Abstract: This report updates Members of recent and proposed changes to local bus service provision throughout Angus. Members are also advised of Scottish Executive Rural Transport and Public Transport Capital Project grant awards.

1 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee:-

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

2 note the service changes to be introduced by Scottish Citylink from 28 November 2005 and authorise investigation and if possible early implementation of bus/coach interchange provision to serve Forfar and Brechin as discussed in this report;

3. note the revised Christmas and New Year local bus service proposals by Strathtay Scottish Ltd;

4. note and welcome the award of £223,000 Rural Transport Grant funding for 2006-07 by the Scottish Executive to enhance rural local bus service provision within Angus;

5. note and welcome the award of £319,000 capital grant for public transport projects in 2005-06 by the Scottish Executive; and agree that the capital grant be utilised for the further extension of real time passenger information in Angus; and

6. agree that the further extension of real time information in Angus be exempt from the tendering process under section 16.3.4 of Angus Council’s Financial Regulations.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Members are advised of recent and proposed changes to local bus service provision in Angus, including Christmas and New Year service arrangements and major changes to Scottish Citylink services in the area. Details are also given of a Rural Transport grant award to the Council for 2006-07 and for a grant for capital public transport projects for 2005-06.
3 SERVICE 30 : MONTROSE – BRECHIN – STRACATHRO HOSPITAL/EDZE LL

3.1 From Monday 5 December 2005, Strathtay Scottish Omnibuses Limited will be making further improvements to Service 30. Between 09:00 and 15:00 on Mondays to Saturdays, the company will operate, on a commercial basis, a half hourly service between Montrose and Brechin. These extra journeys will operate to and from Montrose Railway Station, thereby addressing the previously relatively small number of Service 30 journeys to and from Brechin operated via the station. Members should note that the additional journeys to be introduced by Strathtay Scottish are in addition to the extra journeys introduced on this corridor on 14 November 2005 by M W Nicoll (Report 1176/05 refers).

4 SERVICE 37 : ARBROATH – LETHAM GRANGE

4.1 In order to improve the overall reliability of the 17:20 Monday to Friday journey between Arbroath and Letham Grange on Service 37 (this journey operating directly through from Dundee City Centre departing at 16:40), Strathtay Scottish have retimed the journey to depart Arbroath Bus Station five minutes later at 17:25. This revision will take place with effect from Monday 5 December 2005.

5 SERVICE 39 : MONTROSE – ARBROATH – DUNDEE

5.1 From Monday 5 December 2005, Strathtay Scottish will amend timings on Service 39 journeys. These changes take into account both the opening of the A92 dual carriageway and the need for minor revisions to running times between both Dundee City Centre and Claypotts and north of Montrose. Members should note that there is no reduction in the number of journeys on the Service in question and indeed departure times from Montrose and Arbroath remain unaltered.

6 SCOTTISH CITYLINK

6.1 Members will recall that at the last meeting of this Committee on 13 October 2005, it was reported that Stagecoach had acquired a 35% capital share of Scottish Citylink Limited in return for transferring certain rights to the Motivator and megabus.com operations in Scotland. ComfortDelGro own the remaining 65% of the Citylink share (Report 1176/05 refers). It was reported that this joint venture would see express coach services in Scotland operate under the megabus.com and Scottish Citylink brands.

6.2 Following on from the announcement regarding the new Company, registrations have been submitted to the Traffic Commissioner to vary the current Citylink service provision with effect from 28 November 2005.

6.3 Scottish Citylink currently operates an irregular service between Glasgow/Edinburgh and Aberdeen with journeys every 1 to 2 hours. Few services are scheduled to pick-up/set-down in Angus and the majority of journeys operate on a non-stop basis between Dundee and Aberdeen. Currently the service provision which pick-up/set-down in Angus is as follows:

Dundee – Forfar – Brechin – Aberdeen Corridor

Dundee – Arbroath – Montrose – Aberdeen Corridor

- 06:30 Dundee – 06:56 Arbroath – 07:18 Montrose – 08:30 Aberdeen (Mon – Sat)

In practice, because of the limited service provision there is little use made of the services which pick-up/set-down in Angus.

