

## ANGUS COUNCIL

PLANNING AND TRANSPORT POLICY COMMITTEE

29 AUGUST 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. Committee is informed of the school and College Transport arrangements for the forthcoming academic year and an update is also given on the Council's Travel Concession Schemes.

### 1 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee -

- 1 Note the introduction of the revised timetable on services 57 / 59 between Perth, Blairgowrie and Dundee.
- 2 Note the Emergency arrangements currently being made for the continuation of the Downfield-Bridgefoot-Auchterhouse service following Strathmartine MiniCoaches ceasing to trade.
- 3 Note the emergency agreement made with G & N Wishart for the continuation of their existing Inverarity, Kirkbuddo, Monikie, Dundee service until formal tendering takes place.
- 4 Note the local bus service contracts which are to be re-tendered for January 1997 and the consultation which is currently on-going in this respect.
- 5 Note the service agreements which have been entered into to organise College Transport on behalf of Dundee and Angus Colleges.
- 6 Note the award of the local bus service contract between Kirriemuir, Forfar and Angus College to Meffans Coaches.
- 7 Note the school transport retendering which has taken place in the Brechin and Montrose areas and the retendering of special education, swimming and sports contracts.
- 8 Note the change to the multiplier used to reimburse operators in respect of the Severely Disabled Travel Concession Scheme from 0.5 to 0.67.
- 9 Note the decision of the European Court of Justice not to reduce the age of eligibility to participate in the Senior Citizens Concessionary Travel Scheme for men to 60 years of age in line with that for women.

## **2 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 This report informs the Committee of recent and proposed changes to subsidised local bus services in the Angus Area. This Committee is updated on the retendering of school transport contracts on behalf of the Director of Education and the provision of College transport on behalf of Angus and Dundee Colleges. Changes to the reimbursement rate for the Severely Disabled Travel Concession Scheme are outlined together with an update on a recent European Court of Justice decision with regard to bringing the age for eligibility to Senior Citizens Concessionary Travel for men into line with that for women.

## **3 STRATHTAY SCOTTISH SERVICES 57/59 : PERTH - BLAIRGOWRIE - DUNDEE**

- 3.1 It was reported to Committee on 6 June 1996 (Report No. 452/96) that changes to the timetable were shortly to be made on Service 57 / 59 between Perth , Blairgowrie and Dundee, this revised timetable was introduced on 19 August 1996.

## **4 STRATHMARTINE MINICOACHES SERVICE 138 : DOWNFIELD - BRIDGEFOOT - AUCHTERHOUSE**

- 4.1 Strathmartine Minicoaches have informed the Council that they are to cease trading with effect from 28 September 1996. Currently the service between Downfield, Strathmartine Hospital, Bridgefoot and Auchterhouse is operated under a de-mimimis contract with Angus Council with Dundee City Council contributing towards the service for the proportion of the mileage operated in their area.
- 4.2 In order to permit the service to be surveyed fully and consultation to take place with the public regarding possible changes to the service an Emergency Contract is currently being sought to operate until 26 January 1997, the next major contract renewal date.

## **5 G & N WISHART SERVICE 141 : INVERARITY - KIRKBUDDO - MONIKIE - DUNDEE**

- 5.1 G & N Wishart informed the Council of their intention to de-register the shoppers service between Inverarity, Kirkbuddo, Monikie and Dundee from 17 June 1996 as it was no longer viable to operate commercially. In order to permit the Council sufficient time to undertake surveys and consult with all interested parties, an emergency contract was entered into with the Company at a cost of £30 per week to continue to operate the service until 26 January 1997 to coincide with the next major contract renewal date.

## 6 RETENDERING OF SUBSIDISED LOCAL BUS SERVICES

- 6.1 Local bus service contracts are awarded for three years with an option for extending the contracts for a fourth year. The following local bus service contracts have operated their full term or are emergency contracts which must be tendered formally as soon as possible and are currently under review, these contracts will terminate on 26 January 1997 :

Dundee - Monikie (Monday to Saturday)  
 Arbroath Town Service (Sundays)  
 Dundee - Forfar - Kirriemuir (Evening service Monday to Saturday)  
 Forfar - Letham (Monday to Saturday)  
 Murroes -Dundee (a.m. workers journey Monday to Friday)  
 Dundee - Inveraldie (Monday to Friday)  
 Forfar - Brechin - Stracathro (Daily)  
 Brechin - Queens Park High School (Schooldays only)  
 Kirriemuir - Airlie - Cortachy (Tuesdays only Shoppers service)  
 Blairgowrie - Auchavan (Wednesdays only Shoppers service)  
 Inverarity School - Dundee (Thursdays only Shoppers service)  
 Downfield - Bridgefoot - Auchterhouse (Monday to Saturday)

- 6.2 On-bus surveys have taken place on all services being reviewed, this entailed establishing passengers origin and destination, journey purpose, frequency of travel and any changes they wished to see to the existing services. In addition, all community councils have been informed that these services are to be retendered and have been asked whether or not they wish to see any changes to these services in this review. Consultation has also taken place via the Angus Transport Forum and local members have been informed. Feedback to date has been encouraging and useful comments have been received regarding possible changes to the existing services. Any scope for the further integration of these local bus services with Education Department and Social Work transport requirements will also be considered. Revised timetables will be drawn up shortly and will be the subject of further consultation prior to retendering.

