

## EAST LOTHIAN SUPPORT BUS SERVICE CONSULTATION RESULT SUMMARY

East Lothian Council on the Future Tender of Supported Public Bus Service 2015 by engaging with Councilors, community Councils, community groups, members of the public and local bus operators. The following is a brief summary of the points raised during the consultations.

### **Service delivery, Commercial/Supported**

- **The majority of the public do not understand the difference between commercially operated services and supported services supplied by the council.**

Answer

Commercially operated routes – are operated by Private companies with a view to making a profit for the owner or share holders and receive no public funding towards the operation of the route.

Supported bus services - are services that are subsidised by the council through a tender process because they are not provided by a commercial bus company. They serve communities where no alternative route exists. The council may fund a whole route, part of a route or a service at a particular time of day.

- **The public do not understand the role of the Traffic Commissioner and registering of routes.**

Answer

Following deregulation of bus services in 1986, an operator may operate a service on a commercial basis provided the necessary service details (timetable, route description, start date) are registered with the Traffic Commissioner. All Public Service Vehicle Operators are required to give undertakings to the Traffic Commissioner to have proper arrangements for the operation of their licences, including vehicle maintenance. Proper vehicle maintenance serves road safety but also minimises delays due to vehicle breakdown. The Traffic Commissioner receives reports from VOSA and these are the main source of regulatory action against operators.

The Traffic Commissioner is empowered to take action against those bus operators that do not provide their services, or operate their vehicles, within the terms of their registrations or in accordance the conditions of their licenses. However, enhanced partnership working with the Traffic Commissioner and VOSA would aid this process and help address poor quality operators.

- **I don't understand why the timetable can't be changed straight away?**

Answer

Operators are required operate services for 90 days minimal prior to any changes and to give the Traffic Commissioner 56 days notice from the date the variation application is received, to the date they wish the changes or cancellation to take effect. In certain circumstances a shorter period of notice may apply:

**CASES WHEN SERVICES IN SCOTLAND MAY BE REGISTERED, CANCELLED OR CHANGED:  
(A) WITH LESS THAN 56 DAYS' NOTICE AND,  
(B) WITHIN 90 DAYS OF THE START, OR LAST CHANGE TO A SERVICE.**

(A) LESS THAN 56 DAYS:

Only in the following cases can the normal 56 days period of notice be reduced to a lesser period. Applications to register, cancel or change services must be made in the normal way using the appropriate form PSV350 (Scotland) (for registrations) or PSV355 (Scotland) (for cancellation or changes). But you must also complete and attach form PSV350A (Scotland) and send copies of these to the relevant authorities.

In the cases listed below, you may give less than 56 days' notice at the discretion of the Traffic Commissioner, who will require, in some cases, the application to be accompanied by written confirmation of the support from relevant authorities. An application:

- To register or vary a registration with respect to a service or part of a service which will be substantially similar to and replace a service or part of a service which you or another operator has ceased or is ceasing to operate;
- To vary or cancel the registration of a service which is either not available to the members of the general public or not regularly used by them;
- To vary or cancel the registration of a service in response to representations from a person authorised by either a traffic authority or chief officer of police on a matter concerning road traffic regulation or road safety;
- To register particulars of a new service, or vary the registration to augment an existing service, in order to provide the new or augmented service for a period not exceeding 21 days, in connection with a specified event or occasion which will cause an additional demand for a service;
- To vary the registration so as to vary or suspend a service during a period not exceeding 14 days in response to holidays taken by a substantial proportion of the population in that locality (if such changes were not incorporated into the original registration);
- Where due to circumstances which you could not reasonably have foreseen, you did not make an application in sufficient time for the normal 56 day period of notice;
- To register or vary a registration with respect to a service or part of a service in order to meet an urgent and exceptional public passenger transport requirement.

In the following cases no formal period of notice is required, and these do not need the support of form PSV350A (Scotland), but they will need to be detailed on the registration form (PSV350 (Scotland)) or the changes/cancellation form (PSV355 (Scotland)) as appropriate. An application:

- Where the service in question is a bus substitution service: and
  - Where the registration is varied only to enable the service to comply with traffic regulation conditions (TRCs) or any other provision made by or under any enactment prohibiting or restricting the use of any road by traffic.
- NB. Changes to the operators' address, telephone number or trading name do not need to be registered.

