

## **FC24. Accessible Transport**

The Provost advised that a deputation request had been made by Order of Malta Dial-a-Journey to be heard in regard to this item. The Provost confirmed that the request had been made in accordance with Standing Orders. Council agreed to hear the deputation.

Herbert Coutts (Chair) addressed the Council, following which members asked questions of him and Duncan Hearsum (Chief Executive) and Lawson Eadie (Service User). The Provost thanked the deputation for addressing Council.

Council then considered a report by the Director of Development Services outlining the consultation activity undergone since the budget meeting in February and proposing an interim contractual position.

As part of its budget considerations, Council had agreed to reduce the accessible transport budget to £69,190 and had asked officers to consult further on proposals for the contract with Order of Malta Dial-a-Journey, with particular regard to the public sector equality duty.

The report summarised the consultation process and the results of this exercise. An assessment of the available data had concluded that the service was not cost effective. However, further analysis was required on the equalities dimension and on alternative sources of provision with a view to bringing forward options for the future of the service from April 2017. In the meantime it was recommended that a new contract with a reduced specification is awarded for the period from 1 August 2016 to 31 March 2017. The service, for 2 vehicles 5 days a week (8.30 to 17.00 hours) in the Falkirk Council area only would cost £105,225.

Councillor Gow, seconded by Councillor C R Martin, moved that:-

Council agrees:-

- (1) that, in order to give notice of a reduced service, the existing contract with Order of Malta Dial-a-Journey (OMDAJ) is extended to 31 July 2016; and
- (2) to award a new contact to OMDAJ from 1 August 2016 until 31 March 2017, for a 2 vehicle, 5 days a week, 8.30 to 17.30 hours Falkirk Council area only service at a cost of £105,225 (an annual rate of £157,838) to allow officers to prepare a further report to the Council on options for the future; the additional costs being met from a combination of existing Transport Planning budgets and the balance (estimated at £66,000) from the bus contracts budget.

As an amendment, Councillor Meiklejohn, seconded by Councillor Jackson, moved, in substitution for the motion, that:-

Council agrees:-

- (1) that by significantly reducing the service level and area of operation with OMDAJ there will be a number of people marginalised and isolated as there would be no alternative; and
- (2) therefore to fund OMDAJ from 1 August 2016 to 31 March 2018 to provide a 7 day a week service with journeys not restricted to only Falkirk Council area at a cost of £164,494.

Council adjourned at 1.00 p.m. for lunch and reconvened at 1.45 p.m. with all members present as per the sederunt, with the exception of Councillor McCabe.

On a division, 16 members voted for the motion, 12 voted for the amendment and one member abstained, with voting as follows:-

For the motion (16) – Provost Reid; Depute Provost Patrick; Baillies Buchanan and Paterson; and Councillors Black, Blackwood, D Goldie, G Goldie, Gow, MacDonald, McLuckie, Mahoney, C Martin, Dr C R Martin, Nicol and Nimmo.

For the amendment (12) – Councillors Alexander, Balfour, Bird, Carleschi, Chalmers, Coleman, Garner, Hughes, Jackson, Meiklejohn, Oliver and Ritchie.

Abstention (1) – Councillor Murray.

## **Decision**

**Council agreed the motion.**