

COUNCIL BUS FLEET/INTERNAL COURIER SERVICE AMENDMENTS TO DRIVERS HOURS OF EMPLOYMENT

1. Reason for Report

To agree the regularisation of the contractual hours of employment of a small number of Council bus / courier service drivers in the light of adjustments necessary to accommodate changes in duties and external funding awards.

2. Report Summary

2.1 The Planning and Environment Services Committee, on 13 February 2007, agreed revised contractual hours of employment for seven Council bus fleet / internal courier service drivers, to reflect the duties being undertaken.

2.2 The Committee also agreed to the assimilation of an existing part time school bus driver post into a full time school bus driver / courier driver post, allowing a post to be removed from the establishment with subsequent savings.

2.3 They also agreed to the establishment of a new driver post for a joint Council/Community Transport Demand Responsive service in the Moffat Area.

3. Recommendations

Members are asked to agree:

3.1 the new contractual hours of employment for the Council Bus Fleet/Internal Courier Service drivers, as follows:

Post Ref	New Contractual Hours
5/30094	20.5 hours/week for 38 weeks/year;
5/30054	36.0 hours/week for 52 weeks/year;
5/30176	36.0 hours/week for 52 weeks/year;
5/30092	23.5 hours/week for 38 weeks/year;
5/30124	36.0 hours/week for 52 weeks/year;
5/30343	36.0 hours/week for 38 weeks/year; and
5/30110	36.0 hours/week for 52 weeks/year.

3.2 to the assimilation of the existing part time school bus driver into the full time school bus/courier driver post; and

3.3 to the establishment of a new full time driver post, up to 36 hours per week, for the Moffat area.

4. Glossary of Terms

DRT – Demand Responsive Transport

5. Corporate Plan Links and Contribution

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5.1 Additional duties are in support of Inclusive Communities, to improve services for people with disabilities by providing accessible transport.

5.2 This similarly applies to Safe and Health Communities, with a number of additional bus journeys having been provided in support of "safer routes to schools".

5.3 Reference is also relevant under Enterprising and Learning Communities, with the pledge "We will continue to support bus routes within and around our towns and villages".

6. Resources/Value for Money Assessment

6.1 The small number of additional bus journeys which are now being undertaken, in connection with Area Committee requests and external funding awards, as summarised in the table at 10.1, are being carried out using the Council's own buses and drivers, at marginal cost in accordance with the recommendations of the 2001 Best Value Report.

6.2 The longer-term sustainability of the additional work can be addressed through the additional fares revenue being collected and the change to the establishment being recommended.

6.3 There is an obligation to regularise drivers hours to comply with employment contract law, to consolidate regular overtime working into the drivers contract.

7. Risk Assessment

7.1 There is a risk that bus passengers in remote rural areas will suffer serious deprivation if bus services are withdrawn, as a result of drivers' additional hours not being confirmed.

7.2 There is also a risk that the Council is judged to be in contravention of employment contract law if these matters are not addressed.

8. Consultations

The Group Manager Human Resources, the Director of Finance, relevant Trade Unions and drivers have been consulted and are in agreement with the contents of the report.

9. Background

9.1 The Council operates a fleet of some 40 school buses, a number of which are also used to provide low cost local bus services at other times, particularly as more accessible vehicles are obtained.

9.2 A number of the Council drivers undertake driving duties for both the school bus service and the internal courier service, to optimise resources and achieve full time employment, since the majority of the school bus drivers would otherwise work part-time hours.

10. Key Issues

10.1 The following changes to the contracted hours of employment of the undernoted drivers are being recommended for approval, to sustain the indicated initiatives. It should be noted that the additional duties have arisen mainly through

Scottish Executive initiatives which provided initial, year one, start-up monies or through Area Committee requests. These are noted below:

Post	Existing Contract (hours/week)	Change (hours/week)	Reason
5/30094	15/38	+5.5/38	Local bus service work – Glenkens
5/30054	17/38	+19/52	Local bus service work – Annandale
5/30176	20/38	+16/52	Stewartry DRT services
5/30092	22/38	+1.5/38	Local bus service – Ae Village
5/30124	17/38	+19/52	Laurieston DRT services
5/30343	17/38	+19/38	Southerness DRT services
5/30110	29/38	+6/52	Marchmount Travel Plan journey

10.2 The total additional cost per annum to the wage bill is some £27,000. This can be met from additional fares monies, particularly concessionary fares payments, being collected on the services. The other associated cost namely fuel, can be met from the remainder of the fares revenue together with Bus Service Operators Grant (Fuel Duty Rebate).

10.3 In addition, authorisation is being sought to assimilate the post of Courier Driver (East), which is presently a full time 37 hour per week post, with a part-time bus drivers post. This is necessary following the granting of early retirement to the existing courier driver and the need to make nominal agreed savings when the post is refilled.

10.4 An efficiency review has identified that the above courier post can be combined with an existing part-time school bus driver post with no detriment to the quality of service which would be provided. It would be necessary to assimilate the existing part time school bus driver into this new full time post.

10.5 The savings on this courier post would go towards additional costs which have been incurred as a result of earlier redistribution of the work and associated increased costs against other courier drivers.

10.6 Finally, in connection with the expansion of Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) in the Moffat area, authorisation is being sought for the Council to employ a full time driver, up to 36 hours per week. This new initiative is being funded 100% in its first year by the Scottish Executive, through Rural Services Priority Area monies. The new fully-accessible vehicle is being purchased by the Annandale Transport Initiative, who will have the opportunity to use the vehicle at other times for community purposes. Funding of the drivers wages in year two onwards will require to be met from fares revenues collected on this service and other similar Council-operated services, as indicated in paragraph 10.2, with a contribution, if necessary, from recently-announced new DRT monies from the Scottish Executive.

10.7 The Scottish Executive have indicated that the future administration and management of DRT monies will pass to the South West of Scotland Transport Partnership.

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Background Papers:

Stewartry Area Committee – 24 April 2006 – Stewartry RSPA Scheme; and
Upper Annandale and Eskdale Area Committee – 8 May 2006 – Annandale and
Eskdale RSPA Scheme.