

ANGUS COUNCIL**PLANNING AND TRANSPORT POLICY COMMITTEE****11 MARCH 1999****SUBJECT: PUBLIC TRANSPORT UPDATE****REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND TRANSPORT**

Abstract: This report informs Members of recent changes to local bus services in Angus. Details of the Quality Partnership entered into with Travel Dundee on the Auchmithie, Arbroath, Brechin and Stracathro Hospital corridor and of the Scottish Office's allocation of Rural Transport Grant for 1999/2000 are also outlined.

1 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee -

- 1 Agree to meet the request made by Perth and Kinross Council for a financial contribution towards Service 57 based on the mileage operated on that contract within Angus.
- 2 Note the amendment to Meffans Coaches Service 125 to operate a limited number of journeys on the Forfar to Glamis corridor into Glamis Castle during the summer months.
- 3 Homologate the decision of the Director of Planning and Transport for the award of a de-minimis contract to Meffans Coaches for the introduction of an early afternoon journey between Forfar and Kirriemuir via Glamis, this contract to be funded from Angus Council's Rural Transport Grant allocation.
- 4 Note Strathtay Scottish Ltd's decision to withdraw Service 70 operating between Dundee and South Grange Nursing Home and replace it with a new Service 71.
- 5 Homologate the decision of the Director of Planning and Transport to enter into a de-minimis contract with Strathtay Scottish Ltd. to maintain service provision to South Grange Nursing Home.
6. Note the Quality Partnership Agreement with Travel Dundee which will commence on 29 March 1999 on the Auchmithie, Arbroath, Brechin, Stracathro Hospital Corridor.
- 7 Welcome the announcement by the Scottish Office of the continuation of Rural Public Transport Grant funding to Angus Council for 1999/2000 at the 1998/1999 level of £124,000.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This report outlines recent changes to local bus services in Angus. Committee is updated on cross-boundary operation with Perth and Kinross and Dundee Councils and of a "Partnership" agreement with Travel Dundee for introduction of a super-low-floor wheelchair accessible vehicle on the Auchmithie - Arbroath - Brechin - Stracathro corridor. Details of the Scottish Office's Rural Public Transport Grant allocation to Angus Council for 1999/2000 are also given.

3 SERVICE 57 - DUNDEE - BLAIRGOWRIE - PERTH

- 3.1 It was reported to this Committee on 28 January 1999 that Perth and Kinross Council had requested a contribution towards the contracted evening and Sunday journeys on Service 57 between Dundee, Blairgowrie and Perth (Report 88/99 refers). These journeys had been withdrawn from commercial operation by Strathtay Scottish Ltd in 1996 and an emergency contract had been entered into by Perth and Kinross Council until formal tendering was undertaken. Perth and Kinross Council intimated at that time that they would approach Angus Council for a financial contribution once formal tendering had taken place.
- 3.2 The retendering exercise has now been completed and the Transport Team has undertaken surveys to assess the subsidy per passenger and subsidy per mile criteria on the section of the contract operating within Angus which the Council is being asked to subsidise. The subsidy per passenger is £1.81 and subsidy per mile 11 pence which are within the Council's maximum subsidy criteria of £2.50 per passenger and £1.25 per mile as outlined in Angus Council's Policy Statement dated 25 April 1996 (Report 261/96 refers). It is therefore recommended that Angus Council agree to contribute towards Service 57 at the annual cost of £7,868 per annum.

4 SERVICE 125/126 - KIRRIEMUIR - GLAMIS - FORFAR

- 4.1 It was reported to this Committee on 28 January 1999 that a Sunday service between Dundee, Forfar and Glamis was to be introduced from 10 January 1999, this service being scheduled to operate from Glamis Village to Glamis Castle on Summer Sundays (Report 89/99 refers).
- 4.2 The Administrator of Glamis Castle has approached the Council expressing his thanks for the introduction of the Sunday service and enquiring as to whether or not a weekday service could also be provided. Two operators, Strathtay Scottish Ltd and Meffans Coaches, currently operate to Glamis Village and both Companies were advised by the Council of this request. Meffans Coaches have decided to meet the request and have registered certain journeys on their Service 125 to extend from Glamis Village to/from the Castle during the summer months on a commercial basis. Three journeys from Forfar to Glamis and two from Glamis to Forfar will be diverted on Mondays to Fridays and two journeys in each direction on Saturdays. This new timetable will be introduced from 29 March 1999.

- 4.3 The opportunity has been taken, with the change in the timetable to accommodate operation to Glamis Castle, to negotiate with Meffans Coaches a de-minimis contract for the introduction of a new journey at 1315 from Forfar to Kirriemuir via Glamis. This additional journey which will fill a gap in the existing timetable will cost £465 per annum, it will be funded from the Council's £124,000 allocation from the Scottish Office's Rural Transport Grant.

