

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE – 5 JUNE 2001

RURAL TRANSPORT FUND 2001-2004

Report By Director of Development Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of the report is to: -

- (a) advise the Committee that the Scottish Executive has announced continued and improved funding for the next 3 years for the Rural Transport Fund for socially desirable bus services in rural areas; and
- (b) to advise the Committee of potential new services to be introduced in East Ayrshire.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The Rural Transport Fund was introduced in 1998 by the Scottish Office to enhance public transport services and related facilities in rural areas across Scotland. The Fund has to be for the benefit of people living in settlements of less than 10,000 population.

2.2 East Ayrshire was subsequently allocated £46,000 per annum in 1998-1999 and 1999-2000, of which £41,000 was allocated to SPT for the SPTA area and £5,000 to the Council for the area outwith the SPTA boundary. For 2000-2001 the total funding was increased to £49,000 with £6,000 for the Council area outwith the SPTA area.

3. AREA OUTWITH STRATHCLYDE PASSENGER TRANSPORT AREA

3.1 At its meeting of 26 January 1999, the Committee agreed to introduce: -

- (a) additional late night evening bus services between Ayr and Dalmellington to depart from Ayr on Friday and Saturday night at 2315 hrs; and
- (b) additional journeys on Sundays at 2100 hrs from Ayr to Dalmellington and 0850 hrs from Dalmellington to Ayr to minimise a 2 hour gap in service provision at these times.

3.2 The services are provided by Stagecoach Western Buses and fully utilise the funds available. From traffic returns submitted by the operator, approximately 187 passengers per month are using the service and, on average, 11 passengers are being carried on each journey. The subsidy cost per passenger is £2.28 which is within the Guideline Criteria for rural areas of £2.90 per passenger.

3.3 The funding has also been used to provide a new bus shelter in New Cumnock and to assist with the production of a Cumnock and Doon Valley area transport guide covering all local bus and rail services in the area.

4. AREA WITHIN STRATHCLYDE PASSENGER TRANSPORT AREA

4.1 SPT has introduced the following services in East Ayrshire within the SPTA boundary with the aid of Rural Transport Funding:-

- an enhanced service on the Ayr-Cumnock corridor serving Skares, Sinclairston, Drongan and Ayr Hospital. The additional journeys introduced on the Western service 346/347 service now provide an hourly service on this corridor.
- a two-hourly Sunday service on the Western service 337, Kilmarnock – Glengarnock, providing additional facilities at Lugton, Dunlop, Stewarton, Kilmaurs, Knockentiber and Crosshouse.

5. FUNDING FOR 2001-2004

5.1 The Scottish Executive has recently announced that the Fund will be continued and the new increased allocations are set out below: -

Year	Total (£000s)	Amount for area outwith SPTA	Amount for area within SPTA
2001-2002	60	7	53
2002-2003	63	7	56
2003-2004	70	7	63

5.2 As the contract price is around £7,000 per annum at present, it will not be possible to provide any further enhancements other than the extra journeys already specified on the A713 Ayr-Dalmellington service for services outwith the SPTA area.

5.3 Initial discussions have taken place with SPT regarding potential new services within the SPTA area. SPT are considering introducing evening journeys from Catrine through Mauchline to Ayr and possibly also enhanced travel opportunities for Moscow and Waterside. However, these proposals will need further consideration and will be subject to approval by the SPTA Operations Committee.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The grants available for rural bus services are in addition to the subsidised services currently operating within East Ayrshire.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Nil.

8. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Nil

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 It is recommended that the Committee: -

- (a) notes that the Scottish Executive has announced funding levels for the period 2001-2004 for the Rural Transport Fund for socially desirable bus services in rural areas; and
- (b) notes the potential new bus services that may be introduced in East Ayrshire.

Stephen Chorley
Director of Development Services

22 May 2001

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Budget Rural Transport Measures, Development Services Committee, 26 May 1998.
2. Rural Public Transport Grant, Development Services Committee, 26 January 1999.
3. Rural Public Transport Grant, Development Services Committee, 1 June 1999.

For further information contact Kerr Chalmers on 01563 555715.

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AGENDA