Report No 1405/04

ANGUS COUNCIL

INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES COMMITTEE 25 NOVEMBER 2004

SUBJECT: PUBLIC TRANSPORT UPDATE

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND TRANSPORT

Abstract: This report updates Members of proposed changes to local bus services within Angus. Members are also informed of the introduction of the Transport (Scotland) Bill 2004 to Parliament and the associated on-going consultation on Regional Transport Partnerships.

1 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee –

1 note the proposed services changes by M W Nicoll from 10 January 2005 on the Montrose – Laurencekirk and Sunnyside, Borrowfield, Montrose, Links Health Centre to Ferryden corridors;

2 agree to the provision of an additional early morning journey on the Letham to Forfar corridor on Mondays to Fridays to meet requests received from workers;

3 agree to the operation of the late evening journey on Fridays from Dundee to Monikie to also operate on Saturdays meeting requests received for this service;

4 agree to the provision of an afternoon journey between Monifieth and Forfar thereby providing a shoppers facility from Forfar for residents wishing to access Monifieth and the Angus Gateway development;

5 note the introduction of the Transport (Scotland) 2004 Bill to the Scottish Parliament;

6 note the recent publication by the Scottish Executive of an important Consultation Document on proposals for Regional Transport Partnerships, and agree that in order to meet the required timescales the response of Angus Council be drafted utilising the relevant Member/Officer Group and submitted to the Scottish Executive subject to confirmation by this Committee at its meeting on 27 January 2005.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 This report informs Members of proposed commercial changes to local bus services in the Angus area. Approval is also sought for the introduction of additional journeys on certain routes to meet passenger requests.

2.2 Members are also advised of the introduction of the Transport (Scotland) Bill 2004 to the Scottish Parliament and the associated consultation paper which has been issued in respect of the formation of Regional Transport Partnerships.
3 SERVICES 8 & 9 : MONTROSE – CRAIGO – LAURENCEKIRK

3.1 From 10 January 2005, M W Nicoll Limited will introduce a revised timetable between Montrose, Craigo and Laurencekirk. In order to meet demand, an additional journey will operate from Montrose Railway Station to Craigo and Laurencekirk at 15:55 on Mondays to Fridays.

3.2 From 16 January 2005, 4 return journeys will operate on Sundays between Montrose and Laurencekirk. These journeys are ‘placing runs’ for crew changeovers on Service 47, however they will provide Craigo, which currently does not benefit from a Sunday bus service, with links to Laurencekirk and Montrose.

4 SERVICE 27 : LETHAM - FORFAR

4.1 Residents in Letham have requested the provision of an earlier first bus on weekdays to Forfar which would allow connections with services to Dundee. Currently the first bus is at 07:25 from Letham arriving in Forfar at 07:40 and allowing a connection to Dundee arriving at 08:23. Strathtay Scottish Ltd are able to provide an earlier journey at 06:30 from Letham which would connect with services in Forfar to Dundee allowing an arrival time in Dundee of 07:18 this would allow the intending passengers to make connections with train services in Dundee.

4.2 The cost of an additional journey operating at 06:30 on Mondays to Fridays would be £22.50 per day. It is recommended that a contract be awarded to Strathtay Scottish Ltd for operation of this journey commencing on Monday 31 January 2005. This expenditure of £5,850 in a full financial year can be contained within the Planning and Transport Department’s Revenue Budget for 2004/05 and beyond and it is recommended that a contract be awarded on two months notice of termination, should the contract prove to be unsuccessful then it would be withdrawn.

5 SERVICE 47F : SUNNYSIDE – BORROWFIELD – MONTROSE – LINKS HEALTH CENTRE – FERRYDEN

5.1 M W Nicoll Ltd have registered a new service 47F to operate on Mondays to Fridays from Sunnyside, Borrowfield, Montrose, Links Health Centre and Ferryden. This new service will commence on Monday 10th January 2005. 5 return journeys a day will operate at 08:20, 09:45, 11:10, 13:10 and 14:35 from Sunnyside Hospital. These journeys will be provided on a commercial basis by the operator and will improve the frequency of services calling at the Health Centre on weekdays.

