

**APPENDIX G TO REPORT NO 42/23**

**REVIEW OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT PROVISION**

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**Overview/Background**

The Transport Act 1985 places a duty on Scottish councils to secure the provision of public transport services, as the council consider it appropriate in their area.

The Transport Revenue budget supports the provision of local bus and demand responsive transport services within Angus. Through this provision we seek to:

- Halt the decline and accentuate the role of public transport services.
- Maximise the economic, environmental, and social benefits created by public transport services.
- Develop the role of public transport within the community, by providing mobility for those without a car and creating an attractive alternative to those with access to a car.
- Provide socially necessary public transport services not provided commercially.

**Current Position**

An options appraisal on Public Transport Service Provision for financial years 2023/24 and 2024/25 has been undertaken, to set out potential service reductions and achieve the required budget savings target. The suggested budget savings have been identified as £0.100 million in both 2023/24 and 2024/25 financial years, making an overall saving of £0.200 million, which is 10% of the Transport Revenue Budget

The public transport network in Angus has reached a stage where the remaining bus services are largely considered to be lifeline services. Previous reductions in public transport service provision have created a network that is focused around the larger urban areas, with very little rural transport options available, as well as low frequencies during evenings and weekends. This has created a situation where any reduction in service is likely to result in the removal of a community's key, or only, public transport option.

**Options Appraisal**

The basis of the options appraisal is to calculate, the subsidy per mile, and subsidy per passenger, for each bus service, and this calculation provides an overall score. These scores are then used to rank each service and those services with the lowest scores, have been given consideration for withdrawal, to achieve the £0.100 million savings target for 2023/24. Any service out turning a score of 6 or less, is considered to be low scoring and therefore considered as a potential service for withdrawal. The table below provides details of those services:

<b>Contract</b>	<b>Service Number(s)</b>	<b>Service Details</b>	<b>Operator</b>	<b>Annual Cost</b>	<b>Score - Sub per pax</b>	<b>Score - Sub per mile</b>	<b>Overall Score</b>
A533	27	Arbroath - Forfar. Mon - Sat evenings, all Sunday inc Forfar Town Service	Stagecoach	£103,828.44	1.5	0.5	<b>2</b>
A597	43, 44	Arbroath Town Service. 2 early Sat am journeys	Stagecoach	£1,979.68	2	0.5	<b>2.5</b>
<b>Contract</b>	<b>Service Number(s)</b>	<b>Service Details</b>	<b>Operator</b>	<b>Annual Cost</b>	<b>Score - Sub per pax</b>	<b>Score - Sub per mile</b>	<b>Overall Score</b>
A537	27	Arbroath - Forfar. Mon - Sat early am journeys.	Stagecoach	£43,643.79	0.5	3	<b>3.5</b>
A683	118	Noranside - Tannadice - Forfar circular. Mon Wed Fri	Short's Travel	£17,648.08	0.5	3.5	<b>4</b>
A614	34	Brechin Town Service. Mon - Sat all day	Stagecoach	£101,857.26	3	1.5	<b>4.5</b>
A670 & A673	137, 138, 139	Auchterhouse - Tealing - Murroes - Dundee. Mon - Sat all day	Stagecoach	£137,659.92	2.5	2	<b>4.5</b>
A600	30, 30B, 47	Montrose Town Service -Brechin - Stracathro Hospital. Sat evening journeys	Stagecoach	£5,336.12	0.5	4.5	<b>5</b>
A602	43, 43A	Arbroath Town Service. 2 early morning Mon-Fri	Stagecoach	£13,455.81	3.5	2	<b>5.5</b>
A601	30	Montrose - Brechin - Stracathro. Early morning return journeys Mon-Sun	Stagecoach	£27,078.05	3	3	<b>6</b>
A655	81	Carnoustie - rural area - Forfar. Mon-Fri, 1 return journey	Stagecoach	£26,492.97	2.5	3.5	<b>6</b>

Despite scores ranging from 6, down to 2, none of these services are considered to have a more positive score than another, all services are simply considered to be low scoring.

Contracts A537, A597, A600, A601 and A602, are relatively low cost, all provide key journeys that are relied upon by workers and are therefore important to the overall network.

Contracts, A537, A600 and A601, also support the services that they provide, to be operated commercially for part of the day. Without this support, the commercial element of the service would also be removed, resulting in the complete withdrawal of these services. All five contracts combined would have made a budgetary saving of almost £92,000, however due the key journeys they provide, it is not recommended that this group of contracts are withdrawn in full, or in part.

Contract A537 has historically performed well, with service 27 considered to be a vital service in the Angus local bus network. However, it did produce the lowest score and would also have provided the full budgetary saving for financial year 2023/24.

The service connects Arbroath and Forfar, regularly throughout the day and is a mix of commercial operation and subsidised operation. Without the subsidy, the commercial elements are unlikely to be profitable, and therefore it is expected the operator would also withdraw these commercial journeys, leaving no service at any point throughout the day.

The service has seen a reduction in passengers because of the impact of Covid19, with fewer people travelling for employment or social reasons. A small but steady growth in passengers across the network has occurred since years 2020 and 2021, and this growth is expected to continue in future years. Therefore, given the key connection this service provides between two major Angus towns, as well as the expectation of passenger growth, it is not recommended that this contract is withdrawn.

Contracts A655 and A683 provide services used by largely elderly passengers to access shopping, social and healthcare appointments from rural areas surrounding Forfar. The contracts costs are relatively low, and withdrawal would provide an overall budget saving of £44,000, well below the required £0.100 million. Demand responsive transport (DRT) services are being developed within the Angus network and these services are considered to be well suited to this type of operation. There is potential for small savings to be made through DRT and therefore these services could be maintained in future, whilst also reducing costs. These contracts are not recommended for withdrawal at this time.

Contract A614 provides service 34 (Brechin town service) and it is vital to the network in Brechin. Other local bus services (30 and 21) provide options in Brechin; however, these services only operate on a handful of arterial routes and are used to connect Brechin with Stracathro Hospital, Montrose, Forfar and Dundee. Service 34 allows the community connections from residential areas to the town centre, employment, healthcare, shopping sites, as well as onward travel options via services 21 and 30. The public transport network in Brechin is dependent on passengers utilising service 34 and it is not recommended that contract A614 is withdrawn.

## **Proposal**

It is recommended that contracts A670 and A673 are withdrawn and this would provide a saving of £0.137,659.92 million for financial year 2023/24. It should be noted that this would leave some rural communities without access to public transport, although this is now unfortunately common for comparable rural communities in Angus.

The main purpose of the service is to provide Auchterhouse, Bridgefoot, Tealing, Murroes and surrounding areas with a connection to other bus options on the A90, and also a connection to Dundee city centre. The contracts were previously supported in part by Dundee City Council, however they withdrew their support in 2019/20, due to their own budget reductions.

An on-bus survey was carried out on 11 January 2023, to identify whether the passengers using the service were from Angus, or whether they were passengers from within the DCC boundary.

During the early morning journeys, provided mainly for workers accessing employment, no passengers boarded and feedback from the operator is that this is consistently the case.

Throughout the morning, a total of 25 passengers used the service, however only 1 passenger was from Angus and the other 24 were DCC. A further 30 passengers used the service throughout the afternoon and early evening, with 11 of the 30 passengers being from Angus.

In total, 55 passengers travelled on the service and only 12 (6.6%) were Angus residents. Given the very low number of Angus passengers utilising these services, the high costs associated with delivering

the contracts, it is recommended that these contracts should be withdrawn to deliver the required budget reductions for financial year 2023/24.

To counteract the impact on the local communities, it is also proposed that Demand responsive transport (DRT) is piloted in this area.

DRT services run without a set timetable and often use smaller vehicles than fixed route bus services. Dial-a-ride services scheduled through advance bookings are the typical example. Community engagement would be undertaken when developing and designing how the DRT service will operate. The principle would be fewer journeys and the use of a smaller vehicle, but the views of the community would be considered.

The introduction of a DRT scheme would act as a pilot and case study for possible implementation elsewhere in Angus in the future.

### **Financial Impact**

The withdrawal of contracts A670 and A673, will meet the Transport Revenue Budget reduction target of £0.100 million for 2023/24. It would further provide a further £37,000 saving that would be used to fund the introduction of a DRT scheme.

There will also be no financial penalty suffered by the council for withdrawing contracts A670 and A673 early. Clause 12.1 of the conditions of contract sets out that contracts can be withdrawn by the council with a notice period of 10 weeks.