

ANGUS COUNCIL

PLANNING AND TRANSPORT POLICY COMMITTEE

17 OCTOBER 2002

SUBJECT: PUBLIC TRANSPORT UPDATE

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND TRANSPORT

Abstract: This report updates Members of recent and proposed changes to local bus and rail services in Angus. In addition, Members are updated in relation to the introduction of free travel for senior citizens and disabled persons and of the acquisition of Railtrack PLC by Network Rail.

1 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee -

1. note the registration of a schooldays only service by Meffans Coaches between Brechin and Kirriemuir.
2. note the additional train journeys introduced from 30 September 2002 by Virgin Trains in the new winter rail timetable.
3. note the provision made for additional capacity to cater for increased patronage as a result of free travel for senior citizens and disabled persons from 30 September 2002.
4. note that Network Rail which has recently acquired Railtrack PLC has sought invitations from organisations and individuals to be public members of Network Rail and homologate the application by Angus Council on behalf of Councillor West.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This report updates Members of recent changes to local bus and rail services in Angus. Members are updated on the introduction of free local bus travel for senior citizens and disabled persons and are also advised that public members have been sought for Network Rail which has recently acquired Railtrack PLC.

3 SERVICE 845 : BRECHIN - FINAVON - KIRRIEMUIR

- 3.1 Meffans Coaches have registered a new schooldays only service to operate between Brechin, Finavon and Kirriemuir. This service will commence on 11 November 2002 and will provide journeys at 09:05 from Brechin to Kirriemuir and 11:00 from Kirriemuir to Brechin, these journeys previously being empty runs after/before a Nursery School contract in Brechin.

4 WINTER TRAIN TIMETABLE

- 4.1 The new winter train timetable was introduced from 30 September 2002. This timetable saw significant changes in the level of service provision by Virgin Trains both from Aberdeen via Angus and from Dundee. Previously only 2 Virgin trains operated on the Aberdeen / Edinburgh corridor, a summary of the new services is shown below:

Trains leave Aberdeen on Mondays to Fridays as follows (these trains all serve Montrose and Arbroath), similar routes are available at weekends

Trains leave Aberdeen at	To	Trains arrive at Aberdeen at	From
07:30	Bournemouth via Manchester and Birmingham	08:24	Edinburgh
08:55	Cardiff via Leeds and Birmingham	19:27	Poole via Birmingham and Manchester
20:55	Edinburgh	21:14	Cardiff via Birmingham and Leeds
22:10	Edinburgh		

Trains depart from Dundee on Mondays to Fridays as follows, similar routes are available at weekends (ALL trains call at Edinburgh and several stations in Fife):

Southbound trains from Dundee at	To	Northbound trains arrive at Dundee at	From
06:00	Plymouth via Warrington	07:08	Edinburgh (to Aberdeen)
06:43	Paignton via Doncaster	11:23	Derby via Leeds
08:10	Cardiff via Leeds	13:19	Birmingham via Leeds
08:45	Bournemouth via Manchester (from Aberdeen)	15:23	Bristol via Leeds
10:09	Cardiff via Leeds (from Aberdeen)	17:22	Paignton via Leeds
12:10	Cardiff via Leeds	18:13	Poole via Manchester (to Aberdeen)
14:10	Bristol via Leeds	19:58	Cardiff via Leeds (to Aberdeen)
16:15	Birmingham via Leeds	21:21	Bristol via Leeds
18:10	Derby via Leeds		
22:16	Edinburgh (from Aberdeen)		
23:22	Edinburgh (from Aberdeen)		

- 4.2 These additional journeys are welcomed and will provide opportunities for more direct travel for many individuals making long-distance trips.

5 ANGUS COUNCIL TRAVEL CONCESSION SCHEMES

- 5.1 At the previous meeting of this Committee, Members were informed of the revised Travel Concession Scheme published by Angus Council to introduce free travel for Senior Citizens and Disabled Persons from 30 September 2002 (Report 1004/02 refers).

- 5.2 The introduction of free travel appears to have gone smoothly and press coverage and notices on buses have informed those entitled to free travel of the new arrangements.

- 5.3 Since the travel concession scheme was last reported to this Committee (Report 1004/02 refers) negotiations have been concluded with Strathtay Scottish Ltd. and the following provision has been made for additional capacity to cater for increased usage by Senior Citizens and Disabled Persons:

