the correspondence.



Department for

Infrastructure

An Roinn

Bonneagair

Department for

Infrastructure

www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

**From the Permanent Secretary
Dr Julie Harrison**

Councillor Steven Callaghan
Mayor of Causeway Coast and Glens
Borough Council
Mayor's Office
Cloonavin
66 Portstewart Road
Coleraine
BT52 1EY

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Clarence Court
10-18 Adelaide Street
BELFAST
BT2 8GB
Telephone:
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Perm.Sec@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

Your reference:
Our reference: SINV-0102-2023

Via email:
MayorsOffice@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk

22 June 2023

Dear Councillor Callaghan

NORTH COAST COMMUNITY TRANSPORT FUNDING

Thank you for your request that a Council delegation and the Manager of North Coast Community Transport meet to discuss funding for community transport.

As you are aware, the Budget statement from the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on 27 April 2023 set out final budget allocations across Northern Ireland departments for the current financial year. The Resource Budget allocation for the Department for Infrastructure for 2023/24 does not meet the required need and, despite taking extensive decisions to reduce expenditure and raise revenue, the remaining budget shortfall is estimated to be £112 million.

In order to consider the implications of the budget allocation, and what, if any, mitigating measures can be taken, a public consultation was launched seeking views on the equality impacts of the Resource Budget for 2023/24 and of potential decisions on expenditure across the department, including what the impact of ceasing to fund Community Transport would be, if such a decision was taken.

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Coast Community Transport and other community transport providers in a meeting on Monday 5 June 2023.

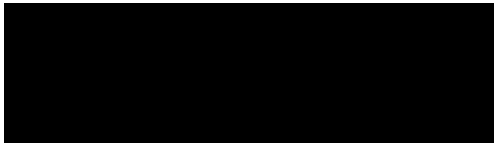
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I have asked Stuart Wightman, the Director for Public Transport Operations to meet you to discuss the current position with funding for community transport. Stuart will be in touch to arrange a suitable time and date.

Yours sincerely

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Julie Harrison.

JULIE HARRISON