

Report of
South Mainland Area Transport Forum

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



March 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 South Mainland area was held on 26 February 2008 at 7.30pm in Sandwich Junior High School. 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 South 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 young people in the South Mainland, who filled out postcard questionnaires on transport issues.

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 Sandwich Junior High School, ran from 7.30pm to about 9.00pm and was attended by 23 people. A list of attendees with contact details is included in Appendix B.

Councillor Rick Nickerson 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 Transport Strategy Officer Emma Perring, Transport Services Manager Ian Bruce, Transport Services Graduate Placement Sean Tulloch and Jan Beattie of Delvin Beattie Partnership, who facilitated the event on behalf of ZetTrans.

Five tables had been set up, each covering a different time of the day:

- Early to Midmorning;
- Middle of the Day;
- Early Evening;
- Evening; and
- Weekends.

At each table were:

- Copies of bus, ferry and air timetables for the South Mainland;
- Maps of the South Mainland area; 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;
- A discussion lasted 25 minutes after which attendees were asked to move onto a different table; and
- After three rounds of discussion were completed there was a brief overview of the key themes raised.

3) Results

Results from the pre-meeting consultation included:

- Of the 115 questionnaire postcards sent out, 10 were returned;
- 19 questionnaire postcards completed and returned by young people;
- 9 emails received from;
 - 6 from individuals;
 - 1 from Dunrossness Community Council;
 - 2 from South Mainland Local Service Delivery Group; and
- 1 letter was received from the South Mainland Local Service Delivery Group.

Results from the public meeting included:

- 23 people attended the meeting and engaged in three 25 minute discussion sessions (see Appendix B for a full list of attendees);
- 15 postcards were filled out with thoughts on wider transport issues; and
- a number of points were 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:

Daytime:

- Earlier services through the week would allow people to attend early exercise classes at Clickmin;
- The 0750 service is valuable for people getting to work, school and college;
 - The routing is particularly good as it is accessible to people along the Voe road;
- Bus services could be better timed to allow people greater access to appointments at the Levenwick Health Centre;
 - Suggested that replacing the 0930 bus from Lerwick with a 0900 service would improve this;
- Lunchtime feeder service from Exnaboe to Channerwick junction is valuable as it gives people in this area access to the main service;
- Some improvements in feeder services were suggested;
 - 1100 service to Lerwick needs a feeder bus;
 - 1400 service from Lerwick needs a feeder bus;
 - A feeder service for residents in Dalsetter is needed;
 - Feeder service needed for senior citizens in Levenwick to get to Lerwick;
 - There is no feeder services for outlying areas of Cunningsburgh, Dalsetter, Ireland, Maywick and Sandwick;
 - Perhaps surveys could be done to measure demand for feeder services in different areas as buses are of no use if people cannot get to the stops;
- Bus services in this area are important for getting to Sumburgh Airport;
 - Buses could connect better with flight times;
 - Express bus to Sumburgh could maybe pick people up at more stops on a reservation basis;
- Buses are essential for tourist travelling to Heritage sites;
 - These could be better timed as people don't have enough time to see things;
 - Some tourist attractions are a considerable distance from the bus routes;
- Reinstate the 1030 service from Lerwick to Sumburgh;
 - This would give time to prepare stock supplies to be shipped to Fair Isle;
 - Would also give Fair Isle residents access to earlier external flights at Sumburgh as they arrive at Tingwall at 1000;
- Better integration with other bus services would allow greater access to places beyond Lerwick;
 - Earlier bus to Scalloway in the morning would allow people in South Mainland to get to NAFC on time;

- The 1535 service from Sandwick School to Lerwick is quite popular with young people meeting up with friends and going to after-school jobs;
- 1535 from Anderson High School to South is popular;
 - Could this service be extended beyond term times; and
- A bus from Lerwick to South Mainland at 1600 would be good for people who finish work early in the Afternoon.

Evening:

- Buses are essential for people getting home after finishing work at 1700;
 - 1710 bus is particularly valuable in this regard;
 - This service could be improved by going around the North areas of Lerwick;
 - Capacity is often an issue on this service;
- 1710 to 2100 is too big a gap for buses from Lerwick to the South;
 - A bus at 1800 would allow young people catching the 1535 from Sandwick School to stay longer in town;
 - More buses between 1710 and 2100 would give young people more after school work opportunities in Lerwick;
- Evening bus times were altered so they can fit in with Junior Youth Club times, community wouldn't like to lose this;
- Sandwick Youth Club on Friday evenings;
 - Stays open late so children can catch the 2230 bus from Lerwick;
 - May wish to close earlier, consult club workers on bus times;
 - No bus to or from the club for children who live north of Sandwick;
- Bring in a 2100 bus from Lerwick on Fridays like there is from Monday to Thursday;
- Introduce a feeder service for the 2100 bus from Lerwick;
- Have buses from Lerwick at both 2200 and 2300;
- Current evening times are good for attending night classes, late night shopping, seeing films and visiting friends; and
 - Extra buses could be put on for special events.

Weekends:

- 0800 service to Lerwick is important for getting to work;
 - Earlier service is needed for people starting before 0900;
- Much earlier services to Lerwick are needed on Sundays;
- 0930 service is too early for people travelling to Fair Isle from Grutness;
- 1050 service to Lerwick on Saturdays is often very busy;
 - This service needs a feeder like the 1315 service;
- 1330 bus to Lerwick via Sandwick on Sundays would be welcomed;
- A mid-afternoon (1430-1500) bus on Saturdays from Sandwick to Lerwick would be welcomed;
- What is the use of the 1615 service from Lerwick on Saturdays;
 - It's not useful and rarely busy;
- Buses on Sundays work out ok for boat trips to Mousa;
- Better understanding of feeder service requirements is needed;
 - Bigton and outer areas of Cunningsburgh are lacking in services;
- More buses needed on Saturday evenings as 1710-2300 is too big a gap;
 - Buses around 2100-2200 would be good for seeing films;

- 2300 service from Lerwick on Saturdays;
 - Is often busy with young people who get off again at Sound;
 - Maybe use a bigger bus or two minibuses;
 - Needs better advertising as it's a different operator;
- There should be later buses from Lerwick to the South Mainland on Sunday evenings as 1845 is too early;
- A 0100 bus from Lerwick on Sunday mornings could take pressure off the 2300 service;
 - Although this is what taxis are for;
- Express bus services could be better used;
 - How busy are they; and
 - Could be dial-a-ride instead.

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

- A waiting room at Grutness pier would be welcomed;
- There was some debate over whether fares were too high or too low; and
- The lack of young bus drivers could place strain on services in the future.

APPENDIX A: Findings from Pre-Meeting Research & Consultation

General Comments

Within the Transport Strategy consultation documents it is generally acknowledged that the South Mainland bus service is quite good although a number of issues were raised:

- Buses to Sumburgh need to be more integrated with flight times, direct service would be suggested as regular timetabled buses can't wait around for delayed flights
- There is a lack of late night buses to and from Lerwick at the weekends in the south mainland
- There isn't sufficient public transport from Sandwick to the Levenwick Health Centre, current timetables rarely fit in with available appointments
- The current service does not cover the lower areas of Cunningsburgh
- Bigger/more buses are needed for the south mainland as they are too often crowded with too many people standing
- There should be occasional bus services to tourist attractions that aren't covered by the current services, such as the Quendale Mill
- Many find the 1530 school bus from Lerwick to Sumburgh useful, possibly extend to 4 times weekly service in school holidays?

