

Mid Suffolk District Council 24 February 2022 – Item 9a

Green and Liberal Democrat Group proposed amendment to Paper MC/21/26 draft 2022/23 Budget

Amendment:

“For scheduled rural community transport utilising zero carbon electric buses, set aside a budget of up to £560,000 capital and £130,000 revenue per year for a two-year period – equating to total £560,000 capital and £260,000 revenue from the Growth and Efficiency Fund.”

This proposal considers the following issues:

- There is a clear need for improving rural public transport and urgent action needs to be taken
- Rural bus services have been cut significantly over the past few years
- Most people in rural Mid Suffolk have to rely on private cars for transport often for short journeys
- In our communities significant numbers exist who are unable to access private transport
- The lack of effective bus travel negatively impacts carbon emissions
- Members, via Overview & Scrutiny Committee and recent strategy workshops, have recognised the need for better rural transport
- Community need for bus services in rural areas is not being met by commercial organisations
- Many councils are now providing community bus operations
- The County Council’s *Bus Services Improvement Plan* does not currently propose any funding for additional services in the Mid Suffolk area.
- Suffolk did not receive any funding from Government’s *Rural Mobility Fund*.
- There is successful partnership working for the demand responsive Katch service in the Framlingham area.
- Existing service providers have advised a service can be operational within three months of agreement to go ahead.

Costs are based on discussions with Suffolk County Council and BSEVC (the organisation currently running some demand responsive community transport in Suffolk) and include:

- Procurement of buses
- Operational running costs
- Installation of additional electric vehicle charging points.

Full detailed background information is available.

Proposed by: Councillor John Field

Seconded by: Councillor Rachel Eburne