

Report of
Central Mainland Area Transport Forum

Focusing on the topic of
Timing of Internal Transport and Integration with
Other Transport Services

Consultation with young people still to be included



July 2008

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1) Background

It is important that the various modes of transport within Shetland are provided to meet the needs of individuals and communities as best they can. In order to assist, Area Transport Forums have been set up across the Isles. They provide an opportunity for users and possible future users to influence the way transport is provided in their area.

A forum covers each of the following areas: South, Central, West, Lerwick and Bressay, North Mainland, North Isles & Whalsay and Skerries.

Every six months a different topic will be open for discussion, and, in time will include opportunities for walking and cycling, as well as the internal bus, ferry and air services.

There are no guarantees that this process will lead to an increase in the services provided, but it will assist in ensuring that the services provided are appropriate. Hearing the views of users and potential users helps create a better understanding of what aspects of public transport work and which areas need improving. Any external transport issues raised will be recorded and passed on to the recently formed Shetland External Transport Forum, where users are able to discuss issues with the main external transport providers.

2) Methodology

The initial meeting for the Central Mainland area was held on 28 May 2008 at 7.00pm in Scalloway Hall. The topic for discussion at this meeting was the timing of internal transport and integration with other transport services.

2.1) Pre-Meeting Consultation and Research

In preparation for the public meeting, letters of invite were sent to various interested groups in the area, these included:

- Businesses with an interest in public transport, such as shops and visitor centres;
- Community groups, such as Community Councils and school Pupil Councils;
- Service providers, such as schools and health centres; and
- Transport operators in the Central Mainland.

These letters detailed the purpose of Area Transport Forums, the date and venue of the first meeting and the topic to be discussed. In addition to the letters a number of posters advertising the meeting were sent out to be put on display in public places such as shops, post offices and health centres.

To give people an opportunity to respond to the issues prior to the public meeting a number of questionnaire postcards were included with the posters to be put on display. The postcards were postage paid and had four questions covering issues of public transport timetabling for people to fill out and return, the questions were:

- Please provide examples of opportunities that you and the wider community can access using the public transport services in your area;
- Please provide examples of current transport that meets needs, explaining why;
- Please provide any examples of opportunities that you and the wider community are unable to access using the public transport services; and
- Please provide any examples of where transport services in the area could be improved. There are no guarantees that this will lead to an increase in services provided, but it will assist in ensuring that the services provided are appropriate.

People were also invited to respond to the issues via email or letter.

Some further consultation was done with Care Centre staff in the Central Mainland, who raised a number of issues on public transport in the area (see Appendix A).

All information gathered through postcards and emails was collated (see Appendix A) along with information previously heard during the Regional Transport Strategy consultation relevant to the issues to be discussed.

2.2) Community Meeting

The community meeting, held at Scalloway Hall, ran from 7.00pm to about 9.00pm and was attended by 9 people. A list of attendees is included in Appendix B.

Councillor Iris Hawkins welcomed everyone to the meeting. Head of Transport, Michael Craigie, gave an overview of the purpose of Area Transport Forums and the issues to be covered at the meeting. Also in attendance were Councillor Andrew Hughson, Transport Strategy Officer Emma Perring, Community Work Manager Bill Crook and Transport Services Graduate Placement Sean Tulloch.

Two tables were set up with a number of materials to assist with discussions. These were:

- Copies of bus and ferry timetables for the Central Mainland;
- Maps of the Central Mainland area;
- Information sheets with findings from the pre-meeting consultation; and
- Wider Issues cards for attendees to record thoughts and suggestions on issues less relevant to the evening's topic.

Three key questions were outlined to help guide the discussion:

- What services are important?
- How well are they working?
- What needs to be changed or improved?

The format for discussion was:

- The attendees were asked to divide themselves into groups and sit at each of the tables to discuss their assigned topic;
- A facilitator sat with each group to help guide discussion and record issues raised on flip charts;
- The discussions lasted 45 minutes and covered the topics outlined by the three key questions; and
- After rounding off discussions there was a brief overview of the key themes raised.

