

Gairloch Community Car Scheme and The Highland Council Rural Transport Initiative

A new approach to school transport and public
transport in a deep rural area

Challenges

- Local Operator who undertook the Home to School Transport between Cove and Poolewe Primary School moved away
- Lack of other commercial operators in the area
- Cost of nearest bidder to fulfil contract would be £47,500
- Minimal public transport in the Gairloch area
- Nearest Hospital is Inverness which is a 160 mile round trip from Poolewe

Opportunities

- Gairloch Community Car Scheme did operate in the area already with volunteers using their own cars
- Council has a statutory duty to provide home to school transport
- Community asset that could be accessed to enable both the statutory duty to be fulfilled and the wider community benefit

Proposals

- Council purchase an 8 seat vehicle, maintain it, pay all fuel costs, maintenance costs, insurance and driver costs
- Hand over the vehicle to Gairloch Community Car Scheme to operate and manage the home to school contract and then have access to the vehicle at all other times for community transport use
- Car available to anyone in the community only charge to be a small mileage rate
- Formal legal agreement with terms and conditions to be signed between Gairloch Community Car Scheme and the Highland Council

Procurement&Legal Team's Position

- Council's procurement team were satisfied by the arrangement as all other local operators had been invited to bid. Only one bid received and that was £2.5k per annum higher than previous bid. This operator was the only one in the area that had the capacity to run the route.
- Vehicle operates under a Section 19 Permit
- 8 weekly vehicle check at garage and specific daily defect check system required
- Driver(s) to be PVG checked

Outcomes

- Council delivered proposals
- Council fulfilled statutory duty
- Greatly increased transport options for the community which is particularly meaningful in an area with minimal public transport options
- Innovative budget savings to the Council of circa £20k per annum
- Very successful operation since its commencement with no issues at all
- Unique example of partnership working when it comes to providing local transport

Gairloch Community Car



Questions