6.4 From 28 November 2005, Scottish Citylink are completely rescheduling services on the Glasgow/Edinburgh to Aberdeen corridor and the new services can be summarised as follows:

- Hourly service Aberdeen - Dundee, Discovery Point - Glasgow. No direct buses to Edinburgh passengers must change at Perth. Hourly return journey from Glasgow - Dundee, Discovery Point – Aberdeen
- Hourly service Dundee, Bus Station to Glasgow. Again no direct bus to Edinburgh – passengers must change at Perth. Hourly return journeys to Dundee Bus Station.

The hourly Aberdeen to Glasgow and hourly Dundee to Glasgow combine to give a regular half-hourly service. All the journeys are scheduled to operate from Dundee to Aberdeen via the A90 non-stop within Angus with the exception of the following two journeys which will remain on the coastal route:-

- 06:35 Dundee (Discovery Pt), Muirdrum, Arbroath, Montrose, St Cyrus, Stonehaven, Aberdeen (Mon-Sat)
- 17:40 Aberdeen, Stonehaven, St Cyrus, Montrose, Arbroath, Muirdrum, Dundee (Bus Station) (Daily)

6.5 Officers from Planning and Transport have met with representatives from the new Scottish Citylink company to express their disappointment and concern at the withdrawal of virtually all coach services which pick-up/set-down within Angus and to discuss possible options available. It is clear that the company see no business case to operate via the coastal route, which serves Arbroath and Montrose, except on the two journeys detailed above. In view of the very limited usage within Angus on the current journeys on this corridor Scottish Citylink see no commercial basis to review their proposals particularly as rail provision on this corridor may be seen by customers to offer a more attractive alternative.
6.6 On the inland corridor via the A90 Scottish Citylink highlighted that the diversions into Forfar and Brechin were not commercially justified for the limited number of passengers they currently picked-up. However, the company did acknowledge that the free Scotland-wide travel scheme for older and disabled persons, to be introduced in April 2006 may significantly increase demand. In response to suggestions from officers, the company confirmed they would be happy to consider bus/coach interchange provision if this could be suitably located close to the A90. Members are therefore asked to agree that Officers investigate and if possible implement at an early date bus/coach interchange points at Forfar and Brechin close to the A90 in order to enable coach services to pick-up/set-down at locations which could be connected to local bus service routes. The outcome of these investigations will be reported back to a future meeting of this Committee.

7 CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR SERVICE PROPOSED LOCAL BUS SERVICE PROVISION

7.1 At the last meeting of this Committee on 13 October 2005 the proposed local bus service arrangements over the Christmas and New Year holiday period were reported (Report 1176/05 refers). Subsequent to that meeting further discussions have taken place with Strathtay Scottish Limited and improved service provision will now be provided on 27 December and 3 January. Full details of the proposed service levels are detailed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Service Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friday 23 December</td>
<td>Normal service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday 24 December</td>
<td>Normal service until approx 2130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday 25 December</td>
<td>No service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday 26 December</td>
<td>Sunday service except for the Arbroath Town Service which will commence from Kirkton at 12:20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday 27 December</td>
<td>Normal service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday 28 December</td>
<td>Normal service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday 29 December</td>
<td>Normal service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday 30 December</td>
<td>Normal service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday 31 December</td>
<td>Normal service until approx 21:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday 1 January</td>
<td>No Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday 2 January</td>
<td>Sunday service except for the Arbroath Town Service which will commence from Kirkton at 12:20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday 3 January</td>
<td>Normal service except for the Tayway corridor which will operate to a public holiday timetable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday 4 January</td>
<td>Normal service</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8 RURAL TRANSPORT GRANT

8.1 The Scottish Executive has announced the grant allocations from the Rural Public Passenger Transport element of the Rural Transport Fund for 2006-2007.

8.2 The allocation for Angus Council has been set at £223,000 in 2006-07. This is an increase from the previous funding round when Angus Council was allocated £205,000 (2004-05) and £216,000 (2005-06) as reported to the Committee on 17 April 2003 (Report 488/03 refers).