3) Results

Results from the pre-meeting consultation included:

- Of the 170 questionnaire postcards sent out, 7 were returned;
- A number of issues were raised by Care Centre staff in Scalloway; and
- 1 email was received from the Central Mainland Local Service Delivery Group.

Results from the public meeting included:

- 9 people attended the meeting and engaged in a 45 minute discussion session (see Appendix B for a full list of attendees);
- 2 postcards were filled out with thoughts on wider transport issues; and
- a comment was made on how to improve Area Transport Forums.

4) Findings

A number of key issues were raised in both the pre-meeting consultation and the discussion sessions at the public meeting. A full write up of findings from the pre-meeting consultation is included in Appendix A, while those from the public meeting are included in Appendix C. Some of the main points raised included:

What services are important?

- Services in the mornings and early evenings are important for commuters working in Lerwick and are frequently well used;
- Shopper services to Lerwick for Burra, Weisdale, Whiteness and Stromfirth are important and appreciated; and
- An additional Friday morning Weisdale shopper to Robinson & Morrison is valuable and well appreciated.

How well are they working?

- It is felt that daytime services for Scalloway work fine, however the South Road routing of the 0730 service makes it difficult to get to the North of Lerwick for 0800;
- There are capacity issues on Burra and Trondra feeder services;
- There are no daytime services for Whiteness and Weisdale on Wednesdays;
- Lack of connections between the Westside and Scalloway make it difficult to make appointments at the Scalloway Health Centre;
- Current bus times don't work well for Fisheries College lectures finishing at 1630;
- Lack of evening services throughout Central areas makes it hard to attend music and film events, night classes and visit people at the hospital; and
- There are no bus services to or from Central areas on Sundays.

What needs to be changed or improved?

- Examine the purpose of routing the 0730 service from Scalloway to Lerwick on the South Road when the North would seem more appropriate as there is more work and industry on this route;
- Consider the possibility of introducing daytime services to and from Lerwick for Whiteness and Weisdale as there is on other days;
- Consider rearranging daytime Scalloway services to better suit shopping at Somerfield or possibly introduce a dedicated shopper service;
- Suggested that an hourly minibus service between Lerwick and Scalloway may be useful, while the larger bus could still be used at busier times;
- Look into areas that have poor access to the bus route, Stromfirth being an example;
- Consider a fixed price dial-a-ride service to allow Whiteness and Weisdale residents better access to the Scalloway Health Centre;
- Better coordination is needed to integrate with services for other areas;
 - Feeders to Scalloway could connect with morning services to Lerwick from North, West and South to allow access to jobs in Scalloway;
 - Improved connections with South Mainland buses for flights;

- Some improvements were suggested for evening buses in Central areas;
 - 1705 buses home is a bit early for some finishing work at 1700;
 - More evening buses could travel from Walls to Lerwick via Scalloway and meet feeders from Burra, improving access for all areas;
 - Consider running a 2230 service on Fridays from Lerwick to Whiteness and Weisdale as there is on Saturdays; and
 - On the whole more evening services are needed for leisure activities and suggested that consultation with social and community groups would allow buses to be better planned around social events.

In terms of wider transport issues, these points were raised:

- Demand for transport services will rise with housing developments in Scalloway and other areas as well as continuing rises in fuel prices;
- The level of bus services are poor compared with ferry services;
- Transport should be a bigger consideration in planning the locations of buildings such as the Shetland College;
- Some services suffer from a lack of advertising and timetables in general could be better publicised;
- Do minibuses have suitable wheelchair access?
- There is feeling that the buses currently used are not suited to the roads and weather conditions on their journeys;
- Examine possibilities to extend transport services offered by the Red Cross for medical appointments to cover more areas;
- There is some feeling that the current bus route in Scalloway is dangerous and there is a lack of official bus stops; and
- There is split opinion over the cost of fares from Scalloway to Lerwick some feel they are quite reasonable while others feel they are too expensive.

