

The Highland Council
Lochaber Area Committee

25 August 2015

Agenda Item	12
Report No	LA 26/15

Transport Programme

Report by Director of Community Services

Summary

This report informs Members of the consultation process which is planned for autumn 2015, in advance of the retendering of bus service contracts across Highland in 2016. The process will include a Member briefing and a public consultation event in Lochaber.

1. Background

- 1.1. Highland Council's Transport Programme has emerged from the process of identifying ways to reduce expenditure over 2015-19. Led by Highland Council under the sponsorship of the Director of Community Services, the Programme has participation from NHS Highland, Scottish Ambulance Service, Highland Third Sector Interface, the Community Transport Association, Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership and Voluntary Action Lochaber (VAL are the operators of the Lochaber Transport Advice and Bookings Service on behalf of the Transport Programme).
- 1.2. The savings target for the Transport Programme, which was agreed by the Council in December 2014, is £2,246,000, from an overall expenditure of £15,003,000 on public and school transport. This amounts to a 15% saving.
- 1.3. Current expenditure in Lochaber amounts to £868,200 for public transport and £1,481,200 for school transport.
- 1.4. The Council's current bus and school transport contracts are in place until 31 December 2016. Tendering of replacement contracts will be required in spring 2016, and will be conducted within the context of the Transport Programme.
- 1.5. On 20 August the Community Services Committee will consider a report which outlines the timetable and key steps for this process.

2. Consultation and tendering process

- 2.1. Before tendering, a consultation exercise will be carried out in respect of all public transport routes. The principal activities for the consultation and retender process are as follows:-

Activity	Timing
Draft proposals for consultations	August 2015
Consultations with Members	September 2015
Consultations with general public	October and November 2015
Consultations with suppliers	October and November 2015
Consultation data reporting	December 2015
Revise proposals	January 2016
Prepare invitation to tender materials	February 2016
Procurement phase	March – August 2016
Contracts issued	September 2016
Contracts commence	January 2017

This programme will include a meeting with Lochaber Members and a public meeting in Lochaber.

- 2.2. Information presented for consultation will include:-
- Details of current passenger numbers, and value for money measures
 - Current and other proposed timetable options.
- 2.3. The savings target for the retender is £1,873,311 against baseline expenditure of £13,172,848. This divides between public and school transport as follows:

	Current expenditure	Savings target
Public transport	£ 2,733,512	£ 388,733
School transport*	£10,439,336	£ 1,484,578

* Includes Care & Learning share of combined public/school transport contracts

3. Implications

3.1. Resource

To develop the school and public transport tender process across Highland there will be significant call upon staff resources from Transport Co-ordination Unit (including transport area offices) and the Procurement Unit, and concentrated support from Policy Unit and Ward Management surrounding the consultations phase.

3.2. Legal

Contract documentation and grant award agreements will be products of the transport services work outlined above.

3.3. Equalities and Rural

Equalities and Rural Impact Assessments will be undertaken as part of the Highland school and public transport tender process.

3.4. Climate Change/Carbon Clever

The determination of route specifications for the Highland school and public transport tender process will seek to produce efficient vehicle workings. Maintenance of public transport services also helps to reduce car mileage.

3.5. Risk

- The accomplishment of savings for the Highland school and public transport tender process is an uncertain process due to market dynamics.
- There are infrastructure developments occurring in various parts of Highland which may put pressure on the Council's work to contain transport expenditure. These include new health site developments at Broadford and Aviemore and new Council offices at Fort William.
- It is uncertain to what extent the report produced for the Transport Programme Board evaluating the Lochaber transport hub concept will result in an agreed solution being found to extend the project into 2016.

3.6. Gaelic

There are no specific Gaelic implications; school transport for Gaelic Medium education will be included in the Highland school and public transport tender process.

Recommendation

- i. Members are invited to note the planned consultation programme, and the outline timetable and key steps for the forthcoming tender process, which are being recommended to the Community Services Committee on 20 August.

Designation:

Date: 13 August 2015

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Background Papers: