

ANGUS COUNCIL

PLANNING AND TRANSPORT POLICY COMMITTEE

28 NOVEMBER 1996

SUBJECT: LOCAL BUS SERVICE REVISIONS AND UPDATE ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT ISSUES

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF PLANNING, TRANSPORT & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Abstract: This report outlines recent and proposed changes to subsidised local bus services in the Angus Area. Christmas and New Year transport provision and the availability of concessionary travel over the festive period are also considered.

1 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee -

1. Homologate the decision of the Director of Planning, Transport and Economic Development for an Emergency Contract to be awarded to Strathtay Scottish for the continued provision of the 1750 Service 22 journey operating between Dundee and Kirriemuir until surveys have been undertaken and the transport requirements on this corridor fully assessed.
2. Note the revision to the Meffans Service 127 operating between Friockheim and Forfar to meet the transport requirements of scholars attending Forfar Academy.
3. Homologate the decision of the Director of Planning, Transport and Economic Development that the emergency contract for the Downfield - Bridgefoot - Auchterhouse service 138 to be awarded to Fisher Tours.
4. Note the revised timetables introduced on the Scottish Citylink services.
5. Note the proposed sale of Tayside Holdings PLC this being the parent company of Tayside Public Transport Ltd and G & N Wishart Ltd.
6. Note the levels of local bus service provision over the Christmas and New Year Holiday period.
7. Agree that the current level of concessions for Concessionary passholders be maintained over the Christmas and New Year period.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to update Committee on local bus service revisions. The level of local bus service provision over the Christmas and New Year holiday period is detailed and the availability of Travel Concession passes over this period is considered.

3 SERVICE 22 : DUNDEE - MURROES - GLAMIS - KIRRIEMUIR

- 3.1 Strathtay Scottish Ltd notified the Council of its intention to de-register the 1750 journey on Service 22 between Dundee and Kirriemuir which operates via Murroes and Glamis. In order to permit surveys to be undertaken and a review of all the subsidised services operating via Murroes an Emergency contract has been entered into for the continuation of this service until contracts are next retendered early in 1997. The cost of this Emergency Contract is £33 per day.

4 SERVICE 127 : ARBROATH - FRIOCKHEIM - FORFAR - KIRRIEMUIR

- 4.1 Following representations from parents the buses at schooltimes conveying children between Friockheim and Forfar have been re-routed in Forfar to serve Forfar Academy. This service revision took place on 21 October 1996.

5 SERVICE 138 : DOWNFIELD - BRIDGEFOOT - AUCHTERHOUSE

- 5.1 At its meeting on 29 August 1996, Committee were informed that Strathmartine Minicoaches had notified the Council that they were to cease trading from 28 September 1996 (Report 649/96 refers). Tenders were sought for the continuation of the service under an Emergency Contract to operate until the next tendering date in early 1997 in order to allow surveys to be undertaken and consultation with the public regarding possible service changes. An Emergency Contract has been awarded to Fisher Tours for the operation of this service at a cost of £386.60 per week. Dundee City Council will contribute towards this service providing 50% of the subsidy for journeys operating to Downfield, this representing the proportion of the mileage operated within Dundee and 5% towards the journeys operating to Auchterhouse, again this representing the proportion of the mileage operated within Dundee on these journeys.

6 SCOTTISH CITYLINK SERVICES

- 6.1 Revised timetables for the winter period were introduced on Scottish Citylink services with effect from 28 October 1996 this involved only minor timetable changes.

7 SALE OF TAYBUS HOLDINGS PLC

- 7.1 Taybus Holdings PLC who own the bus companies Tayside Public Transport Company Ltd and G & N Wishart is currently up for sale. While Tayside Public Transport do not operate any local bus services within Angus their services within Dundee operating to Ninewells Hospital are included in Angus Councils Travel Concession Schemes. G & N Wishart operate services between Auchmithie, Arbroath, Brechin and Stracathro Hospital (Service 140) this being partly subsidised by Angus Council and a subsidised shoppers service between Inverarity School and Dundee (Service 141). In addition G & N Wishart operate a number of school conveyance contracts on behalf of the Director of Education.
- 7.2 The timescale for the sale is such that indicative bids must be submitted to Taybus Holdings PLC by 20 November 1996 and final bids are scheduled to be submitted in December 1996. A number of companies including Strathtay Scottish, Stagecoach and First Bus have already expressed an interest in the acquisition of the company. Committee will be kept informed of the outcome of the sale and any effects on bus services within Angus.