Any registrations, cancellations or changes of services, which do not fall into one of these sets of special cases described above, will need a minimum 56 days' notice from the date of receipt of the application by the Traffic Commissioner.

**(B) WITHIN 90 DAYS OF THE START OR LAST CHANGE TO A SERVICE:**

It is recognised that there may be occasions when a batch of services are being changed some of which are not caught by the 90 day rule and some which are, and the relevant authority might be sympathetic to (or positively want) the 56 day period to apply to all services. In such cases the Traffic Commissioner will require to see written support from the relevant authority in order to determine if it is appropriate to accept 56 days notice in respect of these services which are caught by the 90 days rule.

- **Reliability across the county is generally good however, early morning and evening services tend to suffer the most.**

Answer

This is down to the companies ensuring they have full maintenance regime, which includes driver input from defect sheets generated during the first use check or end of day check. The companies need to ensure that any buses highlighted for use first have been check the night before fully.

Breakdowns on route will always happen and a robust breakdown procedure including maintenance and bus replacement should be in place.

The council has just issued an adverse weather/breakdown procedure as part of the East Lothian charter to improve the flow of information allowing the public to be better informed of any disruption.

The Public can register their complaint with the operator and copy the council into the correspondence as a first point of call. The operator is obliged to answer the complaint, should the complainer feel their point has not been answered fully they can raise the complaint with Bus Users UK:

Bus Users UK represents bus passengers. They aim to help communication between bus users and the people that provide your bus service. They organise Bus Users' Surgeries around the country, set up local groups of bus users and campaign on behalf of bus passengers. You can join Bus Users UK as an individual member; further details on [www.bususers.org](http://www.bususers.org).

If you have complained about a bus service and have not had a satisfactory response, please contact:

*Bus Users Scotland  
Hopetoun Gate  
8b McDonald Road  
Edinburgh  
EH7 4LZ*

**Tel:** 0300 111 0001

**Email:** [enquiries@bususers.org](mailto:enquiries@bususers.org)

- **The majority of the public were generally happy with the standard of buses, with the exception of the following points:**
  - **Buses not cleaned out properly some times.**
  - **Water coming in through the windows and doors**
  - **Poor heating on some buses**
  - **Display screens not clear**
  - **Smoke coming out of the bus smell of fumes**

Answer

Raise the standard of the buses required for the supported services.

Companies look into their procedures and buses as part of the charter.

- **The majority of the public were unhappy with the interaction between different services and rail connections.**

Answer

Look into the supported services and link services where possible to the rail network use the initial meetings with Abellio and local operators to improve connection and move to integrated transport module.

Develop better communication with operators, Local Area Partnerships, and Community Rail Partnership, Relbus and the council

- **The public were unhappy with connections to Hospitals and the frequency of these routes.**

Answer

Look into the supported services and link services where possible and meet with local operators to see if commercial services can be adjusted.

- **Why don't some areas have bus service routes?**

Answer

Previous experience shows that there is not enough demand to warrant a full service so need to look into the supported services and the need to establish Demand Responsive Transport or Community Transport incentives where possible and meet with local operators about the ability to operate these, as part of school contracts or other transport functions

- **The majority of the public were generally happy with their safety on buses, with the exception of the following points:**
  - **Late runs nearing the terminal areas.**
  - **Evening runs travelling through urban areas and large groups getting on having consumed alcohol**
  - **Speed of buses through certain areas**
  - **Other roads user cutting up the bus**
  - **Buses braking without warning**

Answer

The council as part of the supported bus service contracts and the East Lothian bus charter asks operators to take a holistic and coherent view of the end-to-end passenger experience and work proactively to facilitate safe reliable public transport.

