

Single Member Cabinet Decision

Executive
Forward Plan
Reference**E3144****Award of contracts for supported bus services**

| | |
|--|---|
| Decision maker/s | Cllr Joanna Wright, Cabinet Member for Transport Services |
| The Issue | A number of contracts for supported bus services expire on 31 August 2019 and a procurement process has been undertaken to obtain prices for new contracts to replace them. |
| Decision Date | On or after 3 September 2019 |
| The decision | <p>(i) To maintain the non-commercial bus network intact until the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) is resourced to manage, review and procure contracts jointly with the Council or until the West of England Bus Strategy is implemented;</p> <p>(ii) To make savings to achieve value for money from bus revenue support where there is no material impact on the bus network or where external factors – such as changes to the commercial bus network – render provision unnecessary;</p> <p>(iii) To delegate approval to the Corporate Director to award new contracts for non-commercial bus services in accordance with these objectives.</p> |
| Rationale for decision | WECA is working on a Bus Strategy which will include a policy for the support of non-commercial bus services. Until this policy is developed and adopted (estimated 2020-21), WECA has asked its constituent authorities to maintain as much of the current bus service network as possible within the constraints of funding. |
| Financial and budget implications | <p>WECA made a contribution of £400k to B&NES in 2018-19 to assist with the cost of maintaining the current bus route network, of which £150k was held in reserve for 2019-20.</p> <p>Replacing the expiring contracts and two withdrawn commercial services will increase the total forecast spend in 2019-20 to £1.303k. This can be funded by increasing the budget through the utilisation of a one-off underspend of £155k from the Concessionary Travel levy to WECA and a recurring virement of £150k from a corporately-held contingency budget for travel related pressures.</p> <p>The pressures will be greater in 2020-21, when there will be a full-year effect of the higher contract prices and a further round of tendering. If the current bus service network is to be maintained through 2020-21 and into the future, it will be imperative to boost the bus revenue support budget. Taking into account inflationary pressures and tender</p> |

| | |
|--|--|
| | <p>price increases, it is forecast that spending in 2020-21 could be £1.369k against available funding of £1.163k (including £80k of one-off funding). This is a shortfall of £206k, which it is proposed is funded by reserves.</p> <p>Approval has been given by the Council's Section 151 Officer, with the agreement of the Corporate Director, for a one-off draw down from the revenue budget contingency reserve to maintain the current bus service network pending resolution of the longer-term revenue support arrangements between WECA and its constituent authorities.</p> |
| Issues considered | Social Inclusion; Customer Focus; Sustainability; Young People. |
| Consultation undertaken | Section 151 Finance Officer; Monitoring Officer |
| How consultation was carried out | Electronically |
| Other options considered | The option not to award new contracts and thereby cease provision of some existing bus services after 9 November 2019 was considered but rejected on the grounds of the impact on communities away from the commercial bus network. Also, it would pre-empt the emerging WECA Bus Strategy. |
| Declaration of interest by Cabinet Member for decision, including any dispensation granted: | |
| Any conflict of interest declared by anyone who is consulted by a Member taking the decision: | |

| | |
|---|--|
| Name and Signature of Decision Maker | Cllr Joanna Wright, Cabinet Member for Transport Services |
| Date of Signature | 4 September 2019 |
| Subject to Call-in until 5 Working days have elapsed following publication of the decision | |