5 SERVICE 71 - DUNDEE - GRANGE - A92 GARDEN CENTRE/LEISURE CENTRE

- 5.1 Strathtay Scottish Ltd have de-registered their Service 70 operating between Dundee and South Grange Nursing Home with effect from 12 April 1999. This service currently operates seven journeys per day (Monday to Saturday), three of which are provided under contract to Dundee City Council and to which Angus Council contribute based on the percentage of mileage operated within Angus.
- 5.2 Strathtay Scottish Ltd intended to replace service 70 with a new Service 71 which would operate between Dundee, Grange Road (but would not serve South Grange Nursing Home), the new Panmuirfield Estate and the new Garden/Leisure Centre on the A92. In order to maintain a service to South Grange Nursing Home the Company were requested to provide the three journeys to South Grange Nursing Home on Mondays to Saturdays under a de-minimis contract to Angus Council. The Company have agreed to do this at a cost of £936 per annum.

6 QUALITY PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN ANGUS COUNCIL AND TRAVEL DUNDEE

- 6.1 Members of this Committee agreed on 29 January 1998 to the award of a grant to Travel Dundee towards the purchase of a super-low-floor wheelchair accessible vehicle to operate on the Auchmithie - Arbroath - Brechin - Stracathro corridor (Report 104/98 refers). It has taken over a year for this new vehicle to be delivered, however this will be the first vehicle of its specification to be introduced into service in Scotland.
- 6.2 A Partnership Agreement has been entered into with Travel Dundee for the purchase of a super-low-floor wheelchair accessible Optare Solo which will cost the Company approximately £71,000. The Council will provide assistance of £10,000 towards the purchase of this vehicle and have undertaken work at Arbroath Bus Station to facilitate wheelchair access from the stance directly onto the vehicle. In return Travel Dundee are providing timetable improvements as follows :
- The operation of the 0730 and 1750 journeys from Arbroath to Brechin and 0730 and 1750 journeys from Brechin to Arbroath as through services. Currently Strathtay Scottish Ltd provide connections at Friockheim under contract to the Council, these contracts will be cancelled from the commencement of this new service.
 - The operation of an additional journey at 1130 from Friockheim to Brechin and 1150 Brechin to Friockheim which will connect at Friockheim providing a service to Arbroath and Auchmithie.
 - A new journey at 1445 from Arbroath to Auchmithie which will give parents the opportunity of shopping in Arbroath in the afternoon and arriving back in Auchmithie before the return of the schoolchildren.

- The operation of the 1750 Arbroath to Brechin on to Stracathro Hospital for evening visiting and a return journey from Stracathro to Arbroath at 2000.

6.3 Timetables are being prepared for this improved service and will be available in Libraries and Tourist Offices prior to the service introduction.

7 SCOTTISH OFFICE - RURAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT GRANT

7.1 The Scottish Office announced on 19 February 1999 that the Rural Public Transport Grant allocations to Councils for 1999/2000 will be maintained at the 1998/1999 levels. Angus Council will therefore receive £124,000, this money being part of the Government's £4.5 million package to improve public transport in rural areas. In order to receive the grant the Council will need to demonstrate that the grant is being used to provide additional services and increase passenger numbers. Members will recall that a report was submitted to the last meeting of this committee outlining the Council's expenditure to date and the procedures which will be applied to monitor and promote these services (Report 89/99 refers) .

8 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The financial implications arising from this report are the additional cost of subsidy towards the Perth and Kinross contract for the cross-boundary operation of Service 57 journeys between Dundee, Blairgowrie and Perth of £7,868 per annum. The costs of maintaining a service to South Grange Nursing Home of £936 per annum are more than offset by savings on the two previous Dundee to South Grange cross-boundary contracts administered by Dundee City Council to which an annual contribution of £1850 was made. The overall increase therefore in the tendered services budget is £6,954 per annum which can be contained in the Planning and Transport Department Revenue Budget for 1999/2000.

8.2 The additional journey on Meffans Coaches Service 125 will cost £465 per annum and can be met from the Scottish Office's Rural Transport Grant allocation to Angus Council of £124,000.

8.3 The costs in relation to the Partnership Agreement with Travel Dundee for the introduction of a super-low-floor wheelchair accessible vehicle on the Auchmithie, Arbroath, Brechin, Stracathro Hospital corridor have previously been reported to this Committee and can be maintained within the Planning and Transport Capital Budget for 1998/99 (Report 104/98 refers).

9 CONSULTATION

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

10 CONCLUSION

- 10.1 The local bus service network continues to be kept under review. Where services are no longer provided commercially by Companies and there is a demand for these then the Council will enter into subsidy contracts to meet these demands. Where appropriate such arrangements are made jointly with neighbouring Authorities in order to provide the facilities in the most cost effective manner.
- 10.2 Opportunities for working in Partnership with Bus Companies continue to be sought and the introduction of a Quality Partnership with Travel Dundee on the Auchmithie, Arbroath, Brechin, Stracathro Corridor is an example of this. Passengers will benefit through the provision of a quality vehicle which will be accessible to disabled and mobility impaired persons and from improvements to the current timetable. Partnerships such as these are in line with the objectives set out in the Council's Public Transport Policy Statement dated 25 April 1996 (Report 261/96 refers).
- 10.3 The continuation of funding from the Scottish Office's Rural Public Transport Grant at the current levels of £124,000 for Angus for 1999/2000 is welcomed and will give the recently introduced rural services funded from the grant the opportunity to become established and be of maximum benefit to rural communities.

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
1 March 1999

Alex Anderson
Director of Planning and Transport

