Abstract: This report updates Members of recent and proposed changes to local bus service provision in Angus including the public transport implications arising from this year's school conveyance tendering exercise. In addition, Members are informed of the appointment of Consultants to assist in the preparation of Angus Council's Public Transport Information Strategy, of a new Bus Route Development Grant Scheme announced by the Scottish Executive, and of progress in implementing some elements of the Angus Rail Interchange project.

1 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee:-

1. note the recent changes to local bus service provision in Angus;

2. note arrangements being made for undertaking a full re-tendering exercise of local bus service contracts due to terminate on 7 November 2004, and agree the extension of the current contracts up to 9 January 2005 pending completion of the required registration period for the new services;

3. agree to a financial contribution from the Planning & Transport Department towards the award of contracts on a local bus service basis for school conveyance in the Arbroath and Sidlaw/Monifieth areas;

4. note the appointment of Consultants to assist in the preparation of Angus Council's Public Transport Information Strategy;

5. delegate to the Director of Planning & Transport authority to develop and submit any Bus Route Development Grant bid application and report back to a future meeting of this Committee; and

6. note progress on some elements of the Angus Rail Interchange Project including works to be commenced shortly on improved car parking and cycle parking at Montrose and Carnoustie Rail Stations, together with improvements to forecourt arrangements at Arbroath Rail Station.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 This report updates Members of recent and proposed changes to local bus services operating within Angus. Details are also given of the local bus service implications arising from this year's school conveyance tendering exercise. Members are also advised of the appointment of Consultants to assist Angus Council in the preparation of the Public Transport Information Strategy. Details of the new Bus Route Development Grant Scheme announced by the Scottish Executive are also included,
and progress in implementing some elements of the Angus Rail Interchange Project is outlined.

3 SERVICES 115/116 : FORFAR – FRIOCKHEIM – MONTROSE

3.1 Following a review of rural transport grant funded services a new contract was awarded to J. P. Minicoaches for the operation of Services 115/116 operating between Forfar, Friockheim and Montrose, this contract commenced on 29 March 2004. As a result of passenger comments following the introduction of the new service further alterations to the timetables were made from 15 April 2004. These revisions included the provision of an additional journey on Thursdays only at 14:10 from Forfar to Forerseat, returning from there at 14:22 to Forfar. In addition, to meet passenger requests journeys have been extended in Forfar to operate to/from Tesco’s as well as serving the Town Centre.

3.2 The cost of providing the additional journey on Thursdays to/from Forerseat amounts to £260 per annum. This expenditure meets the subsidy per mile criteria set out in Angus Council’s Public Transport Policy Statement approved by the Planning and Transport Policy Committee on 25 April 1996 (Report 261/96 refers). This expenditure can be contained within the Planning and Transport Department’s Revenue Budget for 2004/05.

4 CROSS-BOUNDARY LOCAL BUS SERVICES

4.1 Aberdeenshire Council have reviewed services which they subsidise from their Rural Transport Grant allocation from the Scottish Executive. As a result of this review the following services will be revised from 15 August 2004:

- 22:40 Montrose – Laurencekirk (Monday to Saturday) will be curtailed to operate on Fridays and Saturdays only
- 18:52 Edzell Woods – Montrose (Monday to Saturday) will be curtailed to operate on Fridays and Saturdays only
- 21:20 Montrose – Edzell Woods (Monday to Saturday) will be curtailed to operate on Fridays and Saturdays only
- 09:30 Edzell Woods – Montrose (Monday to Saturday) will be curtailed to operate on Fridays and Saturdays only
- 12:00 Montrose to Edzell Woods (Monday to Saturday) will be curtailed to operate on Fridays and Saturdays only

4.2 Surveys undertaken by Aberdeenshire Council have shown negligible usage of the journeys. Angus Council have also checked usage of these journeys by Angus residents and have established that their withdrawal will similarly not have any adverse effects.

5 LOCAL BUS SERVICE RE-TENDERING

5.1 The following local bus service contracts are due to terminate on 7 November 2004:-

- Dykehead – Dundee (Tuesdays and Thursdays)
- Kirriemuir – Stracathro – Hillside (Wednesdays)
- Forfar – Brechin – Stracathro – Edzell (Daily)
- Montrose – Brechin – Stracathro – Edzell (early a.m. Daily)
- Montrose Town Service 47 (Monday – Saturday evening and Sundays)
- Arbroath – Montrose (Monday – Saturday Evenings)
• Forfar – Stracathro (Non-School Days)
• Montrose – Edzell (early a.m. Monday – Friday)
• Montrose – Stracathro (Saturday early a.m.)
• Brechin – Edzell – Stracathro (Monday – Friday 11:05 & 14:04 Journeys)
• Brechin – Edzell (Monday – Friday 17:10)
• Brechin – Edzell – Stracathro (Saturday)
• Arbroath – Montrose (Sunday)

5.2 Consultation regarding future service provision in respect of these contracted services will commence shortly with Community Councils, local members, and other interested parties. In order to give sufficient time for the full re-tendering process, including reporting back the tender results to this Committee, followed by the timescale required for the registration procedures with the Traffic Commissioner, it is proposed that the remaining period of the existing contracts be extended by two months to terminate on 9 January 2005. The results of the re-tendering exercise and recommendations for the award of the new contracts to commence on 10 January 2005 will be the subject of a further report to this Committee on 14 October 2004.

