

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE – 16 DECEMBER 2003**

#### **KILMARNOCK TOWN CENTRE – PROPOSED SHOPPERS' BUS SERVICE**

##### **Report by Director of Development Services**

### **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To seek the Committee's support for the introduction of a shoppers' bus service within Kilmarnock.

### **2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Through the Section 75 Agreement associated with the development of the new Morrisons' Superstore, the developer agreed to provide funding of £145,000 for the introduction of a high frequency bus service circulating around Kilmarnock town centre to link the development with the public transport interchanges and enhance accessibility throughout the town centre by public transport. It is anticipated that the funding should be sufficient to support a single bus operating the bus service for a three year period. If the service is a success it would be expected that patronage would be secured over this period of time to a sufficient level to make continuation of the service commercially sustainable.

### **3 DETAILED PROPOSALS**

- 3.1 Three route options are proposed:

- A circuit from the Morrisons' Superstore via West George Street, Sturrock Street, St Marnock Street and John Finnie Street (service frequency 10 minutes)
- An extended variant of the first circuit to include Armour Street and Titchfield Street (service frequency 15 minutes)
- A more extended route which would also link in Kilmarnock College, the London Road HQ of the Council, Samson Avenue, McKinlay Place, New Mill Road and Old Mill Road (service frequency 20 minutes)

The service frequencies that can be provided by a single bus, on each route, are indicated above and range between 10 minutes and 20 minutes depending on the route option.

- 3.2** The third option would have substantial attractions in connecting up the College and the Council Headquarters to the town centre and the major transport centres of the bus station and the railway station. The service would be consistent with the Council's office development strategy which was approved on 18 November 2003 by the Corporate Governance Committee. It may, however, require a greater subsidy than is currently available to support a second bus in order to provide the level of frequency which would be needed to attract patronage. If this is the case but it is the preferred routing consideration might be given as to whether additional funds could be sourced from either the College or Council funds for promoting public transport.
- 3.3** The potential for the service to pick-up and set down near the multi-storey car park and other town centre long stay car parks is being investigated. The operation would use 25 seater buses which would be compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act. It is proposed that a flat fare would be charged which will be determined once tenders have been received. But the service would be operated within the Strathclyde Concessionary Fares Scheme. It is considered necessary to make a charge for use of the service in order to achieve long-term sustainability.
- 3.4** It is considered that the most practical and cost effective means to establish the service would be through the SPT. They have agreed to advertise the proposed service for competitive tenders and will undertake all contractual arrangements and financial management on behalf of the Council. They also have specific legal powers to support local bus services.
- 3.5** An alternative method of operation which has been considered could be a Community Transport Organisation. This might be linked to application of the new Power to Promote Wellbeing under the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003. It is proposed that the Coalfields Community Transport Organisation should be invited, if they wish, to tender competitively. The possible advantages of operation as a Community Transport service will also be further reviewed.
- 3.6** A decision on which route to recommend and which operator will be taken once tenders have been received indicating the cost of support which will be required to operate each of the proposed routes.
- 3.7** The objective is to introduce the new service to operate from the opening of the Morrisons' Superstore currently scheduled for February 2004. Because of the timetable involved for contracting for supported bus services an advertisement has already been placed by the SPT inviting tenders. As noted above, however, a decision on route and operator will not be taken until the cost of the various options is known.

#### **4 LEGAL AUTHORITY**

- 4.1** The Local Government etc (Scotland) Act 1994 established a new Strathclyde Passenger Transport Authority for the purposes of the Transport Acts. It is proposed that SPT be instructed to act as the contracting party as regards the provision of the hopper bus service therefore utilising the Authority's experience in this area. The contract will be governed by the Government Procurement Agreement.

#### **5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1** It is expected that the funding already in place will be sufficient to support a single bus operating a service for an initial period of three years. If additional funding is required to support the preferred route this will be given consideration at a future date. The continuation of the service in the long term will depend on the level of patronage achieved during its first three years of operation.

#### **6 RECOMMENDATION**

- 6.1** It is recommended that the Committee note the progress which has been made in introducing a shoppers' bus service within Kilmarnock town centre and that a further report will be submitted to the Committee recommending a preferred route and operator following the receipt of tenders for the provision of the service.

**Stephen Chorley**  
**Director of Development Services**  
**26 November 2003**  
**SC/JR**

#### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**Nil**

For further information on the content of the report contact Stephen Chorley, Director of Development Services on 01563 576011

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