6 SERVICE 79A : DUNDEE – MONIKIE

6.1 A late night journey is currently operated by Strathtay Scottish Ltd under contract to Angus Council, departing Dundee City Centre at 23:05 on Friday evenings. This journey provides a late night service for residents returning home to the rural area north of Monifieth. This journey has proved to be well used and requests have been received for the service to also operate on Saturday evenings. Strathtay Scottish Ltd are able to operate this additional journey at a cost of £38.00 per night. It is recommended that a contract be awarded to Strathtay Scottish Ltd for the provision of this additional journey commencing from 5 February 2005. The cost in a full financial year amounts to £1976, this expenditure can be contained in the Planning Department’s Revenue Budget for 2004/05 and beyond. This contract would be awarded on two months notice of termination.
7 SERVICE 81 : MONIFIETH – MONIKIE – FORFAR

7.1 Members will recall that a new local bus service was introduced on 29 March 2004 linking Monifieth and the surrounding rural area with Forfar (Report 69/04 refers). To date, this service has performed well and passenger loadings have met the subsidy criteria.

7.2 At the current time, the service which operates on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays only provides a return journey from Monifieth to Forfar, meaning that Forfar residents wishing to access Monifieth and the Angus Gateway have to return via Dundee. Negotiations with the operator, JP Mini Coaches Ltd, have ascertained that it would be possible to provide a mid afternoon return journey from Monifieth to Forfar at a cost of £25.00 per day. It is also proposed that this service should run via Inverarity rather than Craichie and Kingsmuir in order to provide a public transport link in a hitherto unserved area. As an hourly service currently serves Kingsmuir by way of Service 27, no passengers will be inconvenienced by this change.

7.3 This expenditure of £3900 can be contained within the Planning and Transport Department’s Revenue Budget for 2004/05 and beyond. It is therefore recommended that this contract be awarded to JP Minicoaches Ltd to commence on 1 February 2005 and that the contract is subject to two months notice of termination.

8 TRANSPORT (SCOTLAND) BILL 2004

8.1 Committee will recall that the Scottish Executive published a White Paper ‘Scotland’s Transport Future’ in June 2004 (Report 1010/04 refers). Following on from this, the Transport (Scotland) Bill 2004 was introduced to the Scottish Parliament on 27 October 2004. The main measures included in this Bill are:

- action to tackle poor road works, with a new Road Works Commissioner, stiffer penalties for delays and low quality resurfacing;
- powers to deliver national free bus fare schemes for the elderly and disabled and cheaper fares for young people; and
- the creation of new regional transport partnerships covering all of Scotland, with Executive funding of an extra £34 million a year to deliver public transport and roads improvements.

8.2 A consultation paper has already been published on Regional Transport Partnerships as detailed below and a further consultation document is due to be issued shortly in respect of Travel Concessions. Members will continue to be kept up to date in respect of these consultation papers and progress in relation to this Bill.

9 CONSULTATION ON REGIONAL TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIPS

9.1 Broad proposals for the formation of new statutory regional transport partnerships covering all of Scotland were outlined in the Transport White Paper “Scotland’s Transport Future” (Report 1010/04 Infrastructure Services Committee 2 September 2004 refers).
9.2 Following this the Scottish Executive has recently published an important Consultation Document which sets out detailed proposals and seeks views on the number and boundaries of regional transport partnerships, their constitution including membership and voting arrangements, their functions and how they are funded. Significantly the Consultation Document proposes a “Central & Tay” Regional Transport Partnership encompassing the Council areas of Angus, Dundee City, Perth & Kinross and Stirling. (A copy of the Consultation Document has been placed in the Members Lounge.)

9.3 In order to meet the timescale of 19 January 2005 for responding to this Consultation Document, while enabling sufficient time for full consideration of the important issues raised, it is suggested that the process for formulating the Council’s views includes:-

- consideration of relevant matters by the short life Member/Officer group, constituted in accordance with Report 1010/04, to advise on Regional Transport Partnership issues of interest in Angus;

- further liaison with other Councils included in the proposed “Central & Tay” Regional Transport Partnership;

- preparation of a full report, to be approved by the Member Officer Group for submission to the Scottish Executive by the closing date of 19 January 2005, as the draft response of Angus Council subject to confirmation following consideration by the Infrastructure Services Committee meeting on 27 January 2005.

10 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The cost for the introduction of additional bus services operated under contract to the Council as detailed in this report amounts to £11,726 in a full financial year. This expenditure can be contained within the Planning and Transport Department’s Revenue Budget for 2004/05 and beyond. All the contracts will be awarded on 2 months notice of termination. They will be closely monitored and should demand not prove to be sufficient to meet subsidy criteria then these contracts would be terminated.

11 CONSULTATION

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

12 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are no human rights implications arising from this report.

13 CONCLUSION

13.1 The local bus service network is constantly reviewed to meet passenger requirements and where necessary additional journeys are introduced to meet passenger demands.
13.2 Consultation responses will be made in respect of proposed new legislation in order to ensure Angus Council’s views are taken into account when formulating new policy.

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
12 November 2004

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