

MEETING	A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE DWYFOR AREA COMMITTEE
DATE	1 March 2013
TITLE	Dwyfor Area Public Transport and Education Transport Services
PURPOSE	Providing the Context for the Re-tendering Process
REPORT BY	Aled Davies - Head of Regulatory Department
PORTFOLIO LEADER	Councillor W. Gareth Roberts, Cabinet Member for the Environment

1. On 15 January 2013 tenders were invited to provide public transport and education transport in the Dwyfor area. The tenders were returned on 25 February 2013. A full assessment of all the proposals will be undertaken during the next three weeks. It is intended to submit information on the transport route options to the Area Committee on 19 March 2013. The aim is to commence new services from April 2013 onwards.
2. It can be confirmed that an application to extend the tendering period was not received by the transport companies, and that the officers responded to every question they had raised during the tendering period.
3. Applications were invited to introduce services following discussions with members and the transport companies. The Service's Officers have been present in meetings with members and also a presentation was given to the Area Committee [17.09.12] to raise awareness on transport tendering in Dwyfor. I can also confirm that Officers have visited the bus companies on a number of occasions to collect information on the current services and have gone through the tendering process with them. Also, the companies have been offered support by Menter a Busnes and Bravo Solutions.
4. At the moment £692,292.05 is being spent as a public transport subsidy in the Dwyfor area and the Council is spending £1,213,824.89 on transporting learners to schools in Dwyfor on a bus, and £491,747.00 on transporting learners in a taxi and with parents.
5. Some services in Dwyfor have not been tendered for over 20 years; therefore there is a real need to readdress the situation in its entirety to ensure value for money. This is vital, especially as the Welsh Government continues to cut transport grants that are given to local authorities and therefore there is a risk of increased costs for the authorities. Retendering also offers an opportunity to ensure that the services provided conform to the Council's arrangements and policies.

6. The main concerns expressed by members involve education transport. For information, a copy of the national guidelines on Education Transport and also Gwynedd Council's policy that is based on these guidelines has been appended in Appendix A.
7. An important step was taken in preparing the tendering information for education transport, namely to look at the location of the home of every learner in relation to the location of the school, and to structure the tenders around the learners who have the right to education transport, namely those who are in:
 - Primary schools – transport for learners who live two miles or more from the school in their catchment area, or the nearest school
 - Secondary schools – transport for learners who live three miles or more from the school in their catchment area, or the nearest school
 - Transport for learners with additional educational needs or disabilities, in accordance with the recommendations of the Special Educational Needs Joint Committee.
8. It must also be borne in mind that the Council has arrangements to take advantage of empty seats on the transport provided. Learners who are not eligible for transport can take advantage of the empty seats scheme once we are aware of what is being offered by the transport companies.