

**Report of**  
**Lerwick, Bressay and Gulberwick**  
**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**

**CONTENTS:**

<b>1) BACKGROUND</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2) METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2.1) Pre-Meeting Consultation and Research</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2.2) Public Meeting</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3) RESULTS</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>4) FINDINGS</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>5) CONCLUSIONS</b>	<b>8</b>

**APPENDIX A: Findings from Pre-Meeting Consultation**

**APPENDIX B: List of Meeting Attendees**

**APPENDIX C: Findings from Public Meeting Discussions**

## **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 Lerwick, Bressay and Gulberwick area was held on 02 June 2008 at 7.30pm in Market House. 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 for the Lerwick, Bressay and Gulberwick area.

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 Day Care attendees from the area, 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 Market House, ran from 7.30pm to about 9.00pm and was attended by 10 people. A list of attendees is included in Appendix B.

Councillor Allan Wishart welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave an overview of the purpose of Area Transport Forums and the issues to be covered at the meeting. Also in attendance were Councillor Caroline Miller, Transport Strategy Officer Emma Perring, Community Learning and Development Officer June Porter and Transport Services Graduate Placement Sean Tulloch.

A table was set up with a number of materials to assist with discussions. These were:

- Copies of bus and ferry timetables for the Lerwick, Bressay and Gulberwick area;
- Maps of the Lerwick, Bressay and Gulberwick 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 sat around a table to discuss their assigned topic;
- A facilitator sat with the 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 Day Care attendees from the area; and
- Some issues raised in the Bressay Stag Consultation were noted.

Results from the public meeting included:

- 10 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 essential for commuters getting to and from work;
- Morning and afternoon services are also widely used by children getting to and from school; and
- Services to other areas in Shetland are important for tourists in the summer and elderly people on daytrips.

How well are they working?

- Morning bus times are good for people getting to work at 0900 but it's difficult for people starting any earlier;
- As there are separate North and South services it can be difficult getting from one area to another without the delay of using two buses;
- There are capacity issues on the public service at school times due to the lack of a school bus;
  - There is also concern that the public service is inappropriate for younger school children;
- The latest bus home is at 1705, which is a little early for some people finishing work at 1700;
- Some parts of Lerwick such as Twageos don't have bus services;
- Services are limited for people visiting areas out with Lerwick;
- Bressay residents have difficulty getting to Shetland College and early flights at Sumburgh due to ferry times;
- Some Bressay residents suffer from exclusion due to the lack of bus services on the Isle;
- The service bus is difficult to rely on for flights at Sumburgh due to delays; and
- The Red Cross provide a good service for elderly people attending medical appointments.

What needs to be changed or improved?

- Consider introducing earlier services for people starting work before 0900 and to tie in with NorthLink arrivals;
- Consider routing the Lerwick North town service around Norstane and Burnside as there are a lot of residents in this area who use the bus;
- Consider introducing an express service bus for children going to school;
- Could the winter school bus for Lerwick North AHS pupils also be used to pick up primary school children;
- There should be more services to areas of interest to tourists, such as St. Ninian's Isle;
- Generally more services are needed to areas out with Lerwick, which could be planned around social and community events;

- Generally more services are needed in the evening;
- There is some demand for some reduced services on Sundays;
- The Bressay Shopper service should cover more areas to increase usage;
- Dedicated Shopper services could be introduced for more remote parts of Lerwick as it is difficult to access supermarkets using the regular service; and
- Consider introducing a circular service so that all areas of Lerwick could be accessible without the delay and expense of using two buses.

### **Wider Issues**

- Timetables and route maps should be at each stop;
- Changes to timetables can be an issue but can be partly resolved by advertising through community associations;
- A general rise in demand for more bus services will come with the rising costs of fuel;
- Fares are thought to be reasonable but there is some feeling that there should be day tickets available for people making multiple journeys; and
- The buses in Lerwick are felt to be of high quality.

### **How can we make Area Transport Forums work better?**

- Better advertising of meetings is needed.

## **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 pupils going to school, people travelling to work and tourists and elderly people on day trips out with Lerwick. Some of the issues raised show how the current timetable could be altered to better suit 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 throughout Lerwick offers good accessibility for people commuting to work;
- Examining the possibilities for improving services to areas out with Lerwick for people wishing to go on day trips;
- Look into options for improving access to different areas throughout Lerwick such as for people attending medical appointments at the Health Centre;
- Ensure services are well timed and routed 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 on buses 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 Lerwick, Bressay and Gulberwick:

- More evening buses are needed in Lerwick;
- Buses in Lerwick are of high quality and fares are cheap;
- Timetables on Lerwick buses should be at each stop along with maps of the bus routes;
- Better consideration should be given to tourists in transport planning as not everyone coming to Shetland hires a car;
- South Mainland bus service is thought to be quite good for people in Lerwick;
- Estimated 5% of Bressay population without cars live in relative exclusion and isolation, relying on neighbours for lifts;
- Bookable taxi service in Bressay is only available at certain times;
- The post bus service doesn't operate to a scheduled timetable;
- There is no proper bus service on Bressay;
- The Bressay shopper service is poorly used as it only stops at two places on the island and may be more popular if it travelled to the more peripheral areas.