- **Late runs nearing the terminal areas.**

The use of CCTV

- **Evening runs travelling through urban areas and large groups getting on having consumed alcohol**

Staff training to manage and the use of CCTV

- **Speed of buses through certain areas**

Staff training, realistic timetables, traffic management, works management

- **Other roads user cutting up the bus**

Staff reporting of incidents use of CCTV to aid the police

- **Buses braking without warning**

Staff training, driver monitoring systems. Emergencies cannot be catered for.

- **The majority of the public don't understand the various ticketing and how to find out about their service.**

Answer

### The council and operators need to work together to deliver a good **Passenger Experience**

East Lothian council expects that the any Operator wishing to operate on the supported bus contracts will be an organisation which considers the provision of a high quality passenger experience to be a key priority of running public bus services.

The Operator will be expected to take a holistic and coherent view of the end-to-end passenger experience and work proactively to facilitate safe reliable public transport.

### **Publicity and Timetable Information**

Operators are required to work in partnership to deliver the East Lothian Bus Passenger Charter and promote the charter.

The operator shall arrange for the provision and distribution of publicity and timetable information for the Service. The operator may use that relevant council buildings (leisure centres, council offices, libraries) are supplied with adequate stocks of timetable information throughout the life of the Contract.

### **Travel Planning Services**

The operator is required to be a full member of Traveline Scotland Ltd and promote travel planning on their website.

The council is working on the development of an app for the planning of travel and visits to East Lothian.

### **Website**

The council to continue with the review of the council's website and look at ways of better sign posting information

The operator should also ensure their own website is up to date with all the timetable and fare information. The website should also contain route running information and disruption.

Vehicles employed to undertake the service fitted with GPS Vehicle Location Equipment. The operator must have suitable GPS Vehicle Location software, capable of tracking vehicle movements accurately and in Real Time

Vehicles equipped to communicate with the *Bustracker* Real Time Information (RTI) system and/or the similar contractor based App

### **Ticketing Schemes**

The operator to promote the delivery of a smart and integrated ticketing and payment environment, aimed at providing passengers with a high standard of end-to-end journey experience

The council has been working with Transport Scotland on the use of the Young Persons National Entitlement Card (YPNEC), as the Home to School travel pass on public transport. The card already facilitates young person's bus and rail concession within East Lothian. Presently, the council has two routes operating fully with the YPNEC and wishes to further develop this.

In summary the council would like to see the delivery of a smart and integrated ticketing and payment environment as follows:

1 <sup>st</sup> August 2015	Young Persons National Entitlement Card (YPNEC), as the Home to School travel pass on all services
1 <sup>st</sup> April 2016	Single and Return fares delivered by smart and integrated ticketing and payment
1 <sup>st</sup> August 2016	Tourist Nominal value smartcard
1 <sup>st</sup> April 2017	Commuter value weekly & Monthly fares delivered by smart and integrated ticketing and payment
1 <sup>st</sup> April 2018	All Fares and integration with rail delivered by smart and integrated ticketing and payment

### Why was the 328 service removed?

In January 2014, Edinburgh Coach Lines (ECL) has undertaken further analysis of the income and expenditure on the 328 service and finds that the service introduced in July and tweaked in October 2013 is not doing as well as anticipated. Indeed, ECL claims to be losing money every week they continue to run the 328 service. This is unsustainable and following discussion between the local ECL management and Group HQ management in Dublin, the decision was taken to give written notice [90 days] of withdrawal from the contract. A letter to this effect was delivered by hand to the Bonnyrigg office of Midlothian Council on Monday 20 January 2014 and complies with the Midlothian cancellation terms and conditions for a withdrawal after service on Saturday 19 April 2014 [Easter Weekend].

Prior to making any decision understanding why this service failed to provide enough revenue to ensure being viable. The factors to look at are easily covered by doing a SWOT analysis of the service.

Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Established operator</li> <li>• Standard of buses</li> </ul>

Weakness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Route length</li> <li>• Route design</li> <li>• Timetable 2 hour service</li> <li>• Rural village size (household numbers)</li> <li>• Bus requirement due to distance to</li> </ul>

Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Redesign of route</li> <li>• Lower cost/savings by changing route</li> <li>• Split from joint tender more control</li> <li>• Improve service</li> <li>• Better marketing</li> </ul>

Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lothian buses 3,7, 15, 26, 22, 29, 30, 33, 39, 40,44, 44A ,49, 113</li> <li>• First bus 108, 124,</li> <li>• Perrymans' 51, 52</li> <li>• Eve Coaches 128, 129</li> <li>• E&amp;M Horsburgh T1,T2</li> </ul>

The SWOT analysis shows that the threats to the service outweigh any strengths, which is the main reason for the failure of the service. Combine this with the weakness of the route length, design and timetable issues the slippery slope increases. The route means the service runs along corridors heavily supplied by frequent service commercial services offering more suitable transport to suit personal needs.

- First the Northern side of the route sees the bus running from Musselburgh to Tranent via Wallyford Park & Ride, Prestonpans Cockenzie and Port Seton. Musselburgh is heavily populated by buses and passengers will use the first come basis, rather than wait on the 328.
  - The main operator along the corridor is Lothian buses, operating frequent service:
    - 26 every 8 minutes to Prestonpans and every 20mins to Port Seton/Tranent
    - 44 every 10 minutes to Wallyford
    - 44A every 30 minutes to Tranent
    - 113 every 40 minutes to Tranent
  - First Bus operates 2 services
    - 108 every 60 minutes to Tranent
    - 124 every 30 minutes to Prestonpans
  - Eve Coaches operate 2 supported services for ELC:
    - 128 at these times, 1022 1107 1312 1427 1632 1722
    - 129 at these times, 0847 1021 1132 1211 1451 1531 1552 1721 1751
- Secondly The South west section from Dalkeith Campus to ERI



- The main operator along the corridor is Lothian buses, operating frequent service:
  - 3 every 10 minutes to Edinburgh/Mayfield via Gilmerton
  - 7 every 15 minutes to ERI
  - 33 every 10 minutes to Edinburgh/Mayfield via ERI
  - 39 every 20 minutes to Midlothian community Hospital/Dalkeith
  - 40 every 30 minutes to Penicuik via Midlothian community Hospital/Dalkeith
  - 49 every 15 minutes to Rosewell via Midlothian community Hospital/Dalkeith
- Perrymans operates service
  - 51/52 every 60 minutes to Edinburgh/Dalkeith via ERI
- Thirdly the West to East ERI to Musselburgh corridor
  - The main operator along the corridor is Lothian buses, operating frequent service
    - 30 every 12 minutes to Musselburgh
  - Joins up with the Northern side at Musselburgh and relevant services

Passenger numbers for the 328 Supported Bus Service supported this as detailed below:

The following data is based on the Transport Scotland ticket machine data report. The report identified boarding point and destination.

The report covers the period 6 January – 28 February 2014 covering the full operation of the service Mon – Sat as follows:

- Total Days = 47
- Total runs per day = 6
- Total runs over the period 282

#### Data analysis

The data was analysed to show how many passengers travelling between Cockenzie/Port Seton to Tranent/Elphinstone as follows:

- Boarding at Whin Park stage coverage
  - Tranent = 98
  - Elphinstone = 27
- Boarding at Alder Road Stages
  - Tranent = 80
  - Elphinstone = 108

The total passengers for the period travelling between Cockenzie/Port Seton to Tranent/Elphinstone was 313, this equates to 1 person a day based on the number of passengers divided by number of runs ( $313/282 = 1.11$ )

The data was analysed to show how many passengers travelling between Tranent/Elphinstone to Cockenzie/Port Seton as follows:

- Boarding at Whin Park stage coverage
  - Tranent = 69
  - Elphinstone = 24
- Boarding at Alder Road Stages
  - Tranent = 103
  - Elphinstone = 73

The total passengers for the period travelling between Tranent/Elphinstone to Cockenzie/Port Seton was 269, this equates to 1 person a day based on the number of passengers divided by number of runs ( $269/282 = 0.95$ )

The data clearly shows that while some journeys may have been busy the others were not, maybe even empty.

Hence the decision to retender and award the 110 service operating within the confines of East Lothian and supplying a better more use service.