5) Conclusions

A number of main points can be drawn from the information gathered in this report and will be used in future planning of transport services. Presently the bus service appears to be most widely used by people travelling to work and accessing shops in Lerwick. Some of the issues raised show how the current timetable could be altered to better serve these demands and also extend the service to cover other demands such as access to healthcare and leisure activities. A summary of these points includes:

- Ensuring timing and routing of services to and from Lerwick offers good accessibility for people commuting to work;
- Examining the possibilities for connecting North, West and South services with buses to Scalloway to allow access to work and education opportunities in the area;
- Look into options for improving access to healthcare services, particularly access to the Scalloway Health Centre from Whiteness, Weisdale and Tingwall;
- Ensure services are well timed to offer access to supermarkets and look into the demand for more dedicated shopper services; and
- Examine the options for expanded evening services to allow better access to leisure activities and events.

In terms of improvements on future Area Transport Forums a number of issues have been raised and will be considered, these include:

- Rethink the distribution of the questionnaire postcards as there was a poor return rate on this occasion despite the high number sent out;
- Consider engaging in more face to face consultation with businesses and community groups as these types of meetings often produce valuable information; and
- Consider ways to better advertise the public meetings, such as posters in bus shelters and adverts in the Shetland Times.

APPENDIX A: Findings from Pre-Meeting Research & Consultation

General Comments

Within the Transport Strategy there were a number of issues raised about bus services in the Central Mainland:

- Bus service in Burra and Trondra has recently been improved including introduction of shopper service;
- Access to health care is good with new service;
- Twice weekly surgery in Hamnavoe improved health access;
- Bus stop at Toogs could be moved to the opposite side of the road;
- Bus service works well for people who live in Scalloway and daytime services have been improved;
- The bus service is not so good for people travelling from Lerwick to Scalloway and back again at night;
- Evening services in Scalloway are not so good;
 - Big gap between the 1630 and 1900 service;
 - A later bus doesn't stop in Scalloway on route to Lerwick;
- The latest service from Lerwick to Whiteness/Weisdale is at 2230 but is poorly advertised and is too early for young people;
- A shopper service for Scalloway may be a good idea.

Central Local Service Delivery Group:

- A dial-a-ride service could be introduced to give people in Whiteness/Weisdale access to the Scalloway Health Centre.

Community Council:

- There is concern that the bus frequently leaves earlier than timetabled, leaving people standing at the bus stop.

Care Centre:

- A feeder service to Scalloway from the Black Gaet to connect with South Mainland services would improve access to jobs in Scalloway;
- Currently a morning feeder service takes school children in Tingwall Valley to meet the Westside school bus to Lerwick in Tingwall. Could this bus then be used to take people from the Westside bus to Scalloway?
- Can the 1600 school bus from Scalloway to Burra be used by the public?
- There is a need for more bus services to and from Scalloway and Burra later in the evening;
- There are no buses to or from Central areas on Sundays.

Individuals:

- Some areas such as Stromfirth are some distance from a bus stop and would benefit from a feeder service or the main bus could be rerouted to cover this area;
- NorthLink ferries arrive in Lerwick at 0730 but the earliest bus home for people living in Burra is 1300;
- It is difficult for people in Burra to get home from medical appointments in Scalloway;

- Increasingly there has been capacity issues on Burra and Trondra feeder services as more people are beginning to use the bus;
- The lack of buses in the evening throughout the central area restricts peoples access to evening events in Lerwick such as films, music and night classes;
- There is no bus service for people starting work earlier than 0900;
- There should be better bus connections between Scalloway and other areas in the north and south mainland to allow access to jobs as many people from different areas work in Scalloway;
- The bus leaving Scalloway at 1620 is inconvenient for lecturers and students at the Fisheries College as they either have to finish ten minutes early or wait for the next bus at 1730;
- There might be a demand for an hourly minibus service between Lerwick and Scalloway, while the bigger bus could still be used at rush hour times;
- There is no bus service in Central areas on Sundays;
- The last bus from Burra to Lerwick is 1740 but there is no way for people to get home again later.

Other Issues:

- Can the Red Cross service for medical appointments be extended to cover areas throughout Central Mainland?
- Current bus route in Scalloway is dangerous, could possibly be rerouted to stay along the main street;
- Rising costs of fuel mean that many will have to give up their cars, which will create a large demand for public transport improvements;
- There is some feeling that bus fares are too expensive from Scalloway to Lerwick;
- Need more official bus stops throughout Scalloway.

