

# **Council to propose five new supported bus services**

**Proposals for five new supported bus services in the west of Edinburgh are set to be discussed at the Transport and Environment Committee next Thursday.**

Under the plans the routes would be The Gyle to Hermiston Park & Ride via Ratho; Queensferry to The Gyle; Cramond to Balerno; Wester Hailes to Chesser and The Gyle to Clermiston.

There are currently three existing bus services operating in the west of the city that are fully financially supported by Edinburgh Council – services 20, 63 and 68 – operated by McGill’s Bus Services but these are to be withdrawn on 14 July this year.

Four of the new routes would be run by Lothian with the The Gyle to Clermiston route being operated by Handicabs Lothian.

Before the revised contracts went out for tender the Council consulted with local communities and operators to help develop route specifications and help balance community requirements within the available budget.

The new services will improve bus provision in the west of the city with some of the routes amended and a new connection to Cramond being provided by utilising a developer contribution from new housing in the area.

Cllr Scott Arthur, Transport Convener for the City of Edinburgh Council, said: “This is fantastic news for residents

in the west of the city as it's really important to make sure the areas they live in are connected with the rest of Edinburgh. There are some parts of the city that are just not well-connected which is why these supported bus services are so important. I'm pleased that the community and bus operators also fed into the proposed routes allowing us to amend some services, which should improve reliability and connections to the wider public transport network.

"I'm delighted to be proposing that these services will be operated by Lothian Buses and Handicabs and once these contracts are awarded better connecting Lady Nairne and Dumbiedykes will become our top priority."

If the proposals are approved next week then the Council will immediately move to award contracts so the new services can be registered with the Traffic Commissioner and be ready to operate as soon as McGill's services stop. The proposed contract lengths are for two years, with two one year optional extensions.

The Council will also work with the successful operators to update all available passenger information on each route and keep community groups updated on the changes to services in their area.

Tendering for the new service provision for the Lady Nairne and Dumbiedykes areas will now start to be progressed.

