

**The Highland Council**  
**Sutherland County Committee**

**9 February 2016**

Agenda Item	<b>10.</b>
Report No	<b>SCC/ 06/16</b>

**Transport Programme**

**Report by Director of Community Services**

**Summary**

As part of the Council's Transport Programme, mainstream school transport and public bus service contracts have been retendered in Sutherland. This report presents an update on the outcomes of the retendering process. The report also updates Members on the promotion of the revised timetable for Route 906, Lairg – Helmsdale.

**1. Background**

- 1.1 Highland Council's Transport Programme has emerged from the process of identifying ways to reduce expenditure over 2015-19. School transport and public bus service contracts were retendered in Sutherland during 2015. All contract services have now commenced.

**2. Sutherland Re-tendering Outcomes**

- 2.1 Community Services Committee of 5<sup>th</sup> November 2015 was presented with an outturn for the Sutherland re-tendering within [Report No. COM 60/15](#).
- 2.2 One route has been revised since then: Lairg-Helmsdale (Service 906); and arrangements for another route, Ullapool-Lochinver (Service 815), finalised. The Lairg-Helmsdale service change is explored further in Section 3 of this report. The final financial position with regard to Sutherland transport route approvals is summarised in Table 1 at 2.3 below.

**2.3 Table 1 –Sutherland Re-tendering Summary Results**

<b>Routes</b>	<b>2014/15 Baseline Annual Cost</b>	<b>New Total Annual Cost</b>	<b>Monetary Difference</b>	<b>Percentage Difference</b>
School	£ 586,906	£ 494,067	-£ 92,839	-16%
Public	£ 645,800	£ 535,587	-£110,213	-17%
Dial-a-Bus	£ 276,924	£ 237,520	-£ 39,404	-14%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£1,509,630</b>	<b>£1,267,174</b>	<b>-£242,456</b>	<b>-16%</b>

The overall result is a little above the savings target of £238,112.

- 2.4 A revised report incorporating the full set of services resulting from the retendering process has been circulated to Ward Members in Sutherland (7<sup>th</sup> January 2016) and to Sutherland Community Councils (14<sup>th</sup> January 2016).

### **3. Lairg – Helmsdale (Service 906)**

- 3.1 Following retendering a contract was initially awarded for a Lairg-Helmsdale service reduced from three journeys to two in each direction, with altered timings; and this caused considerable public concern. A meeting was held at 3pm on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2015 in the Council's Drummie office to discuss the changes and identify the needs of bus users who would be affected. A poster to promote the meeting was displayed on the buses used on the route. The meeting was attended by Councillor Phillips and Councillor Mackay, David Summers of the Council's Transport Unit, a Key Housing member of staff, a Key Housing resident and two members of the public who were bus users.
- 3.2 The outcome of the meeting and subsequent discussion between the Transport Unit and the two Ward Members has been an agreed, revised timetable which reinstates the journeys causing most concern, but withdraws the Brora - Helmsdale part of the route on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays when a service is operated by Helmsdale Community Transport. Thus the provision on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays remains two journeys each way, albeit retimed and on a shortened route; on Tuesdays and Thursdays the original service is reinstated in full. The contract cost for the revised service provision has not changed.
- 3.3 The new timetable addresses the objections received, which particularly concerned travel-to-work in Golspie from the Lairg direction, and the needs of Key Housing residents in Golspie. The Lairg-Helmsdale (Service 906) timetable can be viewed at Appendix 1.
- 3.4 The contractor, MacLeod's Coaches Ltd, has a contractual responsibility to publicise the route. Appendix 2 provides an extract from the contract document to illustrate. The contractor has produced information detailing their services and will place this at: local libraries, service points, post offices and hotels; and at every village bus stop. Their website also carries the new timetable (<http://www.macleodcoaches.co.uk/Lairg-to-Helmsdale.html>).

### **4. Next Steps - Transport Framework Agreement**

- 4.1 The Highland Council has adopted a Framework Agreement approach to source all future transport requirements. This will cover a broad set of potential transport needs, including:
- All home-to-school and public bus contract routes due to expire on 31/12/2016 (this excludes the Sutherland routes unless a change occurs which requires a route to be tendered).
  - Additional Support Needs routes.
  - School meals conveyancing routes.
- 4.2 A series of steps was undertaken to promote the approach to suppliers including:
- An awareness letter sent to all current contractors (including those based in Sutherland

and operating Sutherland contracts).

- Press release and press adverts.
- Notification on the Council's website and Facebook feed.
- Supplier briefing events across the Highlands, including Lairg on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2015.
- Advising a range of community and business representatives of the supplier briefing events, including Transport Fora, Chambers of Commerce, Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership, Community Transport Association, Highland Third Sector Interface, Federation of Small Businesses, and Scottish Council Development and Industry.
- Three weeks prior to deadline for submitting proposals, follow-up contact with all suppliers who had yet to register on to the Public Contract Scotland Tender system.

4.3 Several Sutherland-based transport providers will potentially be included on the Framework Agreement, subject to satisfactory completion of the award process. Successful suppliers will be invited to submit proposals (officially called Mini-competitions) for the type of work they have notified their interest in as these opportunities arise (suppliers can update their profile during the four-year period of the Framework Agreement to reflect their changing interests in different forms of contract opportunity).

## **5. Next Steps – Community Transport Grants**

- 5.1 Community Services Committee of 5<sup>th</sup> November 2015 also approved the community transport grants process. Grants will be awarded for a three-year period: 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019.
- 5.2 Applications are currently being evaluated and recommendations will be considered by Community Services Committee on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2016, with notification of decisions to applicants during w/c 8<sup>th</sup> February 2016.
- 5.3 There have been twenty-five applications, three from groups operating in Sutherland: North West Community Bus Association; Transport for Tongue Ltd; and Helmsdale Community Transport.

### **Recommendation**

Members are invited to:

1. Note the Sutherland retendering process results.
2. Note the revision to the Lairg-Helmsdale timetable.
3. Note the contractor's timetable promotion activity.

Designation: Director of Community Services

Date: 9<sup>th</sup> February 2016

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## APPENDIX 1

### Lairg – Helmsdale (Service 906) Timetable from 4<sup>th</sup> January 2016

<u>CONTRACT 906-1</u>			
<u>LAIRG - HELMSDALE</u>			
<b>Monday, Wednesday and Friday</b>			
Lairg Post Office	0800		1400B
Rogart Post Office	0815		1415
Golspie Key Housing	0830R		----
Golspie Bank of Scotland **	0835		1430
Brora Fountain Square	0850		1440
Brora Fountain Square	1010		1541
Golspie Key Housing	----		1555R
Golspie Bank of Scotland **	1020		1600
Rogart Post Office	1035		1610
Lairg Post Office	1050A		1625
<b>Tuesday and Thursday</b>			
Lairg Post Office	0800	1100	1400B
Rogart Post Office	0815	1115	1415
Golspie Key Housing	0830R	----	----
Golspie Bank of Scotland **	0835	1130	1430
Brora Fountain Square	0850	1140	1440
Helmsdale The Square	0910	1200	1500
Helmsdale The Square	0950	1210	1521
Brora Fountain Square	1010	1230	1541
Golspie Key Housing	----	----	1555R
Golspie Post Office**	1020	1240	1600
Rogart Post Office	1035	1250	1610
Lairg Post Office	1050A	1305	1625
A – Connects with the 11:00 from Lairg Post Office to Tain.			
B – Will wait, when necessary, for the arrival of the 13:03 bus from Tain ASDA (due Lairg Post Office at 13:57).			
** - Bus will also call at Lawson Hospital if required			
R - On Request			

## APPENDIX 2

### Extract from transport services contract document

#### A1 PUBLICITY

- A1.1 Except in the case of closed school transport contracts, the Contractor shall make timetables for the service (or, for flexible services, other relevant publicity) available to users and potential users of the service. For flexible services this information shall include the hours during which the service operates, the fares charged, and details of how to book journeys.
- A1.2 Published timetables and other information shall be as informative as is practical without being unduly complicated, and shall be designed in accordance with the ATCO (Association of Transport Coordinating Officers) "Public Transport Information Good Practice" guide available at <http://atco-uk.com/meetings-and-papers/viewdownload/5-guide-best-practise/3-pti-goodpractice09>
- A1.3 Publicity material shall be available on board the Vehicle and shall be distributed at least two weeks in advance of any timetable change or if there are no timetable changes, at least once a year to suitable outlets such as libraries, tourist information centres, and Council Service Points in the area served. The Contractor shall inform the Authority of his distribution arrangements, and supply copies of his publicity to the Authority at the time of publication of each edition and subsequently on request.
- A1.4 If the Contractor is in default of this Condition, the Authority may produce and distribute timetables and charge the cost to the Contractor, and shall apply Default provisions in accordance with clause A15.
- A1.5 Publicity material shall clearly state that the whole or part of the service (as appropriate) is operated under Contract to The Highland Council.
- A1.6 The Authority shall supply timetable notices for display at principal bus stops. The Contractor shall put these notices in place at the relevant stops.
- A1.7 Contractors shall also ensure that Real Time Information systems are kept up to date where this is applicable to their particular Contract Routes.