

**REPORT TO: HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SERVICES COMMITTEE
ON 3 FEBRUARY 2010**

SUBJECT: MORAY ASSISTED TAXI SCHEME (MATS)

BY: DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 This report is submitted to the Committee to seek approval to amend the structure of the MATS scheme to meet future demand within available budget.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of the Council's Administrative Scheme relating to public passenger transport.

2. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee approves; -

- (i) the reimbursement to MATS clients be reduced from 50% to 33.3% per journey;**
- (ii) the maximum single fare reimbursement be increased from £5.00 to £6.00 per single journey; and**
- (iii) the number of journeys be decreased from 8 per month to 6 per month.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The MATS scheme was established in 2000 to support Moray residents who have mobility difficulties. The scheme is open to persons who are registered blind under the National Assistance Act 1948, persons receiving Higher Mobility Allowance, War Pensioners Mobility Supplement, hold a Blue Badge or are assessed and approved by the Moray Council Medical Advisor.
- 3.2 The Moray Resource Centre administered the scheme until August 2006 when administration was transferred to The Public Transport Unit. The budget is still managed by Community Services Department. The budget for the scheme is £39,397 net, which includes staff costs.
- 3.3 The scheme operates on a membership basis. Members pay £5 per year for membership for which they receive a book of vouchers that allows 8 single journeys per month. Vouchers are dated and time limited and must be used within the month. Members pay half of the taxi fare up to a maximum of £5 per single journey, the taxi company accepts a voucher for the other half and recoups this cost from the Moray Council.
- 3.4 The number of MATS members has been increasing over the last few years from 218 in 2007/08 to 262 currently. The increase in the numbers of MATS

members in the last few years has put pressure on the budget and the outturn for 2008/9 was an overspend of £5,000. Therefore, this has prompted a review of the current running of the scheme for its long term sustainability against the background of a greater number of disabled people utilising the scheme.

- 3.5 Because of equality considerations, there is no way of limiting the number of people who use the scheme. There has been a steady increase in the number of members since 2007 and this is likely to continue. The budget projections reflect this.
- 3.6 To maintain an appropriate level of service within limited financial resources and against the probability that there will be no additional funding in future years to grow the service, it is recommended that the current eligibility and pricing structure needs to be amended.

4 PROPOSALS

- 4.1 To reduce the reimbursement to MATS clients from 50% to 33.3% per journey. For 2010/11 budget, this will reduce the costs from the current projection by £5,945.
- 4.2 The maximum single journey cost is increased from £5 to £6. For the 2009/10 budget, this will increase the costs by approximately £1,000.
- 4.3 The number of eligible journeys per month is reduced from 8 to 6. For the 2009/10 budget, this will reduce the costs by approximately £1,000.

5. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) *Single Outcome Agreement/Service Improvement Plan*

- (i) The report contributes to the Local Transport Strategy.
 (ii) the Service Improvement Plan – priority 3.3 1.

(b) Policy and Legal

Community Care resources are deployed in order to meet the statutory requirements laid down in Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968.

(c) Resources (Financial, Risks, Staffing and Property)

	2009/10 Budget	2009/10 Forecast	2010/11 Proposed Budget

	£	£	£
Transport Cost	32,055	38,000	
Reduction in reimbursement to 33.3%			32,055
Increase in reimbursement to a maximum of £6.00/journey			1,000
Maximum number of journeys/month reduced from 8 to 6			(1,000)
TRANSPORT COST	32,055	38,000	32,055
STAFFING COST	8,742	8,742	8,742
MEMBERSHIP INCOME	(1,400)	(1,400)	(1,400)
Net cost of service	39,397	45,342	39,397

(d) Consultations

The following have been consulted and are in agreement with the proposal; -

Acting Head of Community Care, Transport Manager, and Principal Accountant Deborah Bosworth.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 The following measures are required to bring the expenditure of the MATS scheme in line with the current budget for 2010/11:-

- (i) the reduction in reimbursement to MATS clients from 50% to 33.3%.**
- (ii) the increase in the maximum single fare reimbursement to £6.00.**
- (iii) the decrease in the number of journeys from 8 per month to 6 per month.**

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Background Papers: There are no background papers.

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