
LOCAL BUS SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

Report by Service Director Assets & Infrastructure

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

17 November 2020

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report proposes enhancements to the local bus service in the Eildon, Berwickshire and Cheviot localities.**
- 1.2 A review of the Councils In-House Fleet has identified a number of opportunities to enhance local bus services in the Eildon, Berwickshire and Cheviot localities, see Appendix 1.
- 1.3 In order to deliver the proposed service changes the Council will need to:
- Make minor changes to bus timetables
 - Operate services on the back of School contracts
 - Register dead mileage (where a vehicle operates out of service between two points) to qualify for Bus Service Operators grant at 14.4p per KM
 - Utilise Melrose Gait Development Contribution of £26k per annum for 3 years thus reducing the need to draw on bus subsidies
- 1.4 It is anticipated that the proposed changes will:
- Deliver savings of £44,000 per annum towards existing Fit for 2024 savings targets within both Passenger Transport and Education;
 - Increase contract and revenue income generated by the Councils in house fleet;
 - Improve connections and service efficiency; and
 - Enhance the service provided in the Eildon, Cheviot and Berwickshire localities providing improved links between communities and the wider local bus network.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

I recommend that the Executive Committee:-

- (a) Agrees to implement the proposed service changes.**
- (b) Notes the utilisation of Melrose Gait Development Contribution of £26k per annum for 3 years.**

3 LOCAL BUS SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

3.1 A review of the Council's In-House Fleet in partnership with Finance and Education has identified a number of opportunities to enhance Local Bus Services as detailed below:

- Enhance the 964 timetable in the Eildon Locality by including St Boswells, Borders General Hospital and Melrose Gait on the route.
- Enhance the service in the Berwickshire and Cheviot localities by introducing a new link between Newtown St Boswells and Kelso utilising one vehicle to cover the K03 School contract and services 20, 80, 85, 86, 902, 983.

3.2 A full break down of the proposed services changes and associated benefits are outlined in Appendix 1.

3.3 In order to deliver the proposed service changes the Council will need to:

- Make minor changes to bus timetables
- Operate services on the back of School contracts
- Register dead mileage (where a vehicle operates out of service between two points) to qualify for Bus Service Operators grant at 14.4p Per KM
- Utilise Melrose Gait Development Contribution of £26k per annum for 3 years thus reducing the need to draw on bus subsidies

3.4 It is anticipated that the proposed service changes will deliver the following benefits:

- Reduce the recharge to Education and the cost to the bus subsidies budgets.
- Enhanced links between localities for example new connections between Kelso and the BGH
- Maximise the potential to generate income through increased patronage
- Enables the eligibility for Bus Service Operators Grant which in turn reduces the overall net cost of operation to the council whilst making the services more sustainable in the longer term.

4 WIDER NETWORK REVIEW/STRATEGY

4.1 The review work outlined within this report is the first stage of wider network review. Existing passenger data along with engagement with communities and stakeholders through the Local Area Partnership will shape future transport network across the region.

4.2 Passenger Transport is aware that there are further opportunities across the region where links can be improved through minor changes to the local bus network. For example links to the Jedburgh Community Campus from the town centre.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial

- (a) The changes to the proposed services will deliver a permanent net saving of £18,000 per annum towards Fit for 2024 savings within Education.
- (b) A Development Contribution of £187,200 was received as a subsidy to the cost of providing a local bus service providing a sustainable link from Melrose Gait to Galashiels Town centre on such route, service times and duration as the Planning Authority determine. The enhanced 964 timetable meets this criteria. Therefore an additional income from Development Contributions of £26,000 towards Fit for 2024 savings within Passenger Transport for the next 3 years, with the option to extend this further is proposed. Further savings through growth of fares revenue from this route are possible and this will be monitored going forward

5.2 Risk and Mitigations

The following risks and mitigations have been identified in relation to the proposed services changes.

Risks	Mitigations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Low Patronage levels, reduced income post Covid-19• Passenger dissatisfaction at timetable enhancements\changes• Loss of development contribution income at the end of the contract resulting in potential reduction in service	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enhanced timetable with improved transport links to mitigate for any loss in revenue.• More consistency throughout the timetable with more regular services• Improved utilisation of SBC fleet• Meet regularly with area partnerships and communicate service performance throughout the life of contract.• The Development Contribution will be accounted for within savings for the first 3 years only in the first instance.