South Mainland Local Service Delivery Group:

- Improvements in the feeder bus service, particularly in the summertime, would help improve business at the Quendale Mill
- It's felt there is a need for transport in the Dalsetter area and that a new service would work better with a different timetable
- If all South Mainland buses travelled via the Levenwick Surgery it would be much easier for people to make appointments

Individuals:

- Better integration with buses going to North and West mainland for people in the south looking to travel further than Lerwick (email)
- Currently travelling by bus from South Mainland to the North or West Mainland involves long periods of waiting at the bus station (postcard)
- Services travelling via Levenwick could be improved for people attending the Health Centre and Overtonlea (email)
- More feeder buses from Bigton to Channerwick (postcard)
- Bus service should be free for children attending School (postcard)
- "People coming to Sandwick School from Lerwick have to pay both ways bus people from Sumburgh and Levenwick get free transport to the Anderson" (postcard)
- Buses could be better timed to allow young people to attend Youth Clubs (specifically the Cunningsburgh youth club from 7-10pm on Wednesdays), football training, swimming and other events in different areas of the South Mainland (postcard)
- Dial-a-Ride minibus/taxi to and from Tingwall/Lerwick is a good and affordable service (postcard)
- An on request feeder service for Dalsetter would be welcomed by the elderly in this area (email)

- The bus service is generally good for departing flights at Sumburgh but doesn't connect so well with arriving flights (email)
- "Since the re-organisation of the South Mainland bus service it is of minimal use to people coming to and leaving from Fair Isle" (postcard)
- More bus services to and from Grutness pier to connect with Good Shepherd sailings. Current situation means visitors have to wait long periods of time in unsuitable facilities, i.e. public toilets (email)
- Frequent timetable changes are damaging to business of B&B's and the Bird Observatory in Fair Isle as these places have often sent out travel information before hand (email)
- Ferry and air services to Fair Isle are essential to the community but are very weather dependent (postcard)
- The ferry service will take anyone and anything while the air service is more limited by weight and volume (postcard)
- Day trips away from Fair Isle are limited to three days a week, Monday, Wednesday and Friday (postcard)

Specific Comments

Daytime:

- Earlier service to Lerwick would be good for attending early exercise classes at Clickmin starting at 0745 (postcard)
- 0750 Sumburgh/Lerwick – Routing of this service via Boddam is good for people along the Voe road attending work and elderly attending Gilbert Bain (email)
- 0810 bus is good for people getting to work, college and school at 0900
- Conversely the midmorning service sticks to the main road and so people must walk to meet the bus (email)
- Currently flights from Fair Isle arrive in Tingwall at 10am. As there is no longer a 1030 bus from Lerwick to Sumburgh people in Fair Isle must now wait for the 1200 service to catch an external flight. Reinstating the 1030 bus would make earlier flights more accessible (postcard)
- Current 0930 bus from Lerwick to Grutness is often too early for suppliers getting stock to Fair Isle. As a result the shop in Fair Isle is often poorly stocked and it is difficult to get vet/medical supplies that are prohibited from the plane. A return to the 1030 service would be much more appropriate (email)
- Lunchtime feeder service from Exnaboe to Channerwick junction allows people in this area to use the main service (email)
- Young people frequently use the 1535 bus from Sandwick School to Lerwick (postcard)
- A bus going through Sandwick at 1615 would be welcomed (postcard)
- A bus from Lerwick to the South Mainland at 1600 would be good for people finishing work in the early afternoon (postcard)

Evening:

- The 1710 bus is good for people getting home after finishing work at 1700 (postcard)
- "For us to attend your meeting in Sandwick we would have to hang about in Sandwick from 5.40 until the meeting starts at 7.30. Then we would

have to leave the meeting before 8.00 in order to catch the bus home!”
(email)

- A bus at 1800 from Lerwick to the South Mainland would allow young people catching the 1535 from Sandwick School to stay longer in town (postcard)
- Evening bus times were altered so they can fit in with Junior Youth Club times, community wouldn't like to lose this (RTS)
- Bring in a 2100 bus from Lerwick on Fridays like there is from Monday to Thursday (postcard)
- Current evening times are good for attending night classes, late night shopping, seeing films and visiting friends (postcard)
- “A bus that passes through Sandwick and goes to Lerwick to pick us up from the Sandwick Youth Club on Friday night at 11pm” (postcard)

Weekends:

