Abstract: This report outlines recent and proposed changes to local bus service provision in Angus and indicates arrangements to renew Disabled Persons Travel Concession passes. Members are also updated on Transport Direct funding, and advised of the recent Grant Offer of extra funding from the Scottish Executive for Public Transport Projects in 2003-2004.

1 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee –

1. note the local bus service revisions as outlined in this report;

2. note the arrangements which are being put in place for the renewal of Disabled Persons Travel Concession passes before the end of March 2004;

3. homologate the decision to accept the Scottish Executive grant offer of £320,873 for public transport projects in 2003–2004 as outlined in this report, and agree in view of the very short timescale involved for grant expenditure that, where necessary, work undertaken be exempted from Financial Regulations in accordance with Regulation 16.1.3b(i); and

4. note the expenditure proposals which have been submitted to the Scottish Executive for approval in relation to Transport Direct.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 This report outlines recent changes to local bus service provision in Angus. In addition, Members are advised of arrangements to renew Disabled Persons Travel Concession passes for 1 April 2004. Details are also included of a grant offer of £320,873 additional funding from the Scottish Executive to the Council for public transport projects in 2003–2004 and of the proposals submitted to the Scottish Executive in relation to £10,000 grant funding towards Transport Direct.

3 SERVICE 29A / 29C: LAURENCEKIRK / BRECHIN – MONTROSE

3.1 Strathtay Scottish Ltd. will introduce a revised timetable on this service from 2 February 2004 to provide improved connections with bus and rail services in Montrose.

4 SERVICE 73 / 76 ARBROATH – DUNDEE – NINEWELLS / INVERGOWRIE

4.1 From 5 January 2004, Strathtay Scottish Ltd. introduced a revised route through Invergowrie on services 73/76. There are no timetable revisions on the section of route between Arbroath and Dundee, however minor timetable changes have been introduced between Dundee and Invergowrie.
5 DISABLED PERSONS TRAVEL CONCESSION PASS RENEWAL

5.1 Disabled Persons Travel Concession Passes are renewed on a two-yearly basis. Those persons issued with Angus Council passes immediately following local government re-organisation are due to have their passes renewed for 1 April 2004. Approximately half of the current 1200 Disabled Persons Travel Concession passholders fall into this category.

5.2 Letters will be sent to the passholders in January asking them to complete new application forms and replacement passes will be issued in March 2004 so that all passholders have these before their current pass expires.

6 GRANT OFFER TO ANGUS COUNCIL FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORT PROJECTS IN 2003–2004

6.1 On 5 November 2003 the Scottish Executive announced an additional £15 million funding towards public transport projects in Scotland for the financial year 2003–2004. Angus Council received confirmation of its allocation on 10 December 2003, this amounts to £320,873 the distribution of funding being based on population. This funding can be used towards any public transport projects which fit in with the Council’s Local Transport Strategy but which do not equally benefit car users e.g. local road repairs. Grant can only be claimed for costs incurred this financial year in the period from 10 December 2003 to 31 March 2004.

6.2 The timescale given by the Scottish Executive is extremely short and in light of this the Scottish Executive have suggested the following uses may be appropriate for this grant allocation:

- Measures to improve the bus environment, to reduce crime on buses and to enhance driver and passenger safety, including on and off bus CCTV;
- New or improved bus shelters and stops and raised kerbs to ease boarding;
- Bus priority measures including bus priority lanes, bus gates and bus priority at traffic lights and junctions;
- Work in connection with bus stations, passenger interchanges and park and ride facilities; and
- Cycling and walking related projects, such as the provision of dedicated cycle lanes, upgraded road crossings, path networks and safer routes to school schemes.

6.3 Angus Council was given 28 days from 10 December 2003 to confirm acceptance of this grant funding which is subject to various conditions, including the provision of a summary of the project or projects on which the grant funding is to be used. In view of this timescale officers have written to the Scottish Executive confirming acceptance of this funding allocation and outlining in broad terms how this money will be utilised. In discussion, Scottish Executive officials recognise the difficulty in progressing this scale of expenditure within such a tight timeframe and therefore accept that alternative projects may have to be substituted should certain items not be achievable. They have intimated that they do not need to be informed of any changes until the expenditure is claimed.

6.4 The initial items of expenditure proposed to the Scottish Executive from Angus Council’s grant allocation are as follows:
Proposed Expenditure from Grant Allocation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Amount £</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ARBROATH BUS STATION</td>
<td>104,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Re-surfacing apron.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• New fencing, signing, timetable cases.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• CCTV.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEW/REPLACEMENT BUS SHELTERS</td>
<td>187,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• High Specification Shelters East High Street and The Cross, Forfar.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Additional shelters various locations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Replacement of existing shelters various locations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEW BUS STOP POLES AND FLAGS</td>
<td>21,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VINYL PRINTING MACHINE (FOR BUS FLAGS)</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INFORMATION DISPLAYS STANDS/RACKS (For Libraries and other publicity outlets)</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</td>
<td>321,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.5 As indicated above this breakdown of expenditure may be subject to change. Members will continue to be advised of all proposed expenditure in relation to this grant in future reports to this Committee.

7 TRANSPORT DIRECT

7.1 The allocation of £10,000 funding to Angus Council from the Scottish Executive towards Transport Direct was reported to the last meeting of this Committee on 27 November 2003 (Report 1347/03 refers).

7.2 Subsequently further correspondence was received from the Scottish Executive amending the criteria for which this funding could be utilised to be as follows:

- training Council staff how to use the Transport Direct service and assist members of the public using it;
- increasing the number of public internet points in libraries or local community centres so that communities can access Transport Direct more easily.

7.3 Proposals for the expenditure of the financial allocation to Angus Council in line with the above criteria have been submitted to the Scottish Executive. These proposals have been drawn up in consultation with the Director of Information Technology and it is proposed to utilise the funding to draw up a formal training programme, to train front line staff including those from ACCESS offices, the ACCESS line, libraries and job centres in the use of Transport Direct. The estimated costs of this training
programme totals approximately £9600. Any residual monies will be utilised towards the purchase of IT equipment to enable public access.

8 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The Grant Offer for public transport projects in 2003-2004 involves a very short timescale for procuring suitable projects and maximising the expenditure of £320,873 up to 31 March 2004. In view of this it is proposed that, where necessary, work undertaken be exempted from Financial Regulations in accordance with Regulation 16.1.3b(i) where the contract is required as a matter of urgency to suit the exigencies of the service. In these cases the precise method of procurement will be agreed in consultation with the Chief Executive and Director of Finance.

8.2 Transport Direct expenditure will be met from the one off grant allocation of £10,000 from the Scottish Executive.

9 CONSULTATION

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

10 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

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

11 CONCLUSION

11.1 The local bus service network is kept under review and passengers are advised of all service changes in advance through a combination of notices on buses, printed timetables and newspaper editorial.

11.2 Arrangements are in place to renew Disabled Persons Travel Concession passes for 1 April 2004.

11.3 The grant offer from the Scottish Executive for £320,873 expenditure towards public transport projects in 2003–2004 is welcomed albeit that the timescale for utilising this extra funding is extremely short. The Scottish Executive have been advised that the Council wishes to accept this grant offer and a broad outline of expenditure has been submitted. Members will be kept advised of progress made in relation to this expenditure.

11.4 The funding of £10,000 towards Transport Direct is welcomed. Members will be kept advised of the outcome of the proposals submitted to the Scottish Executive and developments in relation to this one-off expenditure.

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/SC
12 January 2004

Alex Anderson
Director of Planning and Transport