5.3 Integrated Impact Assessment

- (a) An Integrated Impact Assessment has been undertaken.
- (b) The Integrated Impact Assessment identified that the proposals will have predominantly positive impacts in relation to the Councils legal responsibilities under the Equalities Act 2010 and Fairer Scotland Duty.
- (c) The Integrated Impact Assessment recommends that the Council implement the proposal with no amendments on the basis that it is striving to actively contribute to make each bus service more sustainable by saving money, increasing patronage, reducing dead mileage (where a vehicle operates out of service between two

points), reducing social isolation, increasing utilisation of the assets (vehicles) by combining routes, and ensuring that the contracts of the drivers reflect the hours that they actually work. This fits with SBC's Fit for 24 (FF24) vision and plans for savings. In addition the Council will continue to engage and consult with the communities to ensure that the bus services are what the public want at the frequency they require within the constraints of the budget available.

5.4 **Acting Sustainably**

An initial impact assessment has been completed. The assessment considers the impacts of the proposals on Economic Growth, Social Cohesion and Protection of the Environment. Some of the key positive impacts are outlined below.

- Encourage use of public/community transport
- Improve access to facilities for those without a car
- Reduce travel requirements or encourage mode shift to more sustainable forms of transport

5.5 **Carbon Management**

The impact of the proposals on the Councils carbon footprint are not known. However, it is likely it will have a positive impact due to the reduction in dead mileage (where a vehicle operates out of service between two points) and also improved utilisation of the Councils fleet.

5.6 **Rural Proofing**

A rural proofing assessment has been undertaken. It is anticipated there will be no adverse impact on the rural area from the proposals contained in this report

5.7 **Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation**

There are no changes to the Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation as a result of the report.

6 **CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 The Executive Director (Finance & Regulatory), the Monitoring Officer/Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Service Director HR & Communications, the Clerk to the Council, the Corporate Equalities and Diversity Officer and Corporate Communications have been consulted and any comments received have been incorporated into the final report.

Approved by

Name - John Curry

Signature

Title - Service Director Assets & Infrastructure

Author(s)

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Background Papers: NA

Previous Minute Reference: NA

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Appendix 1 – Proposed enhancements to local bus services

Service	Current	Proposed	Benefit
964 Border Weaver Service	<p>Currently operates 4 trips per day</p> <p>Serves Newtown St Boswells, Bowden, Melrose, Tweedbank and Galashiels. 1 Journey per day to Gattonside</p> <p>No journeys currently serve the BGH</p>	<p>Reduce the service from 4 journeys per day to 3</p> <p>Enhance the route to serve the BGH, Newtown St Boswells and Melrose Gait</p> <p>Amend the timings to allow us to enhance the timetable by providing additional links to St Boswells, BGH and Melrose Gait.</p>	<p>Will make the route eligible for £26k development contribution to cover the cost of operation</p> <p>Additional revenue through the enhanced level of service.</p> <p>Provides longer term stability for the route.</p>
Service 20	<p>Currently operates 1 lunchtime return journey between Kelso and Jedburgh Monday to Thursday Schooldays and Monday to Friday School Holidays.</p>	<p>Propose to operate Monday to Thursday.</p> <p>Peter Hogg of Jedburgh will still be available on the Friday for return journeys through their commercial timetable.</p>	<p>Provides a more consistent timetable and enables us to be more efficient with the vehicle.</p> <p>Commercial operator benefits from additional patronage on Fridays</p>
Service 80	<p>Single AM Journey between Kelso town centre and Plexus.</p> <p>Subsidised by SBC and operated by Peter Hogg of Jedburgh who have handed the contract back.</p>	<p>Continue to operate service utilising in house fleet</p> <p>Service to operate at the same times and continue to serve Plexus</p>	<p>Additional Revenue</p> <p>Fully utilises the vehicle</p>
Service 85	<p>Service was previously withdrawn as part of the 2019/20 savings plan, £7K was retained to maintain links in the Berwickshire area that match passenger demand.</p>	<p>Propose to operate Tuesdays and Thursdays only</p>	<p>Provides Stichill, Hume and Leitholm with Links to Kelso.</p> <p>Provides a link that matches previous levels of demand</p>

Service	Current	Proposed	Benefit
Service 86	Service not currently in existence.	New service that will be registered between Newtown St Boswells and Kelso	<p>Eligible for bus service operators grant</p> <p>Provides an additional link between Kelso and Newtown St Boswells</p> <p>Reduces dead mileage</p> <p>Links in with the core bus network</p>
902 Service	Currently operates Monday, Wednesday and Friday as DRT (Demand responsive Transport) serving Kelso, Hume, Mellerstain and Smailholm.	Propose to operate 2 days per week Monday and Wednesday.	<p>Anticipate that by operating as a dedicated service we will generate more patronage.</p> <p>Eligible for Bus Service Operators Grant</p> <p>More regular service for residents of Hume, Mellerstain and Smailholm.</p>