Bressay Stag Study:

- The lack of transport provision on Bressay makes it difficult for people in some areas to get to the ferry;
- Ferry timetables make it difficult for Bressay residents to access early flights at Sumburgh.

Daycare:

- Some areas of Lerwick such as Twageos are not covered by public transport;
- Many elderly people rely on lifts from family as they would require assistance to use the bus;
- The Red Cross service is good for attending medical appointments and perhaps this service could be expanded to cover more areas throughout Shetland;
- There is good bus service provision to access daycare services.

Individuals:

- The 60+ group sometimes uses the bus to Scalloway and would like to use buses more often but they aren't frequent enough;
- There is no transport to places of interest such as St. Ninians Isle and Scatness. The airport bus does go along these routes but there is a long wait for a return bus;
- More buses throughout Lerwick are needed after 5pm;
- There is some demand for a shopping bus for the Lerwick North area;
- The Lerwick bus service at 0840 to Shetland College leaves too early for students from Bressay getting off the 0830 ferry;

- The service around the town is good but there are not enough regular services to go to places outwith Lerwick. Northmavine and Vidlin areas are particularly hard to get to;
- Perhaps more evening buses between Lerwick and rural areas could be put on for community events and maybe a Sunday shuttle bus to go around Hall Teas;
- Bressay ferry needs an earlier service to connect with the Airport bus;
- There could be better early morning services to tie in with Northlink Ferries;
- Bus service to Sumburgh Airport is a bit erratic as the driver frequently changes the route out of Lerwick. So people don't know whether to wait on Scalloway Road or Gilbertson Road.

## APPENDIX B: List of Meeting Attendees

Name
Freda Hirst
Mr J. Henderson
Mrs J. Henderson
Mr G. Wilson
Mrs G. Wilson
Councillor Caroline Miller
Councillor Allan Wishart
David Suckley
Mrs G. Suckley
Ingrid Sandison
Community Learning and Development Officer June Porter

## 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 important for commuters in the outer areas of the town getting to work;
- School children also use the service buses in the morning and afternoon as they live too close to be entitled to an official school bus;

How well are they working?

- Morning bus times are good for people getting to work at 0900 but it's difficult for people starting any earlier;
- It's difficult for people in the South of Lerwick to access jobs and the college in the industrial areas at the North;
- People living in the North of Lerwick can get to appointments at the Health Centre ok but are delayed by having to take 2 buses to get home again;
- School children currently use the Lerwick North town service to get to school as they live too close to be entitled an official school bus;
  - There is some concern that this public service could be unsafe and inappropriate for younger children;
  - There could be some capacity issues on the bus at school times due to the high number of pupils;
- People in the North can get to the Coop and people in the South can access Somerfield easily enough;
  - Getting home is more difficult as they have to go into town then wait for another bus home;
- The latest bus home is at 1705, which is a little early for some people finishing work at 1700;
- Bus connections at Sumburgh Airport are flawed as buses don't wait for flight delays;
  - Noted that British Airways previously funded an Airport service but this is no longer possible;
  - South Mainland residents would be disadvantaged if bus times varied according to flight delays;

What needs to be changed or improved?

- Could the Lerwick North town service go around Norstane and Burnside as it used to?
  - Currently the bus stops at Staney Hill Hall, which is a long walk for some of the elderly people in the area and could be dangerous for younger children running to catch the bus;
  - Noted that there could be safety issues with this route in icy weather as it's a steep hill and there are a number of parked cars obstructing the road;

- Could there be an express bus service for children going to school, which could still charge fares?
  - Noted that the children live too close to be entitled a school bus but would an express public service bus get around this issue?
- In winter there is a bus from the AHS to Lerwick North at 1600, could this bus also be used to pick up primary school children?
- There is a need for later buses into town at around 1900;
  - Other areas have later buses, perhaps they could be planned to suit social and leisure events;
- There is some demand for some reduced services on Sundays;
- Dedicated Shopper services could be introduced for more remote parts of Lerwick as it is difficult to access supermarkets using the regular service;
- Suggested that a circular service could be introduced covering all areas as it's sometimes difficult going between the North and South;
  - Perhaps could use two buses going in counter circulars?
  - Must be careful not to cut off any areas covered by the current service;
  - Could help increase usage during quieter daytime periods;

#### **Wider Issues**

- Changes to timetables can be an issue but can be partly resolved by advertising through community associations;
- A general rise in demand for more bus services will come with the rising costs of fuel;
- Fares are thought to be reasonable but there is some feeling that there should be day tickets available for people making multiple journeys; and
- Seeing how ferry services have been increased couldn't bus services be similarly expanded?

#### **How can we make Area Transport Forums work better?**

- Better advertising of meetings is needed.