

ANGUS COUNCIL

PLANNING AND TRANSPORT POLICY COMMITTEE

11 MARCH 1999

SUBJECT: INTEGRATED TRANSPORT INFORMATION

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND TRANSPORT

Abstract: This report seeks homologation of the decision to purchase a specialist transport information computer software package including, initially, a timetable production module.

1 RECOMMENDATION

1.1 It is recommended that the Committee:-

1. homologate the decision of the Director of Planning and Transport taken in consultation with the Convener of Planning and Transport Policy and the Director of Information Technology, to purchase elements of the Routewise transport information system comprising the central kernel database and timetable production module at an estimated cost of £23,000;
2. note the acquisition of this specialist computer software will be funded from virement of savings arising elsewhere within the Planning and Transport Supplies and Services and Third Party Payments revenue budget for 1998/99.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Provision of good quality information to the travelling public is widely recognised as being vital to attracting people onto public transport. One of the most important ways in which this can be achieved is in the publication of good quality, easily read and accurate printed timetables. This complements other initiatives and expenditure including various support to services such as the Rural Transport Grant funding detailed in report 89/99.

2.2 The Council, via the Transport Team, produce and distribute timetable leaflets for all local bus services in Angus. Passenger information is also provided at bus stops and there are currently 214 information boards at key stops. The importance of good publicity and accurate information is emphasised in the Public Transport Policy Statement endorsed by the Planning and Transport Policy Committee on 25 April 1996 (report 261/96 refers) which includes the objective "To ensure that the public are kept informed of the public transport services available". The Policy Statement also confirms that:-

- The Council will seek to keep the public informed of all public transport available within its area by producing appropriate publicity material, in conjunction with operators, and make available comprehensive timetable information on both bus and train services.

- The Council will continue to provide roadside publicity at key bus stops and shelters and will expand the provision in line with the staff and financial resources available.

3 ROUTEWISE SOFTWARE DETAILS

- 3.1 Producing and maintaining up to date printed timetable information can be a difficult and time consuming task. At present the Transport Team employ a variety of approaches to monitor, amend and publicise relevant information.
- 3.2 Consideration has been given to two specialist computer software packages which could facilitate the development of integrated transport information. The Routewise package designed by Anite Transport Systems most closely fits the requirements of the Transport Team by providing a central kernel holding key transport related data and offering a wide range of modular applications that can be "plugged in" as required. At this stage the Timetable Production Module is the first priority. This module will permit timetable data to be input for each service. These timetables can then be readily merged in order to provide composite timetables with comprehensive details of services along a corridor, they can also be readily output in the format required for timetable display boards.
- 3.3 In the future further elements of the software package can be purchased which will permit this data to be used for a telephone enquiry system, this has already been highlighted as an aim of the Government as the first step in the production of a National Timetable. The system may also be used for interactive enquiry screens for the general public to access at key locations.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The cost for purchasing this specialist software including training and conversion costs is estimated at £23,000. No specific provision for this has been made in the Department's Revenue Budget for computer consumables for 1998/99, however, virement of savings on other supplies and services and third party payments would enable the acquisition of the Routewise kernel and timetable production module. This constitutes an important step towards developing integrated transport information. An annual maintenance charge of 15% also includes provision for software upgrades and provision for this charge can be contained within the Department's Revenue Budget.

5 CONSULTATION

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

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Accurate, up to date, good quality public transport information is an important element of a range of measures to strengthen the role of public transport services both in Angus and throughout the country. An information system developed specifically for transport services represents an important investment in support of the Council's Public Transport Objectives.

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
3 March 1999

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