

## Projects -

### 4a Dyce Shuttle Bus and Station Improvements

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- Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to update members regarding progress with various projects in and around Dyce station.

- Background

Members will be aware that Nestrans has subsidised a shuttle bus between Dyce railway station, Kirkhill industrial estate and Aberdeen Airport since December 2008. Previous reports have sought permission to develop a turning circle to enable better access for the shuttle bus to access Dyce railway station and other enhancements to the station are proposed.

This report provides an update on various matters relating to the shuttle bus and the station, including patronage levels and details of existing proposals.

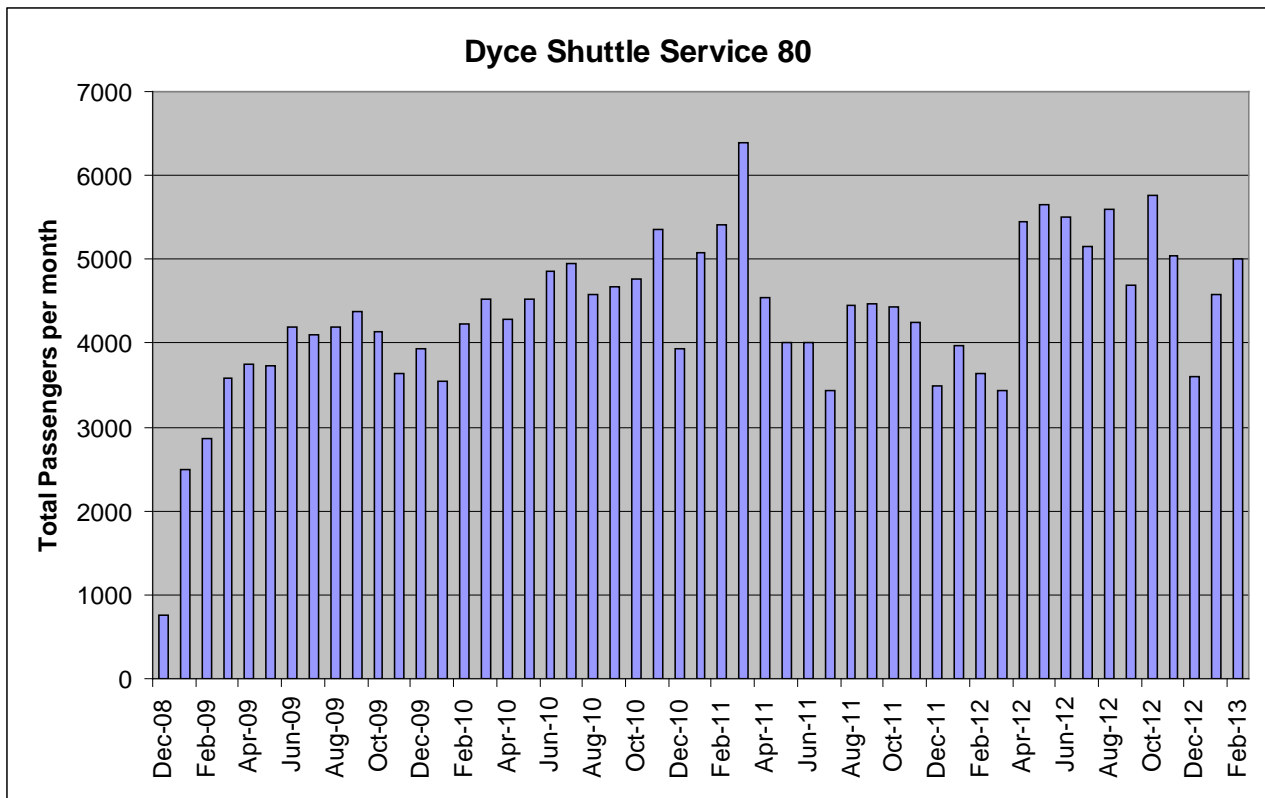
- Service 80 Dyce shuttle bus usage figures

At the last meeting of the Board, members requested information on the current patronage levels for the service 80 shuttle bus between Dyce station, the airport and Kirkhill Industrial Estate.

The total passengers carried since Nestrans introduced the service in December 2008 is now over 220,000 with an average monthly usage of around 5,000. This equates to nearly 250 journeys per day. The bus is currently operated by Stagecoach Bluebird and operates Monday-Friday between 06:30 and 18:30, providing a direct connection with most trains arriving at Dyce.

