

The Highland Council

Transport, Environmental and Community Services Committee
16 May 2013

Agenda Item	13
Report No	TEC 46-13

Review of Community Transport

Report by Director of Transport, Environmental and Community Services

Summary

This report invites Members to approve the scope of the review of Community Transport, as agreed by the TECS Committee on 17 January 2013, and to approve that the Council works with Robert Gordon University to carry out a research project which will develop a pilot scheme in a community that suffers from the negative impacts of poor connectivity.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Council has provided funding to support Community Transport Groups for a number of years and the TECS Committee agreed the level of support for 23 Community Transport Schemes for 2013/14 (£417k) at its meeting on 17 January 2013. (Report TEC-5-13).
- 1.2 Members also agreed to carry out a review of Community Transport, which will include engagement with the private and third sector, and this report invites Members to approve the scope of that review.

2. Scope of Review of Community Transport

- 2.1 The review of Community Transport will invite views from the following stakeholders:
- Community Transport Association
 - Community Transport Groups
 - Users of Community Transport
 - Local Transport Forums
 - Highland Third Sector Partnership
 - Commercial Bus Operators
 - HITRANS
 - NHS (Highland)
 - Scottish Ambulance Service
- 2.2 The review will also take account of the inquiry being held by the Scottish Parliament's Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee into Community

Transport. The Council's written response was submitted on 19 April and reported to the Council on 9 May 2013.

- 2.3 The main issues which will be covered in the review will include, but not be limited to:
1. Objectives of funders and providers
 2. Sustainable funding
 3. Measuring social benefit
 4. Assessing unmet needs
 5. Procurement/availability of mini-buses
 6. Availability and training of drivers
 7. Use of Section 22 Permits
 8. Scope for broadening activities
- 2.4 In 2011 DHC Consultants carried out a study for HITRANS of the Value of Community Transport. This demonstrated social benefits of a small sample of Community Transport projects (one in each of the Councils in the HITRANS area) and provided a methodology for further assessments. It is intended to use that methodology as part of this review.
- 2.5 It is intended to carry out a series of workshops and to seek written responses from the stakeholders and other interested parties.
- 2.6 An update on the review of Community Transport will be reported to the TECS Committee in September 2013.

3. Transport in Remote Communities Research Project

- 3.1 Many remote rural communities suffer from lack of access to public transport or community transport and this has a negative effect on the sustainability and economic viability of these communities.
- 3.2 Robert Gordon University have recently approached the Council with a proposal to carry out a research project in one of these communities to explore possible cost-effective options to address this situation.
- 3.3 It is therefore proposed that the Council works with Robert Gordon University to carry out a research project which will develop a pilot scheme in a community that suffers from the negative impacts of poor connectivity.

4. Resource Implications

- 4.1 The review of Community Transport will require some external resource to assist with the review and the analysis of the submissions. The cost is estimated to be in the order of £5,000, and this will be found from within existing budgets.

The research project with Robert Gordon University is estimated to cost £8,000, and this will be found from within existing budgets.

- 4.2 There are no legal implications arising from this report.
- 4.3 Improvements to Community Transport and the provision of transport solutions in remote communities will have a positive impact on equalities and social inclusion.
- 4.4 Improved and more efficient transport will contribute to the reduction in carbon emissions.
- 4.5 There are no risk implications arising from this report.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 Members are invited to approve the scope of the review of Community Transport, as set out in this report.
- 5.2 Members are invited to approve that the Council works with Robert Gordon University to carry out a research project which will develop a pilot scheme in a community that suffers from the negative impacts of poor connectivity.
- 5.3 Members are invited to note that an update on the review of Community Transport and the Research Project to develop a pilot scheme in a community that suffers from the negative impacts of poor connectivity will be reported to the TECS Committee in September.

Designation: Director of Transport, Environmental and Community Services

Date: 3 May 2013

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Background Papers Report to TECS Committee 19 January 2013 (TEC-5-13)