8.3 The aim of the grant is to enable authorities to introduce new or improved rural transport services, including maintaining those services introduced as a result of the grant funding which has been made available since 1998-99 and for related facilities, such as publicity and staffing for the promotion of rural transport services.
8.4 The Council has made full use of the grant available to date. Additional bus services introduced utilising previous Rural Transport Grant funding are now an integral part of the rural bus network in Angus. These services have been very well received in rural communities and expenditure of the new grant allocation will continue to be maximised including funding an extension of the fixed term Transport Assistant (Rural) post in the Transport Team.

8.5 Services funded by previous Rural Transport Grant allocations are reviewed as part of the tender renewal process and it is expected that over the next 12 months some services will be re-tendered. The results of any tendering exercises will be reported in future public transport update reports to the Committee.

8.6 Proposals for the grant provision for 2007–2008 and beyond are being discussed between the Scottish Executive and CoSLA, these will be reported to Committee as soon as they are available.

9 SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE GRANT OFFER FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORT PROJECTS IN 2005-2006

Background to Previous Grants

9.1 On 5 November 2003, the Scottish Executive announced an additional £15 million funding towards public transport. Angus Council received £320,873 funding for 2003 – 2004 which could 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 (Report 74/04 refers). This money was used for a wide range of projects including, improvements at Arbroath Bus Station (including the provision of CCTV), new bus shelters were purchased for locations throughout Angus, video cameras have been provided for school buses, new ticket machines were purchased to enable greater monitoring of service usage and hardstanding provision was made at various bus stops (Report 524/04 refers).

9.2 On 9 June 2004 the Scottish Executive announced a grant offer of £320,873 to Angus Council for the 2004 – 2005 financial year. This grant money was used as a contribution to the provision of real time information in Angus. A report was presented to the last meeting of this Committee on 13 October 2005 outlining progress to date in respect of this project (Report 1178/05 refers).

Grant Offer for 2005-06

9.3 A grant offer of £318,899 to Angus Council for public transport projects in 2005-06 was issued by the Scottish Executive on 6 October 2005. This offer required the Council to inform the Executive within 28 days of acceptance of the grant, and by 15 December 2005 to provide a summary of how it intends spending the allocation. Written confirmation of acceptance of the grant offer has been duly submitted to the Scottish Executive.

9.4 As indicated in Report 1178/05, it is intended, that as future funding becomes available, to extend roadside coverage of the real time passenger information beyond the Dundee – Arbroath and Dundee – Forfar corridors which are currently being implemented. Members are therefore asked to agree that this grant money for 2005/06 is utilised to procure the further extension of the ACIS real time information system in Angus. Details of this further extension will be reported for consideration to a future meeting of the Committee.
9.5 Computer systems have been installed by ACIS on most of the Strathtay Scottish fleet. To install further equipment of a different supplier both on this company's vehicles and those of other companies would be incompatible with the current system, therefore an exemption from normal tendering arrangements is sought under Section 16.3.4 of the Council's Financial Regulations. These state that any contract may be considered exempt “when the appropriate Committee decides that a specific contract or an extension to an existing contract should be negotiated with a particular party”. The Exemptions Co-ordinator has been consulted in this regard and is in agreement with the basis for the exemption. Members are requested to formally endorse this exemption.

10 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The rural transport grant allocation to Angus Council of £223,000 for 2006-07 is welcomed and expenditure will as in previous years be maximised in order to ensure that public transport users receive maximum benefit from the funding available.

10.2 The capital funding grant offer for financial year 2005-06 from the Scottish Executive of £319,000 for public transport projects is welcomed. Again, expenditure will be targeted in order to achieve maximum benefit from this grant.

10.3 There are no other financial implications arising from this report.

11 CONSULTATION

11.1 The Chief Executive, Acting Director of Finance and Director of Law and 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 The local bus service network continues to be monitored and negotiations are regularly ongoing with operators to ensure that service provision meets the needs of residents and visitors to the area.

13.2 The grant funding available to the Council from the Scottish Executive for rural transport provision is welcomed. Services funded from this grant are now an integral part of the bus service network and any withdrawal of this funding would have serious implications on the local bus service network.

13.3 The capital grant offer for public transport projects from the Scottish Executive is welcomed as this will allow the Council to extend and enhance real time information provision in Angus.

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
14 November 2005

Alex Anderson
Director of Planning and Transport