• Service 20 - 09:20 Forfar - Dundee (Mon - Fri)	additional journey
• Service 22 - 09:37 Kirriemuir - Dundee (Mon - Fri)	additional journey
• Service 40X - 15:26 Dundee - Arbroath (Mon - Fri)	additional journey
• Service 40X - 16:41 Dundee - Arbroath (Mon - Fri)	additional journey
• Service 20 - 07:45 Forfar - Dundee (Mon - Fri)	double-deck operation
• Service 20 - 08:20 Kirriemuir - Dundee (Mon - Fri)	double-deck operation
• Service 20 - 16:25 Dundee - Kirriemuir (Mon - Fri)	double-deck operation
• Service 20 - 16:45 Dundee - Kirriemuir (Mon - Fri)	double-deck operation
• Service 40X - 09:15 Montrose - Ninewells (Mon - Sat)	double-deck operation
• Service 78 - Dundee - Monikie (Circular) (Mon - Sat)	Dennis Dart operation
• Service 20 - Kirriemuir / Forfar - Dundee (Sat)	double-deck operation

- 5.4 It is intended that the additional service provision is reviewed regularly with monthly milestone meetings and if it is evident that the additional capacity is not required then it will be withdrawn. De-minimis contracts have therefore been awarded to Strathtay Scottish Ltd. for the provision of the additional journeys / operation of journeys with larger vehicles these being subject to 2 months notice of termination.

- 5.5 In addition to the provision of extra journeys and larger vehicles outlined above, two standby vehicles have been secured on Mondays to Fridays between 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. to cater for any capacity required or delays encountered on the Tayway services due to increased usage. The cost for these standby vehicles is £20,000 per quarter, this is being met jointly by Angus Council and Dundee City Council with each local authority meeting half the cost. These standby vehicles will operate initially for 90 days (again with monthly milestone meetings to assess their usage) and joint agreement has been reached that they will be funded for a further 90 days if necessary.

- 5.6 The total cost to Angus Council for these additional facilities amounts to £65,000 for the first 6 months and £130,000 in a full financial year. The only outstanding issue at present is a possible capacity issue on the Blairgowrie - Coupar Angus - Birkhill -

Dundee corridor where it is considered that overloads may occur. Perth and Kinross Council are in negotiation with Strathtay Scottish Ltd. regarding this and it is likely that Angus Council will be asked to contribute towards this service provision. Other capacity issues may arise in due course and will have to be addressed accordingly.

6 NETWORK RAIL

6.1 Applications have been invited from organisations and individuals in Great Britain to be public members of Network Rail. Network Rail has recently acquired Railtrack PLC. Its objectives will be to achieve engineering excellence and provide safe, reliable and efficient rail infrastructure. Because it is a company limited by guarantee Network Rail will be accountable to its Members not to shareholders. The role of Members is similar to that of shareholders of a PLC though without financial interest in the performance of Network Rail.

6.2 The key duties of Members will be to:

- hold the Board of Directors to account for its management of Network Rail; and
- ensure that Network Rail is managed in line with high standards of corporate governance.

6.3 Network Rail is looking for around 100 Members in total. Around 60 of these (the public Members) will represent the community and the public interest, there will also be around 40 industry members who are being drawn from rail inquiry operators.

6.4 The Board of Network Rail will appoint the Public Members following a selection procedure managed by an independent panel. Those appointed are likely to have demonstrated a real interest in the rail network and the ability, as a Member, to make a constructive contribution towards the improvement of the network through their qualities and experience, independence and personal integrity. Members will not be paid for this role, but reasonable expenses will be reimbursed. The closing date for applications was 11 October 2002.

6.5 In order to meet the timescale for making applications for public membership, and with the agreement of the Convener of Planning and Transport Policy, an application has been submitted by Angus Council on behalf of Councillor West who is one of the Council's representatives on the Campaign for Rail Enhancement Aberdeen to Edinburgh (CREATE). The Committee is asked to homologate this action.

7 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The budget allocated by the Scottish Executive for the implementation of free travel for senior citizens and disabled persons for 2002-2003 is £582,000 and £1,051,000 for 2003 - 2004. It is expected that the additional costs for reimbursing operators for free concessionary passenger usage together with the costs for additional capacity provision can be fully met from the budget allocation from the Scottish Executive up to March 2004. The Scottish Executive has given no financial commitment for the continuation of funding towards the travel concession scheme beyond that date.

8 CONSULTATION

8.1 The Chief Executive, Director of Finance and Director of Law & Administration have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

9 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no human rights implications arising from this report.

10 CONCLUSION

10.1 The registration of a new schooldays only service by Meffans Coaches is welcomed, such journeys increasing the travel opportunities for Angus residents.

10.2 The introduction of additional train journeys by Virgin Trains both from Angus and Dundee is welcomed, providing additional travel opportunities to both Edinburgh/Glasgow and beyond.

10.3 The introduction of free travel for elderly and disabled persons has gone smoothly to date. The increased patronage is likely to have significant effects on the local bus service requirements in the area, therefore usage will be closely monitored. Additional facilities introduced to meet expected demand will be withdrawn should they not prove to be required and similarly should capacity problems arise then it may be necessary to secure additional capacity provision.

10.4 The invitation for public members of Network Rail provides an opportunity to secure greater transparency in agreeing and delivering improvements to the rail network.

NOTE

No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above Report.

AA/LEM/KW
8 October 2002

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