6 SCHOOL CONVEYANCE TENDERING

6.1 School conveyance contracts are tendered throughout Angus on a three-year rolling programme with approximately one-third of the County being re-tendered each year. This year contracts are due for renewal in the Arbroath and Sidlaw/Monifieth areas.

6.2 A tendering exercise has recently been undertaken and the results of this were reported to the Education Committee on 27 May 2004. In this tendering exercise all the contracts requiring vehicles of more than eight passenger seats, 29 in total, were tendered on the basis that they would be operated as local bus services. An alternative bid was submitted for one of these contracts, AAB/1 from the Arbirlot area to Arbirlot Primary School, to operate it with two eight seat vehicles, both undertaking two runs rather than utilising a larger 21 seat vehicle. This alternative option achieved significant cost savings and was awarded on this alternative basis.

6.3 In total 28 contracts were awarded to operate as local bus services, the advantages of this being that local bus services can:-

• help sustain local communities (as adults can travel to work/shop etc);
• enable parents to accompany children to school;
• enable parents to bring nursery children to/from their nursery class;
• enable pupils who are not entitled to transport on safety grounds or who are within the statutory walking distance of the school to have access to transport; and
• help secure the best value for money from expenditure on school and public transport taking into account the full range of the Council’s policies.

6.4 The prices submitted by operators for the provision of the services on a contract basis rather than local bus service, while not meeting the tender specification, did highlight that one operator was charging a slightly higher rate, up to £2.50 per day, for operation on a local bus service basis. The reason given for this was that they would have to pay their drivers a higher wage rate for handling cash and that they would have to meet the costs of registering the services with the Traffic Commissioner. The Company considered that these additional costs were not wholly offset by the Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG) available to them.
6.5 In light of these additional costs but taking into account the benefits of increased travel opportunities to the wider population, it is recommended that this Committee agrees to 70% of the additional cost of awarding these contracts as local bus services be met from the Planning & Transport Department’s Revenue Budget. This amounts to £2,470 in 2004/05 and £3,555 in a full financial year.

6.6 The Transport Team is now including as much information on registered school services as is possible within the public transport timetables detailing all local bus service provision in Angus. In addition, new ticketing software which is to be introduced shortly will enable usage of these services to be monitored which will identify the take-up of these new travel opportunities.

6.7 The total number of school contracts now operating as registered local bus services is 69 out of a total of 79 contracts for vehicles of more than eight passenger seats, this represents 87% of the contracts in place throughout Angus.

7 APPOINTMENT OF CONSULTANTS TO ASSIST IN THE PREPARATION OF ANGUS COUNCIL’S INFORMATION STRATEGY

7.1 A report was presented to this Committee on 28 August 2003 seeking approval to appoint Consultants to assist in the preparation of a Public Transport Information Strategy for Angus (Report 890/03 refers).

7.2 Sections 33 to 35 of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2001 require local authorities to determine what local bus information should be made available to the public and the way in which it should be provided.

The term "information" covers all bus information including the following:

- paper timetables;
- roadside displays including bus stop flags and timetable information;
- real time information;
- web based information;
- fares information;
- concessionary travel information;
- information for mobility impaired passengers;
- maps;
- information required in respect of the delivery of a National Transport Timetable.

7.3 Atkins Transport Planning have been appointed to work with Angus Council to prepare the Information Strategy. The six month commission will include a baseline study of the existing public transport information currently available within the Council area, followed by a consultation phase with local residents, bus operators and other key stakeholders. Following this information-gathering phase Atkins will work with Angus Council’s Public Transport Team to develop short, medium and longer-term public transport information strategies for Angus. The overall aim of the study will be to design and deliver a clear, concise and integrated public transport information system for the Angus Council area.

7.4 All the tenders submitted met the tender specification and the contract was awarded to the lowest tenderer, Atkins Transport Planning. The cost of the consultancy work will be £14,850, this is within the £15,000 budget set aside for this project. This expenditure can be contained within the Planning & Transport Department’s Revenue Budget for 2004/05.
7.5 Members will be kept informed of progress made in relation to the preparation of the Public Transport information Strategy.

