REPORT TO: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES COMMITTEE ON 1 NOVEMBER 2011

SUBJECT: TRANSPORT FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

BY: DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

1. REASON FOR REPORT

1.1 To update Committee on recent proposals by The Scottish Government for greater integration of transport services across the health and social care sectors, and how these proposals will be progressed within Moray.

1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section G (19) of the Council’s Administrative Scheme relating to the function of the Council in relation to public passenger transport under the Transport Act 1985.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 Committee is asked to review and endorse the potential for integrated services in the future.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 In September 2007, JMP Consultants Ltd (JMP) was commissioned by Nestrans, the Regional Transport Partnership for Aberdeen City and Shire, and NHS Grampian to conduct a study into the three main interlinkages between transport and health:

   - Promoting Active Travel – that inappropriate use of some transport modes is contributing to sedentary lifestyles, whilst walking and cycling can be a convenient transport mode for some journeys and improve physical activity levels;

   - Transport and Public Health – that undesirable side-effects of the transport system have detrimental impacts on public health; and

   - Access to Healthcare – that transport is required to enable access to healthcare, and that accessing health services is a key transport demand.

3.2 Specifically, Nestrans and NHS Grampian sought to develop a Health and Transport Action Plan (HTAP) to address these three topics. The HTAP is one of three regional action plans identified in the NESTRANS Regional Transport Strategy (RTS), published in March 2007. The HTAP Steering Group comprises of officers from each of the three north east Local Authorities, NHS Grampian, and the Scottish Ambulance Service.
3.3 In developing the HTAP, a Background Study was conducted to better understand the issues. This involved engagement with key stakeholders, including selected members of staff within NHS Grampian, the Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS), the local authorities of Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council and Moray Council, and also HITRANS (the Regional Transport Partnership that includes Moray).

3.4 More recently transport for health and social care has been the focus of a study by Audit Scotland who have recommended greater integration of transport services between the various agencies who deliver passenger/patient transport services. As part of this report all agencies have been asked to complete a self audit questionnaire relating to transport provision. A completed copy of the questionnaire is attached at Appendix 1. The full report is available on the Members portal.

3.5 In Moray there is currently no formal linkage between health transport and public/social transport. The Council supports some non-commercial local bus services and provides day care transport as well as school transport and some dial-a-bus services. The Council supports third sector transport organisations such as BABS dial-a-bus and the Speyside Car Share Scheme. Patient transport services for those who cannot access or use public transport is provided by the Scottish Ambulance Service, either directly in their own minibus/ambulance fleet or by car through the voluntary sector. Where possible commercial and subsidised bus services operate to or close to local medical centres and hospitals. The Council operates 2 dial-a-bus services within Moray, one in the rural Forres area and one in the rural Speyside area. These link into mainstream public transport services, and offers a more flexible option for those attending health appointments.

3.6 During 2004 this authority funded a project to look at greater integration of health transport and social/public transport services. This involved cross party talks with the Council, the Health Board, WRVS, MVSO, the Red Cross and the Scottish Ambulance Service. Although no resource integration was delivered through this project, there was a greater understanding of the needs of each service, and better customer information was made available through the production of a transport directory highlighting where transport could be accessed and where information on transport availability was available. The directory is no longer updated and is not being re-published because of financial issues.

3.7 One of the major barriers to further resource integration is vehicle availability. Vehicles that operate school and day centre transport are required at specific times and therefore not always available. Whilst there will be an element of downtime between the AM and PM peak requirements there is no flexibility as far as accommodating late appointments etc. is concerned, as vehicles need to be back at school/day care centre for a specific time. Likewise, vehicles used locally do not have sufficient downtime to travel beyond the local area to places such as ARI or Raigmore hospitals. There is however a greater degree of flexibility during the school holiday period. For the retender of
contract in 2002 the opening and closing times of the Buckie based day care centres were amended to allow school transport vehicles to be used for day care transport, thereby reducing the overall transport cost to the Council. This issue of further external integration will be considered in the HTAP strategy and set out in the HTAP strategy action plan.

3.8 All transport contracts, including subsidised bus services, school transport, and community transport are due to expire July 2012. To maintain service provision contracts will have to be issued in accordance with procurement policy requirements early in 2012, with operators advised of the outcome around May/June 2012. There has been a User Intelligence Group meeting for ad hoc hire of coaches/taxis and further stakeholder involvement is planned within the timeframe of the future tender exercise for Client Services. Further integration of service delivery will be incorporated into the tender specification where joint operation of services can be delivered.

3.9 In recognition of the Scottish Government’s requirement to see further joint working of these sectors HTAP is looking at a number of initiatives to improve the currently fragmented nature of health transport provision. This includes the potential for a centralised information hub within the Grampian area, that will maintain a database of all available public transport in the area from commercial bus and coach services to voluntary car schemes, offering a “one stop shop” for patients who require transport for an appointment. This will ultimately link to the appointments system to ensure patients are given appointments that fit in with available transport.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Single Outcome Agreement/ Service Improvement Plan

The strengthening of public involvement relates to the following Single Outcome Agreement and Service Improvement Plan priorities:

(i) Outcome 15 - Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people’s needs.

(b) Policy and Legal

There are no Policy or Legal implications arising from this report.

(c) Financial implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

(d) Risk Implications

There are no risk implications arising from this report.
(e) **Staffing Implications**

There are no staffing implications arising from this report.

(f) **Property**

There are no property implications arising from this report.

(g) **Equalities**

There are no equality implications arising from this report.

(h) **Consultations**

C McKerron, Service Manager has been consulted and comments have been incorporated into the report.

L Paisey, Principal Accountant has been consulted and has no comment to make and agrees that there are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

5. **CONCLUSION**

5.1 Committee is asked to review and endorse the potential for integrated services in the future.

Author of Report: Public Transport Manager

Background Papers:

Ref: