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Top award for Moray's on-demand bus service

Moray Council's dial a bus service picked up a top award at the Scottish Parliament this week.

The Dial M for Moray team beat off 170 other applications to scoop the prestigious Campbell Christie Public Service Reform award at a ceremony in the Scottish Parliament building.

The awards are supported by the Scottish Government and attract submissions from across all public sector organisations.

Since 2007 the distinctive buses have gradually replaced subsidised scheduled services in the area, increasing travel options and reducing isolation in many rural areas. It has also saved £170,000 in subsidy costs.

The citation read at the ceremony described the service as ‘unique in Scotland’ and an example of a public service that has developed in response to those using it.

Dial M for Moray has far exceeded the original objectives and now offers best value to Moray taxpayers as a cost-efficient demand-led bus service.

Other council areas operate dial a bus schemes but these are predominately urban services covering a small area.

From a social care perspective regular elderly customers can be monitored by staff for intervention by health services, and the buses can be used for the promotion of care options and health campaigns. Most recently the original pilot project in Forres was expanded in response to customer demand for access to the new GP surgery.

Access to the service has made communities more independent in travel, thus stronger and more sustainable as stand-alone rural settlements. This is evident in the number of local societies and clubs now using Dial M for Moray for outings. We have also extended the service to include non-residents through guest house/hotel bookings, and available to vacationing visitors.

Leader of Moray Council, Cllr Stewart Cree said: “By asking the community what their transport needs are and adapting a traditionally urban model to deliver a rural solution to meet them, the customer is at the heart of this project. The council now delivers a superior service in-house at less cost, what I would call the Holy Grail of public sector ambition.”

In the picture are (L to R): Donald MacRae Public Transport Manager (driving seat), Charles Riches driver (kneeling), Chris Hall Transport Planning officer, Cllr John Cowe

More pics in related material section.

Moray Council area stretches from Tomintoul in the south to the shores of the Moray Firth, from Keith in the east to Forres in the west. The council and its 4,500 employees respond to the needs of 92,500 residents in this beautiful part of Scotland, which nestles between Aberdeenshire and the Highlands.

Famous for its colony of dolphins, fabulous beaches and more malt whisky distilleries than any where else in Scotland, Moray is a thriving area and a great place to live.

Headquartered in Elgin, the administrative capital of Moray.

Contacts



Sharon Dunbar

Press Contact

Media and Communications Officer

sharon.dunbar@moray.gov.uk

01343 563046

07967 748826



Peter Jones

Press Contact

Communications manager

Press, public communications, social media, events, FOI, campaigns, crisis comms.

peter.jones@moray.gov.uk

01343 563601

07974 191318