APPENDIX B: List of Meeting Attendees

Name
Marion Hughson
Robert Arculus
Graham Robinson
Pauline Arculus
Councillor Iris Hawkins
Willis Duncan
Councillor Andrew Hughson
Colin Reynolds
John Hunter

APPENDIX C: Findings from Public Meeting Discussions

Key Questions

What services are important?

How well are they working?

What needs to be changed or improved?

What services are important?

- Morning services are essential for people getting to work at 0800 and 0900. The 0900 in particular is getting increasingly busy;
- The 1705 service is also essential and increasingly busy;
- The weekly Burra shopper service is very useful for elderly people getting to Somerfield/Co-op;
- The shopper service for Weisdale, Whiteness and Stromfirth every second Tuesday is a good service; and
- Likewise the Friday morning Weisdale shopper to Robinson & Morrison is valuable and well appreciated.

How well are they working?

- The 0730 from Scalloway to Lerwick isn't great for people getting to work at 0800 at the North end of town as it goes in the South road;
- Daytime services for Scalloway are frequent and generally work ok;
- There are no daytime services for Whiteness and Weisdale on Wednesdays;
- There are limited connections between the Westside and Scalloway;
 - Have to travel via Lerwick or by taxi;
 - This is inconvenient for people getting to the surgery;
- Visiting people in the hospital can be difficult, particularly in the evenings; and
- People in Whiteness and Weisdale miss opportunities to attend night classes in Aith, Lerwick and Scalloway due to lack of evening buses.

What needs to be changed or improved?

- An 0700 service from Walls passes the brig-o-fetch at 0740, could this connect with a service going to Scalloway?
- The 0730 service from Scalloway to Lerwick goes in the South road and spends time as a town service, stopping throughout Sandveien. This delays the service considerably;
 - If this service went in the North road it would allow people working in factories and industry at Gremista to get to work on time;
- There is demand for daytime services for Whiteness and Weisdale on Wednesdays as there is on other days;
 - Shops are open on Wednesdays just like any other day;
 - Also people would be able to attend half day courses at Shetland College;
- Previously there was a bus arriving from Scalloway at Somerfield at 1130 and another service out to Scalloway at 1300;

- This allowed ample time for shopping and could maybe be re-instated?
- There needs to be improved access to the Scalloway health centre for people living in Whiteness and Weisdale;
 - A fixed price (£2.50) dial-a-ride service would seem like a good solution as health related transport would need to respond quickly;
- Generally better integration with services to other areas is needed;
 - More connections with South Mainland buses for flights;
 - People from other areas need better access to Scalloway as there are a lot of job opportunities in the area;
- 1705 bus is too early for many people finishing work at 1700;
 - A slightly later service would allow time to get to the bus stop and maybe a bit of shopping;
- The last bus to Burra is at 1705, perhaps a later evening service once or twice a week would be useful to tie in with activities such as Youth Clubs and films;
- There is some demand for later buses in the evening at weekends travelling from Walls to Lerwick via Scalloway
- More evening buses could be planned around the times of social events;
 - Consult with 500 Clubs, pool teams, darts teams, etc.
- Could be some demand for buses from Lerwick to Scalloway at 2100 and later;
 - This would allow access to activities and events in Lerwick and for people visiting friends and family in the hospital;
 - There will likely be an increasing demand for this type of service when/if the new cinema and music venue is open; and
- Could be demand for a 2230 service on Fridays from Lerwick to Whiteness and Weisdale as there is on Saturdays.

Wider Issues

- Scalloway is growing with housing developments underway and generally more services will be needed in the near future;
- Ferry services run quite extensively so why can't buses run more often as well?
- Shetland College might be better located in over, around the North Ness;
 - Current location is a long walk from bus stops in bad weather;
- Printed timetables could be better publicised;
- The fortnightly Tuesday shopper service from Weisdale/Whiteness/Stromfirth is a great service but needs better advertising;
- Do minibuses have suitable wheelchair access?
- The buses currently used are not suited to their journeys;
 - Particularly in strong winds the buses don't very feel safe;

How can we make Area Transport Forums work better?

- Better advertising of meetings is needed;