



West Lothian  
Council

**DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSPORT POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

**SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON CHANGES TO LOCAL BUS SERVICE  
REGISTRATION IN SCOTLAND**

**REPORT BY HEAD OF OPERATIONAL SERVICES**

**A. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To advise panel members of the Scottish Government's consultation on changes to the local bus service registration system and to agree a response to the consultation.

**B. RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the panel note the proposed West Lothian Council response to the Scottish Government's consultation on changes to the system of local bus service registrations. It is recommended that the panel agree to the forwarding of the consultation response to Council Executive for approval.

**C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

<b>I</b>	<b>Council Values</b>	Making best use of our resources; and Working in partnership.
<b>II</b>	<b>Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)</b>	The council has a policy of supporting public transport services where resources permit.
<b>III</b>	<b>Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers</b>	None.
<b>IV</b>	<b>Impact on performance and performance Indicators</b>	None.
<b>V</b>	<b>Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement</b>	Bus services contribute to a number of Single Outcome Agreement aims such as providing access to increased and better quality learning and employment opportunities
<b>VI</b>	<b>Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)</b>	None.
<b>VII</b>	<b>Consideration at PDSP</b>	This is the first opportunity to consult the panel.
<b>VIII</b>	<b>Other consultations</b>	A similar response to the consultation is being drawn up by SEStran with council officer input.

## **D1 BACKGROUND TO THE CONSULTATION**

The basic legislation governing local bus services has remained constant since deregulation and privatisation in the mid 1980s. All local bus services need to be registered with the Office of the Traffic Commissioner and, only with their approval services can operate. It is a requirement of bus operators to undertake this process. In order to make changes to services operators need to give notice to councils and the Traffic Commissioner and the consultation is principally about proposed changes to this process and about an increased requirement for operators to consult councils over changes rather than merely notifying them of changes as at present.

The consultation papers provided by Scottish Government are provided as Appendix 1. A response is required by 24 October 2014.

## **D2 CONSULTATION RESPONSE**

The proposed response is broadly supportive of the government proposed changes. The changes are expected to give councils a marginal increased voice in service changes and maintain the overall timescale for bus companies to notify councils of changes to services. This will give councils the same overall time in which to frame any necessary response to service changes, including providing service replacements if deemed necessary, and to provide advanced notice to the public of the changes.

The proposed changes do not challenge the basic tenants of the deregulated regime that has been in force since 1986. An earlier consultation by Iain Gray MSP on a proposed private members bill to regulated bus services was supported by the council in 2013 as a much improved framework for councils to influence services. Given the stated position of the government that the current approach provides an efficient and effective way of providing bus services the marginal change proposed under the current consultation is supported. The proposed response is detailed in Appendix 2.

## **E. CONCLUSION**

The proposed response to the Scottish Government's consultation on changes to the local bus service registration system is supportive of the changes put forward.

## **F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES**

Council Executive 6 August 2013.

## **G. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1: Scottish Government Consultation on Changes to Bus Registration in Scotland.

Appendix 2: Proposed West Lothian Response to the Consultation.

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**Jim Jack**

**Head of Operational Services**

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