

ANGUS COUNCIL
COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – 23 NOVEMBER 2021
PUBLIC TRANSPORT SERVICES REVIEW
INFORMATION REPORT

1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of the review of public transport services instructed by the Road Safety Member Officer Working Group (reference Report No. 44/21).

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 As identified by the Road Safety Member Officer Working Group, a review of Bus Transport was agreed and progressed on the basis of its relevance to the remit of the Road Safety Member Officer Working Group. The review was expanded to include buses and trains, which each are used as public transport.

3. CURRENT POSITION

- 3.1 The Road Safety Member Officer Working Group, which comprises elected members and officers met regularly during 2021 to discuss the public transport services review: its methods, its findings and next steps.
- 3.2 A series of Focus Groups were undertaken with Community Councils/Volunteer Organisations; Angus Community Planning Partnership; Angus Transport Network; Angus Council Services; and other Local Roads Authorities. Transport Operators were also invited to attend. A copy of the information packs used at the Focus Groups is included in **Appendix 1**.
- 3.3 The aim of the Focus Group was to seek to establish the range of questions on which to consult with the public. Following a review of the results from the Focus Groups by the Road Safety Member Officer Working Group, several emerging key issues were identified, and the public survey questions were agreed - see **Appendix 2** including:
- how the council prioritises spend on bus routes and demand responsive transport, such as taxi services; and
 - ideas on how community volunteers could help provide local transport services.
- 3.4 The public survey from 14 July to 11 August 2021 was undertaken using an online platform. In addition, paper copies of the survey were available for collection and submission at local libraries, following COVID-19 restrictions. 120 responses were received. The results of the survey are presented in **Appendix 3**.
- 3.5 The Road Safety Member Officer Working Group met to review the findings of the public survey on 22 September and 20 October 2021, which are summarised as follows:
- 120 responses had been received while the survey had been open from 14 July to 11 August 2021.
 - Of the respondents, 95% lived in, and 46% worked in, Angus.

- 43% of respondents use bus or train transport on a weekly basis.
- 31% of respondents never or rarely use bus or train transport.
- Of respondents, the percentage use of bus or train was split 42/58.
- 29% of respondents thought the current split between traditional fixed bus service routes with set times and services that are more demand responsive was correct.
- 52% of respondents thought that the services should be more demand responsive, i.e. flexible routes and times.
- However, when asked what would encourage greater use of public transport services, 44% and 50% of respondents scored 'more fixed bus routes' and 'more fixed bus times' as a 10 out of 10, with 32% scoring 'more demand responsive'. 22% of respondents scored 'better quality buses' and 'cleaner stations/shelter' as a 10 out of 10 priority.
- 94% of respondents considered that council providers such as bus operators and taxis should provide public transport services. 26% and 16% of respondents respectively considered that voluntary organisations, community groups or individual volunteers should provide public transport services with a preference for these to be 'non-core' services.
- Respondents were more in favour (scoring 10 out of 10 on scale of priority) of us focussing on development of Real Time Information (42%); Smart and integrated ticketing (36%); and Travel Planning Information (34%) than Park and Choose (25%); Cashless payments (25%); and Active Travel Hubs (19%).
- Other issues of concern included requests for more frequent services; better connected services; more Sunday services; later buses; support for rural services; support of local bus operators; not everyone can drive and other equality and accessibility issues; and better integration of public transport and school transport.

3.6 The following themes for action have been identified:

- Local engagement with those who don't use public transport
- Providing just and effective public transport with reducing budgets
- Transitioning public transport to Demand Responsive Transport (DRT)
- Transitioning to the Sustainable Travel Hierarchy
- Quality, reliability, and performance of bus fleet

3.7 A series of initial actions have been identified to progress the themes identified in the public transport services review. The results of these actions will be reviewed and discussed at future meetings of the Road Safety Member Officer Working Group. Consideration will also be given to any changes required to the future contractual provision for public transport.

3.8 The initial actions to be progressed as part of the public transport services provision are as follows:

Demand Responsive Transport

- DRT opportunities and options to be considered as part of any renewal of public transport service contracts.
- Opportunities and options for volunteer groups to provide DRT services to be explored.

Publicity & Community Engagement

- To explain and explore the opportunities and benefits of DRT.
- To explain and explore the part public transport plays in a just transition to the Sustainable Travel Hierarchy.

Connectivity & Communication

- Continue to improve Real Time Information and provide accurate Travel Planning Information in Angus.
- Continue to work through TACTRAN as Regional Transport Partnership on the above and also Smart and integrated ticketing initiatives.
- Ensure opportunities for coordination and sharing of public transport and school transport is considered in decision making and proposed changes to transportation services.

Quality, reliability, and performance of bus fleet

- Ensure contractual obligations are met by bus operators.
- Use contractual requirements to seek to improve the quality and performance of bus fleet.

On-going Review by Road Safety Member Officer Working Group

- The Road Safety Member Officer Working Group will review the delivery of the above actions and maintain a view on how the themes identified as part of the review are being addressed.

NOTE: The background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) which were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report are:

Report No. 44/21 – Road Safety Framework to 2030 Update, Communities Committee 23 February 2021.

REPORT AUTHOR: Walter Scott, Service Leader – Roads & Transportation

EMAIL DETAILS: Communities@angus.gov.uk

List of Appendices

Appendix 1 – Focus Group Information Pack

Appendix 2 – Public Survey Questions

Appendix 3 – Public Survey Results