8 **BUS ROUTE DEVELOPMENT GRANT**

8.1 On 21 April 2004, the Minister for Transport, Nicoll Stephen, announced the launch of the Bus Route Development Grant Scheme. This Grant Scheme delivers one of the Partnerships for a Better Scotland commitment that the Scottish Executive would "pilot new kickstart plans to create better value bus services... to promote particular under-used routes through enhanced frequency and marketing".

8.2 The aim of the grant is to provide three year financial support to aid the development of new and existing bus services which can demonstrate the potential for growth. The overall aim of the grant is to improve access to public transport, encourage modal shift and reduce congestion.

8.3 Access to Bus Route Development Grant monies (a Section 70 transport grant) for projects to commence in 2004/05, must be identified in conjunction with operators and be set within the context of the local transport strategy for the area. It is a prerequisite that schemes should contribute towards the strategy objectives and the application must demonstrate that within the three-year funding period the proposal will achieve financial viability and be able to sustain the projected higher passenger numbers and overall level of service.

8.4 Eligible projects for the first round will be those which can demonstrate a high potential for developing new and under utilized registered local bus services, achieving high levels of passenger growth, greater service frequency, quality and other significant benefits to passengers. Bids submitted must be in accordance with the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) and the appraisal must be submitted with the bid.

8.5 Planning & Transport Officers are currently in discussions with local bus operators in Angus to identify possible bid applications. Bids must be submitted by 30 July 2004 and Members are asked to delegate authority to the Director of Planning & Transport to develop and submit any bid application and that this be reported back to a future meeting of this Committee.

9 **ANGUS RAIL INTERCHANGE PROJECT**

9.1 The position on various aspects of the Angus Rail Interchange Project was reported to members at meetings on 28 November 2002 (Report 1401/02), 28 August 2003 (Report 907/03) and 29 April 2004 (Report 524/04).

9.2 Further progress which has now been made on some elements of this project includes schemes for improvements to car parking and cycle parking at Montrose Rail Station and Carnoustie Rail Station, together with proposed improvements to forecourt arrangements at Arbroath Rail Station. Works to be undertaken on the above elements have been finalised with ScotRail and are being commissioned for commencement in the near future. These works, which are illustrated in the drawings attached to this report, include:-

- Montrose Station – provision of 63 space car park and cycle shelter, together with improvements to bus turning area and drop off points;
• Carnoustie Station – provision of 17 space car park and cycle shelter on north bound platform, together with improvements to pedestrian access to platform and amended access to footbridge;

• Arbroath Station – provision of taxi bay, drop off area and cycle shelter on forecourt.

9.3 Various other elements of the project at Montrose, Arbroath and Carnoustie Stations are continuing to be discussed and examined with Network Rail and ScotRail. Network Rail has also confirmed that regular meetings are being held with the Scottish Executive to discuss and agree priorities for delivering rail projects across Scotland including elements of the Angus Rail Interchange Project involving the provision of mobility impaired access/footbridge at Montrose Station and refurbishment of freight lift at Arbroath Station to mobility impaired access standard for passenger usage.

10 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The additional costs arising from this report are £250 per annum for the provision of an additional journey operating on Thursdays between Forfar and Forsterseat. The contribution from the Planning and Transport Department towards the additional costs for the award of Education Contracts on a local bus service basis will be £2,470 in 2004/05 and £3,555 in a full financial year. The appointment of consultants to assist in the preparation of Angus Council’s Public Transport Information Strategy will cost £14,850. This total expenditure amounts to £17,570 in the current financial year and can be contained within the Planning & Transport Department's Revenue Budget for 2004/05.

10.2 The works on rail stations car parking, cycle parking and forecourt improvements identified in this Report are estimated to cost £76,098 at Montrose, £63,500 at Carnoustie, and £27,375 at Arbroath. These works will be funded from part of the overall Public Transport Fund Award of £1,754,000 for the Angus Rail Interchange Project which comprises elements of both Section 94 consent and Section 70 grant.

11 CONSULTATION

11.1 The Chief Executive, Director of Finance and Director of Law & Administration 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 Local bus services continue to be monitored and adjusted to meet passenger requirements.

13.2 The award of further school conveyance contracts to be operated as local bus services is welcomed. This policy enables adults and non-entitled children to travel on these vehicles and maximises travel opportunities particularly in rural areas.

13.3 The appointment of consultants to assist in the preparation of Angus Council’s Public Transport Information Strategy is welcomed and Members will continue to be informed on progress made in relation to the preparation of the final plan.
13.4 Additional funding towards public transport is welcomed and the opportunity will be taken to work with bus operators to submit bids into the initial and subsequent rounds of the Bus Route Development Grant Scheme to further develop local bus service provision in Angus.

13.5 Improvements at Montrose, Arbroath and Carnoustie Rail Stations continue to be pursued as part of the implementation of elements of the Angus Interchange Project.

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 June 2004

Alex Anderson
Director of Planning and Transport