- A mid-afternoon (1430-1500) bus on Saturdays from Sandwick to Lerwick would be welcomed (postcard)
- A 2100 bus from Lerwick to the South Mainland on Saturdays would be welcomed (postcard)
- Earliest bus from Sumburgh to Lerwick runs 1 hour later on Saturdays and 3 hours later on Sundays (RTS)
- “Sunday – a bus to Lerwick via Sandwick at 1.30pm” (postcard)
- There should be later buses from Lerwick to the South Mainland on Sunday evenings (postcard)
- People getting from Fair Isle to Sumburgh (via Lerwick) to catch flights on Sundays have a two-hour wait at the airport. Better integration of services would be welcomed (email)

APPENDIX B: List of Meeting Attendees

Name
Andrew Nicolson
George Nicolson
Pat Christie, Community Learning & Development Worker, South
Ronald Irvine
John Sinclair
Elma Johnson
Bob Baker
Wendy Lowe, Youth Development Worker
Avril Nicol, Youth Development Officer
Councillor Jim Budge
Chris Jackson
George Jacobson
Felicity Yianni
Tom Jamieson
Councillor Allison GL Duncan
Douglas Halcrow
Joan Friedlander
Jim Friedlander
Pete Ellis
Aimee Barclay, Empowerment & Participation Worker
Elyse Jamieson
Councillor Rick Nickerson
Chris Halcrow

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?

Early to Midmorning

What services are important?

- 12.00 bus works well for Mousa ferry
- 0740 Sumburgh – Lerwick via Boddam is excellent

How well are they working?

What needs to be changed or improved?

- We need to have the 9.00am bus from Lerwick – so that folk can get appointments at Levenwick
 - One hour is not enough!
 - 9.30 isn't working – too short a gap before the bus returns North
- For people to get to NAFC could the bus from the Viking leave 10mins earlier to get to the college on time
- Loss of 10.30 – affects Fair Isle too
 - Lack of 10.30 means stock isn't ready for shipping of supplies to Fair Isle
- No early bus on Saturday
- No Dalsetter feeder early in morning
 - Need a bus shelter
- Do we need a survey for a feeder to Dalsetter (and other places) at other times of day
- Feeder needed for 1100 bus to Lerwick
- Feeder service needed for Levenwick senior citizens to get to Lerwick – could link with Sandwick

Middle of the Day

What services are important?

- Airport
- Getting to Heritage sites
- Lerwick – shopping, hospital, etc.
- Doctor – problem for north heading south
- Shops
- College

How well are they working?

- Flight times are not connecting with buses (timetables)
- Buses do not connect well with local heritage centres
 - Tourists not having enough time to see things

- No feeder service to outlying areas
 - Cunningsburgh, Dalsetter, Ireland, Maywick, Sandwick
- Working well in middle of day
- Problem with 1535
 - Could the service bus be the bus that goes direct to LK not the one that goes via Aithsetter, Fladdabister

What needs to be changed or improved?

- Legislation
- Joined up thinking
- Airport service
- Feeder services
 - Buses are no use if you cannot get to the bus stop
 - Feeder needed for 1400 bus from Lerwick
- Timetables on bus shelters (dated) and updated
 - feeder bus shelters
- Express bus
 - Could pick up and set down at designated stops – reserve

Early Evening

What services are important?

- Access to Lerwick after school

How well are they working?

- Sandwick Youth Club on Friday evenings
 - Stays open to catch 2230 from Lerwick
 - Could be a bit late
 - What is demand for leaving Lerwick at 2230?
 - Get a view from club members and those that run it

What needs to be changed or improved?