8 LOCAL BUS SERVICE OPERATION OVER THE CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR HOLIDAY PERIOD

- 8.1 There will be no local bus services operating within Angus on Christmas Day or New Years Day. On Boxing Day and 2nd January a Sunday service will be operated. Timetables for other days will remain unchanged.
- 8.2 In previous years Tayside Regional Council sought tenders for the provision of a network of town services on both Christmas Day and New Years Day within Dundee City and Perth City. Of the services operating within Dundee only three routes extended into Angus these were the Downfield to Strathmartine Hospital service, a service between Dundee and Ashludie Hospital (both of these being paid for by Tayside Regional Council) and a service between Dundee and Liff Hospital paid for by the Hospital itself. The services provided were very poorly used and this year both Dundee City Council and Perth & Kinross Council have decided not to subsidise any local bus services on these two days. There will be no rail services operating within Angus on these days and therefore there will be no means for Angus residents to get to Dundee by public transport. To provide for services from the main Angus towns to Dundee and operate them within Dundee even if only to the main Hospitals would be extremely expensive and would be unlikely to meet the Council's value for money criteria of subsidy per passenger and subsidy per mile set out in the Council's Public Transport Policy Statement approved by Committee on 25 April 1996 (Report 261/96 refers). No provision has been made for this in the 1996/97 Revenue Budget.

9 CONCESSIONARY TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS OVER THE CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR HOLIDAY PERIOD

- 9.1 The Concessionary Travel Schemes for Angus Council, agreed by the Committee at its meetings on 6 December 1995 and 25 April 1996, apply on all local bus and train services in Angus at all times throughout the year when these services are operating. In previous years Tayside Regional Council made special provision to permit all Travel Concession passholders to travel free over the period between Christmas and New Year.
- 9.2 As no Travel Concession Scheme re-imburement claims for the new Angus Council Travel Concession Schemes have been received as yet from the main operator Strathtay Scottish Ltd no firm estimate of the likely cost of providing free transport can be made, however, it is anticipated that such a claim would be in excess of £12,000. No special provision has been made within the 1996/97 Revenue Budget for additional free travel over this period.
- 9.3 Among the Council's objectives, as set out in the Public Transport Policy Statement, is to ensure the best value for money from the total expenditure on passenger transport, taking into account the full range of the Council's responsibilities. In line with this objective priority is accorded to monitoring the commercial bus network and supporting relevant services over and above the commercial network when required. Against a background of limited financial resources available to address demands and continuing pressures on the commercial network it is suggested that priority for expenditure should continue to be directed towards support for year round services rather than further enhancing the Concessionary Travel Scheme provision over a limited period. This also recognises the wider issue of maintaining a reasonable bus network over which Concessionary Travel arrangements can apply.
- 9.4 It is therefore recommended that there be no change to the current levels of concession for Concessionary passholders over the period between Christmas and New Year.

10 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The additional cost to Angus Council of £4,500 for the Emergency Contract with Strathtay Scottish for the continued operation of the Service 22 journey at 1750 between Dundee and Kirriemuir and the Emergency Contract with Fisher Tours for the continuation of Service 138 between Downfield, Bridgefoot and Auchterhouse can be contained within the Planning, Transport and Economic Development Department's Revenue Budget for 1996/97.

11 CONSULTATION

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

12 CONCLUSION

- 12.1 The local bus service network continues to be kept closely under review and members should note the Emergency Contracts which have been arranged in order to maintain the current levels of service on the routes concerned pending a full review of the services involved.
- 12.2 Members should note the forthcoming sale of Taybus Holdings PLC and committee will be kept informed on the outcome of this and any implications for transport services in Angus.
- 12.3 The arrangements for local bus service provision over the Christmas and New Year Holiday period are outlined and it is recommended that there are no enhanced levels of Concession offered to Concessionary passholders over this period.

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
20 November 1996

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