

Agenda Item	<b>24</b>
Report No	<b>EDI/36/18</b>

## HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**Committee:** Environment, Development and Infrastructure

**Date:** 17 May 2018

**Report Title:** Bus contracts in Lochaber

**Report By:** Director of Community Services

### 1.

#### **Purpose/Executive Summary**

- 1.1. This report describes the withdrawal of Stagecoach from Lochaber on 30 June, and the process of procuring replacement public and school transport contracts. Delegated authority to award contracts is sought.

### 2.

#### **Recommendations**

- 2.1. Members are invited to grant delegated authority to the Director of Community Services, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chairs, to decide an appropriate level of service and to agree the award of contracts for the following routes:
- Corpach – Upper Achintore (evenings)
  - Kinlochleven – Fort William
  - Roy Bridge – Fort William.

### **3. Introduction**

- 3.1. On 7 December 2016 the Community Services Committee agreed awards of contracts for bus services in most areas of Highland for the period 24 April 2017 to 31 December 2021. Many school transport contracts had already been awarded, and these commenced in January 2017.
- 3.2. Stagecoach were offered, and accepted, three public service bus contracts in Lochaber, namely:
  - 509: Kinlochleven – Fort William (evenings)
  - 512: Achnacarry / Roy Bridge – Fort William
  - 514: Corpach – Upper Achintore (evenings).They were also awarded school transport contract 5200/1 (Duroor and Onich – Kinlochleven High School). This enabled them to continue their daytime service between Fort William and Kinlochleven on a commercial basis (i.e. not under contract).
- 3.3. Following the mothballing of Roy Bridge Primary School, Stagecoach successfully tendered for school transport contract 5309/5 (Roy Bridge – Spean Bridge).

### **4. Stagecoach withdrawal from Lochaber**

- 4.1. Stagecoach publicly announced a review of their Fort William operations on 21 February 2018 and wrote to the Council on 29 March 2018 to give notice to terminate their Lochaber contracts after operation on 30 June 2018. In that letter they also confirmed the closure of their depot in Fort William.

### **5. Replacement contracts**

- 5.1. Tenders are being invited for replacement contracts. It is necessary to replace the school transport contracts in order to fulfil the Council's statutory obligations. Various service levels have been invited for public transport services, in order to allow costs to be compared for existing and reduced levels of service.
- 5.2. Another operator has expressed willingness to accept Contract 512 if it can be novated to them, but this depends on Stagecoach's agreement to do so. It is also intended to vary the existing Fort William daytime town service contract currently held by Shiel Buses to add the evening journeys. These actions would avoid the need to retender these two contracts.
- 5.3. It is intended that new contracts can be awarded in time for the start of the school year on 20 August. Temporary arrangements are being made for public transport routes during the school summer holidays.
- 5.4. In order to shorten the period for which temporary contracts will be needed, and to allow commencement on 20 August, delegated powers are sought for the Director, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chairs, to agree an appropriate level of service and to agree awards of contract accordingly.
- 5.5. Following tendering, school transport contracts will be approved by the Tender Board as required to fulfil statutory duties.

## **6. Implications**

### **6.1. Resource**

Resource implications are subject to tenders received and therefore not known at the time of writing, but it is highly likely that these changes could result in a budget pressure.

### **6.2. Legal**

There are no known legal implications other than the award of contracts.

### **6.3. Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural)**

Award of contract will maintain public transport provision for areas of Lochaber which would otherwise have no public transport, or where provision would be limited to infrequent long-distance routes.

### **6.4. Climate Change / Carbon Clever**

Bus contracts contribute towards the Council's climate change objectives by giving alternatives to car use.

### **6.5. Risk**

There are no known risk implications other than the unknown budget pressure as described in 6.1 above.

### **6.6. Gaelic**

There are no known Gaelic implications.

Designation: Director of Community Services

Date: 8 May 2018

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