- Capacity? – sometimes standing
- 1535 – AHS – could be additional public service
 - Term time restrictions
 - How many travellers? How do we gauge demand in summer
- Sumburgh 1710 doesn't go North
 - King Harald st., Bolts, Grantfield, Jim's Garage
 - Developing North Ness
 - Lochside/Gilbertson Road
- After school
 - 1615 arrival in Lerwick 1710 depart – Short time to do things
- 1710 – 2100 – big gap
 - After school jobs – can't get home till 2100
- Demand Responsive
 - Cost even if not used

Evening

- What services are important?
 - Feeder service at weekend
 - Late night bus
 - Weekday service from Sumburgh – Lerwick & weekends are very good
- How well are they working?
 - Generally the service is good, the later leaving has improved the service
- What needs to be changed or improved?
 - A bus shelter at the Channerwick junction, instead of the shelter at Brune Channerwick
 - Change 1845 to go through Bigton instead of Levenwick, Fridays only – or a feeder service for Bigton
 - Bus from Lerwick – Sumburgh at 7.30pm
 - Feeder from 9.00pm bus
 - Have a 10.00pm bus from Lerwick to Sumburgh and an 11.00pm bus
 - Extra 2300 bus for special events (larger bus)

Weekends

What services are important?

- 1050 – Saturday (very busy)
- 0800 bus – important for work
- 1710 – very important
- 2230 – Friday night
 - Lerwick to home & Sandwick Youth Club

How well are they working?

- 2300 minibus
 - There is a perception that this service is often overfull. However the operator states that the only occasion this occurred was on the night of the summer carnival and that steps have been taken to remedy this in the future
 - Claimed that a larger bus couldn't be put on due to the lack of a ticket machine. However the operator ensures that all buses are fitted with ticket machines
 - A lot of young folk get out at Sound
 - Double up – have more buses, on special events (carnival)
- Sunday ok for visitors to Mousa
 - Collect from bus 1200 from Lerwick (leave 1230 to Mousa)
 - 1500 boat from Mousa – meets school bus to Lerwick at 1535
 - 1700 boat from Mousa – can leave 10mins early for people to catch the bus to Lerwick at 1708

What needs to be changed or improved?

- Earlier buses to Lerwick are needed on Saturday for people getting to work
- Sunday also needs earlier services to Lerwick

- 0930 bus from Lerwick on Saturday is too early for people going to Fair Isle from Grutness at 1030
- 1050 service on Saturdays needs a feeder service like the 1315 service
- Express buses could be better used
 - How many people use them
 - Could be dial-a-ride instead
- Sandwich Youth Club
 - No bus for those living north of Sandwich to get to and from the Youth Club
- Better understanding of feeder bus demands needed
 - Bigton and outlying areas of areas of Cunningsburgh
- 1400 Saturday bus to Lerwick would be good for young people working
- What is the purpose of the 1615 bus from Lerwick, it's rarely busy and isn't very useful
- Later buses are needed from Lerwick on Sundays as 1845 is too early
- A service at around 2100-2145 from Lerwick would be good as there is nothing from 1710 to 2300
 - Buses around this time would be better for seeing films in Lerwick
 - Some parents don't like younger people using the 2300 service as there is a perception that it can be used by "drunk people". However the operator ensures that there has been no evidence of drunkenness on the service during the five years it has been in operation
- 2300 service from Lerwick needs better advertising as it is run by a different operator and some people are unaware of it
- Could possibly be a bigger bus at 2300 as it's often busy with young people who get off at Sound
- 0100 bus from Lerwick on Sunday mornings might take pressure off the 2300 service
 - But there are taxis for this purpose

Wider Issues

- Average age of bus drivers is an issue
 - Lack of younger people driving buses could lead to a reduction in services in a few years
 - Pay rates for bus drivers could be a factor here
- Customer care training needed for drivers
- Are fares too low?
- Fares too high? Cheaper by car
- Sometimes buses arrive earlier than timetabled
 - Better late than early
- Waiting room at Grutness would be welcomed
- Extra buses in Summer for tourists
- Could the express services be better used? How many people use them?
- Consult the drivers – they know the nature of demand
- Need better access to timetables for all operators
- Are multi-journey tickets available for all operators?

How can we make Area Transport Forums work better?

- Don't need so long for 3rd session
- Breaking up of the day – not always work
 - Evening
 - Weekend
 - Day
- Should have had flight times
- Different forum for operators
- Saturday meeting?