



COUNCIL EXECUTIVE

LOCAL BUS REVIEW - UPDATE

REPORT BY HEAD OF OPERATIONAL SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise Council Executive of the ongoing changes to the local bus network and to seek approval for extensions to a number of subsidised bus services until the review of the entire network is completed.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council Executive:

1. note the changes to the local bus network
2. note the requirement to review the council subsidised local bus services to remove duplication with commercial services
3. agrees that a report is submitted to the Development and Transportation PDSP to discuss changes to the subsidised network
4. agrees a four month extension to council subsidised additional bus services outlined in appendix 1 of the report
5. agrees that the cost of the contract extensions (£100,000) will be funded from a projected underspend in the 2018/19 winter maintenance budget

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I	Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs; being honest, open and accountable; making best use of our resources; and working in partnership
II	Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	The council has a policy of supporting public transport services where resources permit. The Transport (Scotland) Act 1985 states that it is the duty of the council, in exercising their power, to conduct themselves as not to inhibit competition in the commercial market.
III	Implications for Scheme of Delegations	None

to Officers

IV	Impact on performance and performance Indicators	The council has a target KPI for Public Transport of having 90% of residents with access to an hourly or better daytime service Monday to Saturday. It is possible that changes in the commercial and subsidised network could impact this KPI.
V	Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	The local bus network contributes to a number of outcomes by connecting communities with services and employment.
VI	Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	The cost of extending the routes as outlined in appendix 1 for a four month period will cost £100,000 and it is proposed that this is funded by an anticipated underspend on winter maintenance in 2018/19.
VII	Consideration at PDSP	None
VIII	Other consultations	Finance and Property Services, Procurement Services and Governance Manager.

D. TERMS OF REPORT

The local bus network is provided through a combination of commercial services (80% of the network) and council subsidised services (20% of the network).

The commercial network underwent significant and largely positive changes in 2018, as First Bus revised its services and Lothian Country extended theirs.

As a result, commercial services are now serving our communities differently. This has resulted in a number of route and timetable overlaps between the commercial and subsidised network.

Whilst there is potential for further commercial changes, the level of overlap is such that the council is now legally required to adjust its subsidised services. Work is now underway to identify the required charges and a revised subsidised local bus service.

This work could not be started earlier as the commercial market was changing frequently and any modelling work undertaken would have been negated as the next phase of changes was made.

A report will be submitted to the Development and Transportation PDSP to discuss the changes required to remove the overlaps and to maintain a sustainable subsidised service which contributes to the council's overarching public transport strategy. The outcome will be reported to the Council Executive.

To maintain the current level of subsidised service until the review is completed requires the extension of the time limited additional services agreed at Council Executive on the 6 February 2018. These contracts are listed in appendix 1. It is

proposed that these contracts are extended for a further four months until 31 July 2019 at a cost of approximately £100,000.

The General Fund Revenue Budget month 9 monitoring position reported to Council Executive on 26 February 2019 was a forecast overspend of £200,000. Since the month 9 position was reported, the largely mild weather has continued and it is now anticipated that the winter maintenance budget will underspend by approximately £100,000 in 2018/19. It is proposed that this underspend is preserved for the cost of extending the time limited additional services for four months in 2019/20. The movement in the forecast position is in addition to that reported at month 9 and therefore could be used to address the time limited funding for four months until the review is complete, without increasing the overall position reported at month 9. This has been verified by the Head of Finance and Property Services.

E. CONCLUSION

The changes to the commercial bus network have been significant and, as a result, there is a legal requirement for the council to review its subsidised services. This work is underway and the outcome will be considered by the Development and Transportation PDSP prior to seeking Council Executive approval for the required changes. However there is a need to extend the time limited town centre contracts for 4 months to allow the review to be completed and agreed.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

Revenue Budget Strategy 2018-19 to 2022-23 - Report by Head of Finance and Property Services to Council Executive on 6 February 2018

Revenue Budget 2018/19 - 2022/23 - Report by Head of Finance and Property Services to West Lothian Council on 13 February 2018

Draft 2017/18 General Fund Revenue Budget Outturn - Report by Head of Finance and Property Services on 26 June 2018

Appendices/Attachments: Appendix 1 – Time Limited Town centre Bus Contracts

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Head of Service Jim Jack, Head of Operational Services

Date of meeting: 26 March 2019

Appendix 1 – Time Limited Additional Bus Services

Route Number	Route Description	Operator	Details of Additional Service
LBS 1	Linlithgow Town Service	SD Travel	Additional 3 hours afternoon operation Monday – Saturday
LBS 5	Bathgate Town Service	E&M Horsburgh	Additional 3 hours afternoon operation Monday – Saturday
LBS 6	Armadale Town Service	E&M Horsburgh	Additional 3 hours afternoon operation Monday – Saturday
LBS 31	Livingston – Bathgate via Linlithgow	E&M Horsburgh	Additional pick up in Dechmont and others