



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Environment, Regeneration & Streetscene Services

Cabinet Board

6th October 2022

Report of

D.W Griffiths Head of Engineering and Transport

Contract Extensions of the Subsidised Local Bus Network

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected: All

Purpose of the Report

To seek Members approval to extend the current subsidised bus contracts until the 31st March 2023.

Executive Summary

Contracts for the current subsidised bus routes were scheduled to end in September 2021. As a direct result of the pandemic the Passenger Transport section sought permission to extend the contracts to the 31st December 2022.

The contracts were put out for tender in May 2022. However, the prices submitted by the bus companies exceeds the funding available to support the current level of services. A decision will be required if the Council considers it affordable to initiate a budget to provide funding to maintain the current levels of service.

The Council's budget setting process is not scheduled until the autumn, it is therefore requested that a further extension to the contracts be granted until the 31st March 2023. This will allow services to continue until a decision can be made during the Councils budget setting process if revenue support is available.

During the pandemic Welsh Government (W.G) provided support for bus operators with the introduction of the Bus Emergency Scheme (BES). BES2 which ended in July. It was confirmed on the 29th June 2020 that support for bus operators is set to continue until March 2023 in the form of BES3.

Background

Public Transport in NPT is provided by private bus operators. These companies operate in the main on a commercial basis, this means if a route is commercially viable then an operator will provide a bus service.

Contracts for the current subsidised bus routes were scheduled to end in September 2021. As a direct result of the pandemic the Passenger Transport section sought permission to extend the contracts to the 31st December 2022.

The contracts were put out for tender in May 2022, the prices submitted by the bus companies exceeds the Bus Service Support Grant (BSSG) available to support the current level of services.

Bus operators have received financial help from the W.G during the pandemic in the form of the BES. It has been stated that this support will continue until March 2023 in the form of BES3, this can be used to support the extra costs incurred by the operators in the short term.

With W.G confirming the BES3 to fund bus services to the end of March by further extending the current contracts until the 31st March 2023 which will give Members to consider if funding can be secured to maintain the subsidised bus network from the 1st April 2023.

Financial Impacts

There is no financial risk by extending the contracts until the 31st March.

Integrated Impact Assessment

A first stage impact assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its legislative duties (under the Equality Act 2010, the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. The first stage assessment has indicated that a more in-depth assessment is not required. Appendix A.

Valleys Communities Impacts

By extending the current contracts until the 31st March 2023 there will be no detrimental impact on our valley communities.

Workforce Impacts

No detrimental workforce Impacts.

Legal Impacts

Compiled with EU OJEU, Welsh Government and internal corporate procedure rules.

Risk Management Impacts

There is no risk attached with extending the current contract arrangements.

Consultation

There is no requirement for consultation on increasing the length of the contracts to maintain subsidised services.

Recommendations

Having due regard to the Integrated Impact Assessment it is recommended that;

- That the current subsidised bus contracts be extended until the 31st March 2023 to allow time for the budget setting process to take place.

Reasons for Proposed Decision

Extending the contracts until March the 31st 2023 will allow time for Members to consider Council priorities as part of the budget setting process.

Implementation of Decision

That the extension of the contracts be implemented after the three day call in period.

Appendices


Appendix A. IIA

List of Background Papers

Nil

Officer Contact

Peter Jackson
Integrated Transport Manager

 01639 686091
 p.jackson@npt.gov.uk

Brendan Griffiths
Passenger Transport Manager

 01639 686658
 b.griffiths@npt.gov.uk

Appendix A

Impact Assessment - First Stage

1. Details of the initiative

Initiative description and summary: Subsidised Local Bus Network
Service Area: Passenger Transport Unit
Directorate: Environment, Regeneration and Neighbourhood Services.

2. Does the initiative affect:

	Yes	No
Service users		X
Staff		X
Wider community		X
Internal administrative process only	X	

3. Does the initiative impact on people because of their:

	Yes	No	None/ Negligible	Don't Know	Impact H/M/L	Reasons for your decision (including evidence)/How might it impact?
Age		X				Extending the contracts for the Subsidised local Bus Network will have no impact on residents with protected characteristics
Disability		X				
Gender Reassignment		X				
Marriage/Civil Partnership		X				
Pregnancy/Maternity		X				

Race		X				
Religion/Belief		X				
Sex		X				
Sexual orientation		X				

4. Does the initiative impact on:

	Yes	No	None/ Negligible	Don't know	Impact H/M/L	Reasons for your decision (including evidence used) / How might it impact?
People's opportunities to use the Welsh language			X			This initiative will have no impact on people's opportunities to use the Welsh Language.
Treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English			X			This initiative will not treat the Welsh Language less favourably than English.

5. Does the initiative impact on biodiversity:

	Yes	No	None/ Negligible	Don't know	Impact H/M/L	Reasons for your decision (including evidence) / How might it impact?
To maintain and enhance biodiversity			X			There is no impact and there are no pathways for biodiversity to be maintained/enhanced.
To promote the resilience of ecosystems, i.e. supporting protection of			X			There is no impact and there are no pathways for enhancement to the environment.

the wider environment, such as air quality, flood alleviation, etc.						
---	--	--	--	--	--	--

6. Does the initiative embrace the sustainable development principle (5 ways of working):

	Yes	No	Details
Long term - how the initiative supports the long term well-being of people	X		Extending the current contracts will directly contribute to Wellbeing Objective 1. by ensuring continuity of the subsidised local bus network. Which some services transport pupils to education.
Integration - how the initiative impacts upon our wellbeing objectives	X		Extending the contracts support local businesses and secure employment for contractor's staff. Wellbeing Objective 4
Involvement - how people have been involved in developing the initiative	X		Officers have spoken to operators on the subsidised local bus network to ensure they as content with the option of extending the contracts.
Collaboration - how we have worked with other services/organisations to find shared sustainable solutions	X		Officers have spoken to operators on the subsidised local bus network to ensure they as content with the option of extending the contracts.
Prevention - how the initiative will prevent problems occurring or getting worse	X		The extension to the contracts will offer time to review and evaluate the new tender prices and to consult with Members on the most appropriate use of the grant funding.

7. Declaration - based on above assessment (tick as appropriate):

A full impact assessment (second stage) is not required	X
Reasons for this conclusion	

This is an Internal admin process which in the short term will have a positive impact on our contractors and the traveling public.

A full impact assessment (second stage) **is** required

Reasons for this conclusion

	Name	Position	Signature	Date
Completed by	P. Jackson	Integrated Transport Manager	PJ	30.08.2022
Signed off by	D.W Griffiths	Head of Service/Director	DWG	30.08.2022