

ANGUS COUNCIL

PLANNING AND TRANSPORT POLICY COMMITTEE

7 MARCH 2002

**SUBJECT: NATIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT TIMETABLE –
TRAVELINE SCOTLAND**

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND TRANSPORT

Abstract: This report outlines progress on the development of the single public transport information service for bus, coach, rail, ferry and air services in Scotland and provides a suggested response to the request from Scottish Ministers that local authorities formally join Traveline.

1 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee –

1. note progress on the development of the single public transport information service for bus, coach, rail, ferry and air services;
2. note the request from Scottish Ministers that individual local authorities indicate how each Council intends to support the Traveline project in Scotland;
3. delegate authority to the Director of Planning and Transport, in consultation with the Convener of the Planning and Transport Policy Committee, to formally join Traveline Scotland provided it can be demonstrated that this is in the Council's best interest and subject to clarification of various matters detailed in this report; and
4. agree that a copy of this report be forwarded to the Scottish Executive indicating the Council's position on this matter.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The National Transport Timetable for Scotland was introduced on 31 December 2000 (report 107/01 refers). This is a national telephone enquiry service branded Traveline covering the whole of Scotland with links to English call centres to give information on all modes of passenger transport throughout Britain. It is accessed via a telephone call centre covering the whole of Scotland with the call number 0870 608 2 608.
- 2.2 The development of Traveline is a "Programme for Government" commitment of the Scottish Executive. Traveline is intended to provide a collective service on behalf of both operators and Councils to enable them to meet the requirements of the Transport (Scotland) Act.
- 2.3 Traveline is already in operation but is not yet providing fully detailed and accurate travel information. When fully operational, Traveline will provide bus information at the bus stop level. Traveline is intended to later also become an Internet service.

- 2.4 Traveline is a company with no employees. It comprises members who are mainly public transport operators. The members appoint a board of directors. Traveline has received start-up funding from the Scottish Executive, which has been used to employ a contractor, Journeyplan, to provide the service. The running costs of the call centre are met by public transport operators. Ministers believe that the running costs for data management for the service should be met by local authorities, who would have full access to the database and who should be able to recharge these costs to operators under the provisions of the Act. The Scottish Executive has provided funds, where needed, for local authorities to transfer data to Traveline (report 95/02 refers).

3 TRAVELINE MEMBERSHIP

- 3.1 Local authorities and Strathclyde Passenger Transport (SPT) have not yet formally become members of Traveline. Discussions have been ongoing for some time, including COSLA, on the future participation of local authorities both in respect of funding and membership issues, and to improve data exchange between the local authority databases and the Traveline database.
- 3.2 The Scottish Executive is concerned that Councils and SPT have not to date taken up formal membership of Traveline. Correspondence from the Scottish Executive is appended to this report confirming the importance that Scottish Ministers place on the Traveline project and urging local authorities to formally join the company in partnership with transport operators.
- 3.3 From Scottish-wide discussions it appears that local authorities in general are broadly satisfied with progress on Traveline and in most cases already participate fully in the provision of data (with the notable exception of SPT). Angus Council has actively supported the development of this project and supplies information to Traveline on all registered local bus services within Angus. The Council also publicises the Traveline information service via the comprehensive local bus service information published by the authority including on timetable leaflets, the Angus Public Transport Map and Guide and on timetable information boards at approximately 240 locations throughout Angus.
- 3.4 Joining Traveline can therefore be supported in principle however there are a number of important issues to be resolved before Angus Council (and indeed other Councils) can consider becoming formal members. These issues were highlighted at the meeting of the COSLA Roads and Transportation Executive Group on 5 February 2002 and include:-
- the provision of the Traveline services within the SPT area;
 - the participation of SPT in Traveline;
 - Council's liabilities as members;
 - the appointment of up to two Councils/Councillors as directors;
 - Councils/Councillors' liabilities as directors;

- the contract between Traveline and Journeyplan which cannot be seen by Councils until they become members of Traveline;
- clarification of responsibility for the costs associated with data management centre development;
- any allocation of those costs between Councils, taking account of their existing data input costs;
- whether Councils are able to recharge bus operators with the running costs of a service which also covers train, ferry and air information;
- whether operators will accept any recharge of data management costs, given their funding of the call centre.

3.5 Each of the above issues raise various matters for consideration, clarification and resolution. One of the key areas concerns the suggested financial contribution from each local authority towards the running costs of the Traveline Data Management Centre. The Deputy Minister for Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning has indicated the average cost for each authority is less than £6,000 per annum. This, however, raises further issues such as:-

- What is the principle behind local authorities paying?
- What service do Councils receive in return for payment?
- What is the main work of the Data Management Centre and who benefits?
- How should costs be split between local authorities?
- How will the future provision of more detailed information be reflected in future data centre running costs?

3.6 All local authorities would need to participate as the Data Centre covers all of Scotland. A common view among Councils is that the Scottish Executive has a continuing role to play in funding at least part if not all the running costs of the Data Management Centre.

4 NEXT STEPS

4.1 In responding to the Scottish Ministers request for information from all authorities on each Council's proposals and timetable for formally joining the Traveline Scotland company, it is important to reflect both individual circumstances and common concerns. Discussions between COSLA, the Scottish Executive and Traveline are continuing and the Association of Transport Co-ordinating Officers has been examining the Traveline business plan.

4.2 At this stage it is suggested that Angus Council should continue to actively support the development of Traveline. As a positive statement of intent it is therefore proposed that the Committee agree to delegate authority to the Director of Planning and Transport, in consultation with the Convener of the Planning and Transport Policy Committee, to formally join Traveline Scotland provided it can be

demonstrated that this is in the Council's best interest and subject to clarification of various matters as summarised in paragraphs 3.4 and 3.5 of this report.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The funding of the ongoing running costs of the Data Management Centre is one of the key stumbling blocks to be clarified and agreed in advance of formally joining membership of Traveline. The current estimate by the Scottish Executive of around £6,000 per annum for each authority would need to be contained within the Planning and Transport Department's Revenue Budget.

6 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no human rights issues arising from this report.

7 CONSULTATION

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

8 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The Scottish Executive wish to see local authorities formally joining the Traveline company as soon as possible. Angus Council has actively supported the development of this project but shares the concerns of most other Councils over financial and other issues arising from formal membership.
- 8.2 It is considered premature for Angus Council to formally join Traveline in advance of these common concerns being more fully addressed. However, it is proposed that the Council should at this stage clearly signal its intent in principle to become a member subject to the satisfactory resolution of these issues.

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/CGR/IAL
26 February 2002

Alex Anderson
Director of Planning and Transport