## 7 COLLEGE TRANSPORT

- 7.1 It was reported to Committee at their meeting on 25 April 1996 that the Director of Planning, Transport and Economic Development had entered into service agreements with both Angus College and Dundee College to continue to organise transport for students to the Colleges for the summer term from April 1996 when the responsibility for this function passed from the Director of Education to the Colleges themselves. Further service agreements have been successfully negotiated for the 1996/97 academic year. This involves arranging contracts with operators and negotiating the purchase of season tickets or special discounted travel rates for groups of students amounting to an annual value of approximately £100,000.

- 7.2 A tender was sought for the provision of a local bus service between Kirriemuir, Forfar, Friockheim and Angus College in Arbroath to provide a service to and from the College at lunchtimes. A similar service operated on an experimental basis last year and was well used by students and the College asked that formal tenders be sought for its replacement. The contract was successfully retained by Meffans Coaches who operated the contract last year. It is worth noting that this service was also regularly used by members of the general public as an additional shoppers facility to/from Arbroath.

## **8 EDUCATION TRANSPORT**

- 8.1 The Transport Team organise education transport on behalf of the Director of Education. School conveyance contracts within Angus are retendered on a three year rolling programme. This year contracts have been renewed in the Brechin and Montrose areas together with the majority of contracts to provide transport for children with special education needs and all swimming and sports contracts. Contracts for transport provision to Angus Music Centre have still to be arranged, but as yet the transport requirements are not known. Details of all the contracts renewed have been reported to the Education Committee (Report Nos 434/96, 582/96). This retendering was a major exercise which in addition to the tendering and award of contracts involved writing to scholars receiving transport and detailing their arrangements as well as informing schools and operators of pupils allocated to each contract and agreeing routes and timetables.

## **9 ANGUS COUNCIL TRAVEL CONCESSION SCHEMES**

- 9.1 Committee were informed at the meeting of 25 April 1996 (Report No 263/96) that operators were unhappy with the generation factor proposed to be used by the Council in respect of reimbursement for the Severely Disabled Travel Concession Scheme. It was agreed that this would be reassessed once information on usage in respect of travel by the Severely Disabled passholders was ascertained.
- 9.2 The Travel Concession Scheme Regulations 1986 require that the Council adopt reimbursement arrangements which should be formulated so that the costs to the operators of providing concessions are met by the payments made by the Local Authority to the operators with the objective being that operators are "no better and no worse off" through participation in the Scheme. The regulations also indicate that due allowance should be made for traffic generated by the Travel Concession Scheme (i.e. passengers who would not have travelled if they had had to pay the full fare). Further discussions have taken place with operators and it has been agreed that in order to meet the requirement that the companies are "no better and no worse off" through participating in the scheme then the multiplier to be used by the Council in respect of reimbursement for the Severely Disabled Travel Concession Scheme should be 0.67 rather than 0.5.
- 9.3 Committee may have noted recent reports in the Press with regard to a claim by a Shropshire pensioner of sex discrimination in respect of the qualifying age for Senior Citizens Concessionary Travel being 65 years of age for men while women qualify at 60. The case went to the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg who ruled that this benefit was not within the scope of EU law. The court therefore backed the

Government in their claim that this concession is linked to pensions and was exempt from equal treatment rules for both sexes because of the difference in the state pension ages in Britain for men and women. Should the court have ruled in favour of the case then there would have been major financial implications for the Council in maintaining their current level of concession for Senior Citizens travel.

## **10 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 The cost of the emergency contract with G & N Wishart of £30 per day and of the replacement facility for the Strathmartine MiniCoach service between Downfield, Bridgefoot and Auchterhouse can be contained within the Planning, Transport and Economic Development Department's revenue budget for 1996/97.
- 10.2 The cost of the local bus service put on at the request of Angus College between Kirriemuir, Forfar and Angus College will be met in full by the College and therefore will have no budgetary implications for the Council.
- 10.3 The costs of the Travel Concession Schemes to the Council are as yet unknown as invoices showing usage since June 1996 when the new schemes became fully operational have still to be submitted. It is however expected that the additional costs resulting from the change in the reimbursement rate for the Severely Disabled Travel Concession Scheme can be contained within the Planning, Transport and Economic Development Department's revenue budget for 1996/97. Expenditure on the Travel Concession Schemes is being closely monitored and should it appear that the budget be exceeded then this will be the subject of a further report to Committee.

## **11 CONSULTATION**

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

## **12 CONCLUSION**

- 12.1 The local bus service network is 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 journeys involved.
- 12.2 Over a period of time the transport requirements of an area can change therefore a major consultation exercise is currently under way in respect of contracts which are coming up for renewal. Any potential for financial savings to the Council through integration with Education Department and Social Work transport requirements will also be investigated as part of this review.
- 12.3 An integrated approach is taken in respect of all transport provision and members should note the revised school transport arrangements for the forthcoming academic session and the service agreements entered into in respect of college transport provision.
- 12.4 The level of reimbursement to operators in respect of participating in the Severely Disabled Travel Concession Scheme has been reviewed and it has been concluded

that in order for operators to be "no better and no worse off" financially through participating in the Scheme that the level of reimbursement should be increased as detailed in this report.

#### 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/MR/KW  
20 August 1996

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