

7. PUBLIC TRANSPORT SAVINGS UPDATE AND LOCAL BUS SERVICE CONTRACTS

The Council Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Operational Services providing an update on the progress to date in achieving the £1.94m of savings required in 2016-17 from passenger transport services and to seek approval for a package of revised council bus service contracts.

The Head of Operational Services explained that a revised Public Transport Strategy had been agreed by Council Executive on 30 June 2015 together with a plan to meet approved savings for 2015-16 and 2016-17. The strategy set the parameters for service provision and the priorities for resourcing services within the available budget in the future with the principle of minimising the impact on local bus services.

The approved savings plan commenced implementation with the revision of the local rail concessionary travel scheme which took effect on 6 September 2015 with a savings target of £272,000. Costs of the revised scheme were being closely monitored to ensure that savings were on target and initial indications were that this saving could be achieved in full from 2016-17.

The remaining approved saving of £1.94m was to be delivered in 2016-17 and the proposed allocation of savings was spread across five separate proposals and covered the following :-

1. Review of taxi and minibus operations;
2. Guidance for granting transport entitlement;
3. School bus income;
4. Review of large vehicle operations; and
5. Review of supported local bus services

Each of these proposals was explored in the report noting the savings to be made under each one. It was also noted that as a result of the savings to be made under proposals 1 through to 4 (noted above) the remaining balance of £913,000 would require to be achieved from local bus services.

All of the local bus service contracts were due to expire on 31 March 2016 and the council had undertaken a procurement exercise to tender for a framework contract for local bus service contracts. Details of the tenders returned and their ranking for the services included were summarised in Appendices 2 and 3 attached to the report.

The Head of Operational Services continued to explain that the tender evaluation for the framework was now complete and the necessary standstill period had ended without any challenges to the procurement process. The framework award letters had been accepted by suppliers

and on approval by Council Executive, the council would start a mini-competition process for the list of contracts that indicative tender prices suggested could be afforded within available resources.

The report concluded that further work undertaken had revised the level of savings to be achieved under each of the proposals and consequently the level of savings required from the review of local bus services had increased.

It was recommended that Council Executive :-

1. Note the revised savings targets for the proposed changes to passenger transport services and local bus service contracts;
2. Note the current position on the framework contract for local bus services;
3. Approve the list of revised local bus service contracts as set out in Appendix 2 attached to the report so that mini-competitions could be undertaken to secure the council's contract local bus services within available resources; and
4. Note the implications for local bus service changes on a ward by ward basis as set out in Appendix 4 attached to the report.

Motion

“Council Executive notes the severe financial pressure applied to West Lothian Council by the failure of the SNP Scottish Government to adequately fund local Council Services.

Council Executive therefore notes Recommendations 1 and 2 in the report, agrees to amend Recommendation 3, to include contract numbers LBS/26E, LNS/8, LBS/20, LBS27, LBS20E, LBS/30, LBS/21, LBS/31S Opt B, LBS/11/12, LBS449, LBS/26 for 2016/17 and 2017/18 in the mini competition, at an estimated cost of £830,357.

Council Executive recognises that the inclusion of the additional contracts will lessen the impact on communities and requires officers to report back following the outcome of the mini competition process with an amended version of appendix 4.

Council Executive agrees a further recommendation :

5. Agrees that the balance of £179,643 be retained to support subsidised bus services over the period 2016/17 and 2017/18.”

- Moved by Councillor Muldoon and seconded by Councillor King

Amendment

“Council Executive note the recommendations of the report, accepts that there was now £1 million extra available but agrees to hold a series of public meetings to allow West Lothian communities a say on which

services would be affected”.

- Moved by Councillor Johnston and seconded by Councillor Anderson

It was agreed that Roll Call vote be taken which resulted as follows :-

Motion

Amendment

Tom Conn

Frank Anderson

Jim Dixon

Peter Johnston

Lawrence Fitzpatrick

Dave King

Danny Logue

John McGinty

Anne McMillan

Angela Moohan

Cathy Muldoon

George Paul

Decision

Following a vote the motion was successful by 10 votes to 2 and it was agreed accordingly.