Recent difficulties with congestion in the Dyce area and unreliability may have had a slight impact on passenger numbers, but the most recent figures for February 2013 indicate that 5,007 passengers used the bus, up by 38% on the same month last year.

The graph below shows monthly patronage over the 4¼ years that Nestrans has subsidised the bus (the peak of over 6,000 users in March 2011 was when two vehicles were used – current levels with a single bus are close to the average for 2010/11 with two buses).



- Service 80 contract

As members will be aware, in each of the four years of its operation, Nestrans has sought tenders and awarded the contract to operate the Dyce shuttle bus. However, with the current levels of patronage and Nestrans' commitment to establish a turning circle on the west side of the station, Stagecoach Bluebird have indicated a willingness to continue the operation on a commercial basis without subsidy.

The shuttle bus is now therefore established as a commercial service. However, this means that the authorities have no opportunity to dictate timetables, fares or route and the operator can determine these as appropriate, subject to giving adequate notice. Stagecoach Bluebird have not indicated any significant alterations other than the minor timetable changes indicated below.

- Service 80 proposed timetable changes

As mentioned above, the shuttle bus operator Stagecoach Bluebird, has experienced some difficulties with timings due to congestion in the Dyce area, exacerbated by construction and roadworks impacting on an already congested network. Delays have resulted in a number of services missing rail connections and hence some complaints.

After discussions with the operator and Aberdeen City Council's Public Transport Unit, it was agreed to revisit the timetable. To this end, Stagecoach have consulted with passengers, undertaken extensive route timing tests and have proposed amendments to ensure a more robust timetable, particularly in the evening peak when traffic impacts most on the operation. The main outcome will be one less trip in the evening peak, to be implemented in a new timetable from Monday 15<sup>th</sup> April.

- Proposed turning circle

Members will recall that Nestrans has submitted an application for planning permission to construct a bus turning circle accessing the west side of Dyce station from Foinavon Close. Details are available from the City Council's website at:

<http://planning.aberdeencity.gov.uk/docs/planningdocuments.asp?appnumber=121785>

Representations were required by 6 February 2013 and it is understood that five representations have been received. The application will require to be considered by the Development Management Sub-Committee.

The City Council has asked that a tree survey and bat survey be carried out and the bat survey has recently been completed and submitted to the Council. The tree survey has been commissioned and will be presented soon. Both are likely to indicate that there are not considered to be issues which would prevent granting of the application.

A meeting has been held with Roads colleagues from Aberdeen City Council and agreements reached regarding the need to promote a Traffic Regulation Order for the new section of road. As the turning circle is intended purely to enable access for buses, the TRO will be advertised as "bus and bicycles only". This will automatically result in restrictions preventing car parking or abuse by taxis, which could impact on cycling safety or restrict the free flow of buses.

- Dyce station

Dyce railway station is now the north east's second busiest, with nearly 580,000 passengers in 2010/11. As well as being an important Gateway station serving the International Airport, it is understood that Dyce is one of the country's top performing stations in terms of revenue and yet does not currently comply with Disability Discrimination Act guidelines nor is it a staffed station.

However, as previously indicated to Board, Transport Scotland has announced plans to upgrade the station to being fully DDA compliant. This will involve construction of a new overbridge, with lifts at either side to enable full access for people with mobility problems, heavy luggage, children's buggies, etc. A contract has now been let to enable these works to proceed, with work scheduled to commence shortly and an expected completion date around the end of the year.

ScotRail have also indicated an intention to provide a new waiting area, ticket office and toilets in addition to the existing shelters and to upgrade the station to a staffed station. ScotRail staff have also met with officers of Nestrans and Aberdeen City Council to discuss any possibilities of providing an enhanced car parking provision at the station and a number of options will be explored with a view to improving the car park, although the timescale for this may be longer than the above-mentioned schemes.

- Recommendation

It is recommended that Members :

- a) note the patronage on the Dyce service 80 shuttle bus;
- b) approve the continuation of the service being operated by Stagecoach Bluebird on a commercial basis;
- c) note the proposed timetable changes;
- d) note progress regarding the proposed turning circle; and
- e) welcome the proposed enhancements to Dyce station.