

4. SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON CHANGES TO LOCAL BUS SERVICES REGISTRATION IN SCOTLAND

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Operational Services advising of a Scottish Government consultation on changes to the local bus service registration system and to agree a response for approval by the Council Executive.

The Head of Operational Services explained that the basic legislation governing local bus services had remained constant since deregulation and privatisation in the mid-1980s and which meant that all local bus services needed to be registered with the Office of the Traffic Commissioner and, only with their approval, could services operate; it was a requirement of bus operators to undertake this process. In order to make changes to services, operators needed to give notice to councils and the Traffic Commissioner.

The consultation, a copy of which was attached to the report, was 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 response, a copy of which was attached to the report at Appendix 2, was broadly supportive of the government's proposed changes as the changes were expected to give councils a marginal increased voice in service changes and to maintain the overall timescale for bus companies to notify councils of changes to services. The proposed changes did not challenge the basic tenants of the deregulated regime that had been in force since 1986.

It was 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 registration. It was also recommended that the panel agree to forward the consultation response to the Council Executive for approval.

Decision

1. Noted the contents of the report;
2. Requested that the Head of Planning and Economic Development confirm to Panel Members what the effect would be of the proposals on council subsidised bus services;
3. Requested that the Head of Planning and Economic Development confirm to Panel Members the money the council provided for bus subsidies; and
4. Agreed that the report be forwarded to the next appropriate meeting of the Council Executive with the recommendation that it be approved.