

Report No 1042/99

ANGUS COUNCIL

PLANNING AND TRANSPORT POLICY COMMITTEE

14 OCTOBER 1999

SUBJECT: PUBLIC TRANSPORT UPDATE

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND TRANSPORT

Abstract: This report updates Committee on recent and proposed changes to local bus services and public transport provision in Angus.

1 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee -

- 1 Note the revised timetable to be introduced on Service 28 between Laurencekirk and Montrose and welcome the introduction of a Sunday service.
- 2 Note the revisions made to the Service 30 and Service 47 timetables to meet Montrose Academy scholars requirements.
- 3 Note the revisions to be made to the Arbroath Town Services following consultation between bus users, Angus Council and Strathtay Scottish Ltd..
- 4 Note the introduction of a Tuesday shoppers service between Inveraldie/Tealing and Dundee and welcome the assistance of Tealing Community Council in establishing this new service.
- 5 Note the introduction of winter timetables by National Express, Scottish Citylink and Scotrail.
- 6 Note the decision by Aberdeenshire Council to terminate the cross-boundary contract operating between Luthermuir, Laurencekirk and Montrose with effect from 1 January 2000.
- 7 Homologate the payment of a revenue guarantee to Meffans Coaches for revenue loss on their Forfar to Arbroath service following the introduction of a direct service serving three of the main settlements on the contract route.
- 8 Note the service levels currently being proposed for commercial local bus service operation over the Christmas and New Year holiday period. Agree that the Director of Planning and Transport be authorised to secure additional services as considered appropriate to maintain an adequate level of service to the public over this period and report back to the next meeting of this committee.

- 9 Note the award of contracts to date in relation to the Public Transport Grant funding awarded to Angus Council, Dundee City Council, Travel Dundee, Strathtay Scottish Ltd., Scottish Enterprise Tayside and Ninewells Hospital Trust for a cache of measures to benefit public transport on the Ninewells to Carnoustie corridor.
- 10 Note the proposed introduction date of 1 December 1999 for the National Travel Concession Scheme for the Blind.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This report updates members on recent and proposed changes to local bus services in Angus. Members are also updated on expenditure in relation to the Public Transport Fund grant awarded to Angus Council in partnership with Dundee City Council, Travel Dundee, Strathtay Scottish Ltd., Scottish Enterprise Tayside and Ninewells Hospital Trust. In addition, members are informed of the proposed introduction date for the National Travel Concession Scheme for the Blind.

3 SERVICE 28 - LAURENCEKIRK - MONTROSE

- 3.1 Merlin's Ark have submitted a registration to the Traffic Commissioner to introduce a revised Service 28 timetable with effect from 18 October 1999. This new timetable includes minor timing revisions to the Monday to Saturday services. On Sundays additional journeys are to be operated as follows:

0650 Laurencekirk - Montrose 0714	0840 Montrose - Laurencekirk 0901
0945 Laurencekirk - Montrose 1012	1602 Montrose - Laurencekirk 1624
1545 Laurencekirk - Montrose 1612	2255 Montrose - Laurencekirk 2316

At present no Sunday service operates on this corridor and therefore this additional service is welcomed.

4 SERVICE 30 - MONTROSE - BRECHIN - STRACATHRO SERVICE 47 - MONTROSE TOWN SERVICE

- 4.1 From 25 September 1999, minor changes were made by Strathtay Scottish Ltd. to the timings of afternoon journeys on Services 30 and 47 to meet the transport requirements of Montrose Academy. These alterations were made at the request of the Council.

5 SERVICES 40 - 49 ARBROATH TOWN SERVICES

- 5.1 From 1 November 1999, a number of revisions will take place to local bus services operating in Arbroath, these are as follows:
- Service 46 (Bus Station - Aikman Road) will operate via Leonard Street on journeys to Aikman Road thereby providing a bus service from the Town Centre to Abbey Health Centre. In addition, on journeys both to and from Aikman Road the service will pick-up and set-down at the front door of the Safeway Superstore.

- Service 49 (Bus Station - Hospitalfield - Arbroath Infirmary - Bus Station) will be re-routed to operate via the High Street, West Abbey Street (for the public library), East Abbey Street (for the Health Centre) and Lordburn to Arbroath Bus Station.
- Services previously terminating at Abbey Health Centre from Timmergreens and Kirkton will additionally serve Burnside Drive for the Safeways Store as well as Lordburn for the Abbeygate Centre.
- Evening services to Cliffburn will be re-routed via Benedict Road, Great Michael Road, Ness Drive and Flairs Avenue, this evening route will therefore correspond to that operated in the daytime. St Ninian's Road will continue to be served by Services 73 and 73A.

5.2 These service revisions are being introduced following consultations between Angus Council, bus users and Strathtay Scottish Ltd. which identified requests for the re-routing of vehicles to better serve the major retail outlets in Arbroath, the Health Centre and the Library.

6 SERVICE 370 - INVERALDIE - DUNDEE

6.1 From 4 October 1999, Fisher Tours introduced a revised service on Tuesdays providing a shoppers service between Inveraldie / Tealing and Dundee departing at 0930 and with a return journey at 1230. This service operates via the Murroes and South Powrie. This new service is being introduced following a public meeting at Tealing and a survey of the local residents conducted by Tealing Community Council on behalf of Angus Council to establish the transport requirements of the area. Appreciation is extended to the Community Council for their assistance in publicising this new service.

6.2 This new facility will cost £1040 per annum the costs of which can be met from the Rural Transport Grant awarded to Angus Council for 1999 - 2000. The contract has been awarded on the basis of two months notice of termination and its performance will be closely monitored.

7 NATIONAL EXPRESS / SCOTTISH CITYLINK

7.1 From 27 September 1999 the new Winter timetables came into operation. There was no change to the level of service provision within Angus resulting from this.

8 SCOTRAIL

8.1 From 26 September 1999 the new Winter timetable was introduced. There are no major changes to services operating within Angus however some re-timings of services has been undertaken.

9 CROSS-BOUNDARY LOCAL BUS SERVICES

9.1 Angus Council has received notice from Aberdeenshire Council of its intention to terminate from 1 January 2000 the cross-boundary contract operating between Luthermuir and Montrose which is jointly funded by the two Authorities. This service is for a morning journey at 0800 from Luthermuir via Laurencekirk at 0810 and

continuing to Montrose and a return facility at 1603 from Montrose. On schooldays this service is extended to/from Montrose Academy. Since this contract was introduced Merlin's Ark have registered services on this corridor which from 18 October 1999 provide an alternative facility to passengers at 0807 from Laurencekirk and a return journey at 1600 from Montrose.

- 9.2 As there is an alternative service now available no action is required on the part of this Council as a result of the termination of the contract by Aberdeenshire Council.

10 ARBROATH - FORFAR LOCAL BUS SERVICES

- 10.1 Members were informed at the meeting of this Committee on 28 January 1999 of the award of a contract to Strathtay Scottish Ltd. for the operation of an hourly service between Forfar and Arbroath (Report 89/99 refers). This experimental service is funded from the Rural Public Transport Grant allocation to this Council of £124,000 and the initial contract which has been awarded to Strathtay Scottish Ltd. will operate until 31 March 2000. This service operates directly from Forfar to Letham from where it continues to Friockheim and then directly to Arbroath providing a much improved journey time than the previous limited service operated under contract to the Authority by Meffans Coaches.

- 10.2 The service operated by Meffans Coaches provides a vital link for rural communities along the A932 between Forfar and Arbroath as well as serving Guthrie, Redford and Carmyllie. The service provides 4 return journeys per day on Mondays to Saturdays. It was recognised that the provision of a frequent and direct service between Forfar and Arbroath would affect the revenue being taken on the Meffans contract. It was agreed at that time that a Revenue Guarantee would be entered into to ensure that the operator did not suffer a financial loss as a result of the new experimental service coming into operation. It was further agreed these costs would be met from the Planning and Transport Policy Revenue Budget for 1999-2000. The difference in on-bus revenue for the months of April to August 1999 compared with 1998 is £4593.05. It is recommended that a payment is made to Meffans Coaches for this amount and further variations are calculated and re-imbursed on a month by month basis until 31 March 2000 when this contract will be re-tendered.

11 CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR HOLIDAY ARRANGEMENTS

- 11.1 Members will recall at the last meeting of this Committee on 26 August 1999 the provision of a Monday to Friday service on the May Bank Holiday Monday was reported (Report 822/99 refers). This service proved to be successful with over 2000 passengers using the additional journeys provided on that day. It was reported that negotiations were taking place with operators to establish the commercial provision of services over the Christmas and New Year holiday period with a view to providing additional journeys on a similar basis if required.
- 11.2 The major public transport operator, Strathtay Scottish Ltd. has informed the Council that their provisional proposed **commercial** local bus service provision over the Christmas and New Year holiday period is likely to be as follows:

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|---------------|-----------------------|
| • 24 December | Normal Friday Service |
| • 25 December | No Service |
| • 26 December | Sunday Service |

- | | |
|---------------|---------------------------|
| • 27 December | Sunday Service |
| • 28 December | Saturday Service |
| • 29 December | Normal Service |
| • 30 December | Normal Service |
| • 31 December | Sunday Service until 2200 |
| • 1 January | No Service |
| • 2 January | Sunday Service |
| • 3 January | Sunday Service |
| • 4 January | Saturday Service |
- 11.3 Consultation is still on-going with shopkeepers to establish opening hours and likely demand therefore this proposed service provision may still be subject to variation. On the basis of the information available to date Members should note the possible lack of a normal service from Saturday, 25 December until Wednesday, 29 December 1999 and from Friday, 31 December through until Wednesday, 5 January 2000 with the exception of 26 December 1999 and 2 January 2000 which are Sundays when a normal Sunday service will be provided.
- 11.4 For services which are operated under **subsidy contracts** to the Council there will be no service provided on 25 and 26 December and 1 and 2 January, on the other days a normal service will operate.
- 11.5 The result of Strathtay Scottish Ltd's commercial decision is that many of the settlements that do not have a Sunday facility may be without services for up to 5 days. In addition, the Saturday service on 28 December and 4 January may not provide a meaningful facility if it is to link with contracted services which will be operating as normal on these days.
- 11.6 Discussions are still taking place with the Chambers of Commerce to ascertain the extent to which retail outlets will be open over the Christmas and New Year period. Once this has been confirmed and the bus operators intentions finalised, it is recommended that timetables be drawn up to provide a reasonable service provision to the public over the Christmas and New Year period by enhancing where necessary the services to be provided on a commercial basis. Prices will be sought for the provision of these enhanced timetables on a de-minimis basis by Strathtay Scottish Ltd.. It will be necessary, in order for the operator to ensure adequate staff resources to cover these services and for publicity to be prepared that these arrangements are entered into as quickly as possible after all relevant information is available. It is therefore recommended that the Director of Planning and Transport be granted delegated authority to enter into de-minimis provision to secure services as required and report back to the next meeting of this Committee.
- 11.7 No specific provision has been made in the Transport Policy Revenue Budget and funding has not been identified from any sources such as Millennium Funds etc. to secure these additional services over the Millennium period. The costs, which have yet to be fully established, will have to be met from and contained within the Transport Revenue Budget for 1999 - 2000.

12 PUBLIC TRANSPORT FUND

- 12.1 Members will recall that the Scottish Office awarded funding of £475,000 to Angus Council, Dundee City Council, Travel Dundee, Strathtay Scottish Ltd., Scottish Enterprise Tayside and Ninewells Hospital Trust for a cache of measures to benefit public transport on the Ninewells to Carnoustie corridor (Report 448/99 refers).
- 12.2 A contract has now been awarded to Bright Tec for the provision of real time information VDU's, transceivers for relaying information on the location of vehicles and repeater units at the roadside to transmit the signals from the buses to the VDU detection units. In addition, a contract has also been awarded for the upgrade of the SCOOT traffic management system.
- 12.3 Members will continue to be kept informed of progress in implementing this scheme.

13 NATIONAL TRAVEL CONCESSION SCHEME FOR THE BLIND

- 13.1 Members will recall that at the meeting of this Committee on 28 January 1999 the proposed National Travel Concession Scheme for the blind was reported (Report 90/99 refers). This new scheme was originally scheduled to be implemented in June 1999 but is now due to be introduced on 1 December 1999. The National Scheme will be a voluntary agreement by operators to provide free national travel on the basis of local authorities agreeing to provide an agreed level of support for three years. Authorities would also administer the issue of a standardised concessionary pass.
- 13.2 Councils are still awaiting full details of the Scheme and the results of negotiations between the Scottish Executive and major public transport providers. Negotiations with minor operators will have to be undertaken individually by each local authority.
- 13.3 Under the proposals the costs to the Council for implementing the bus element of this scheme will remain at the present budgetary level of £10,000. This expenditure must be guaranteed for three years and an allowance made for inflation in line with RPI. For rail expenditure re-imburement currently costs the Authority £500, under the proposals it is estimated that this cost will increase to £1,700. It is however possible, dependent on budgetary pressure, to charge up to £5.00 per pass per annum, therefore the Authority need not incur any additional expenditure in respect of re-imburement costs or the administrative costs required for the procurement and issue of passes.
- 13.4 Once full details are received from the Scottish Executive then these shall be reported to a future meeting of this Committee.

14 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1 The withdrawal by Aberdeenshire Council of the cross-boundary service between Luthermuir / Laurencekirk and Montrose from 1 January 2000 will result in savings to Angus Council of £3,500 per annum. As an alternative service exists then no replacement service is required.

- 14.2 The additional de-minimis payments to compensate Meffans Coaches for the loss of revenue following the introduction of a new experimental service between Forfar and Arbroath will amount to approximately £11,000 for 1999 - 2000. This additional payment can be met from the Transport Policy Revenue Budget for 1999 -2000.
- 14.3 The cost of additional service provision over the Christmas and New Year holiday period has yet to be ascertained. The expenditure will require to be contained within the Transport Policy Revenue Budget for 1999 - 2000.

15 CONSULTATION

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

16 CONCLUSION

- 16.1 The local bus service network continues to be kept closely under review. Where necessary local bus services are amended for example to meet scholars transport requirements thereby meeting these needs in the most integrated and cost effective manner.

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
5 October 1999

Alex Anderson
Director of Planning and Transport

