

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Subject: DISCONTINUED BUS SERVICES
Meeting: FALKIRK COUNCIL
Date: 25 JUNE 2008
Author: DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At the meeting of Falkirk Council on March 5, 2008, the following motion was agreed:

Now that the precedent has been set in setting aside the criteria for sustainability of subsidised bus services brought in by the then Labour Administration in 1997, Council agrees to instruct Officers to bring forward a report listing all of the services cut in the subsequent eleven years. This report should also give an explanation as to the reasons why these services were discontinued. As the 1997 policy is no longer the sole criteria for the retention or re-introduction of previously discontinued bus services, this would allow all communities equality of representation and treatment.

2 DETAIL

- 2.1 The current Policy for the Procurement of Public Transport Services was approved by the Council in 2006 and had been prepared in conjunction with the Local Transport Strategy. This policy replaced the one approved by Council in 1997. The current policy (para 4.28) states that “The Council will normally confine its funding to journeys which have an average of at least four passengers”.
- 2.2 Appendices 1, 2 and 3 detail services that have been withdrawn since 2005 and the reasons why these services have been discontinued. Figures are not available for the usage of services or journeys withdrawn prior to 2005. These services were tendered over seven years ago and passenger statistics are no longer available.
- 2.3 In general some of the service reductions that have taken place in the last eleven years have involved services which were originally introduced to take people to work for which there has subsequently been little or no demand, either because employment was reduced or the place of employment closed, or because of increased car use and flexitime or variable shift patterns. Examples are Maddiston to the Refinery in Grangemouth (other services were available), Denny to Greenhill, Maddiston to Larbert, Bo’ness to the brickworks at Whitecross.
- 2.4 Some other journeys which were withdrawn have now been reinstated in another format and some are now operated commercially. Others have been withdrawn and amendments made to other subsidised journeys or commercial services to cover the withdrawal.

- 2.5 For example, in 2003 an experimental service was introduced between Skinflats and Falkirk. The service operated for a short period of time and was then withdrawn for lack of use. However, Fife Scottish introduced a new service between Dunfermline and Falkirk via Skinflats and this provides a much better level of service between Skinflats and Falkirk.
- 2.6 The majority of service withdrawals for other reasons have been in the last two years; refer to appendices 1, 2 and 3.
- 2.7 Whilst in the past there have been a number of very poorly used journeys lost, there have also been instances where subsidised services have been increased with very little cost to the Council or no cost by making changes to commercial services. For instance a late evening Monday to Friday journey from Falkirk to Bo'ness was withdrawn in August 2005. In April 2008, First reinstated this journey on a commercial basis.

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1 Officers have administered the subsidised bus contracts budget in accordance with successive Council policies. Overall, in spite of growing car use, most bus services in the Falkirk Council area are as frequent or better than those available before the deregulation of bus services in 1986.

4. RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 It is recommended that the report be noted.

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Director of Development Services

Date: 18 June, 2008

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LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

NONE

Appendix 1

Bus services withdrawn in 2005

In 2005, the following withdrawals took place on services which were subsidised by Falkirk Council:

- Evening journeys on service 13 between Polmont and Avonbridge. Passenger useage was very intermittent. On most evenings the journeys operated empty both ways between Polmont and Avonbridge
- One early morning journey on service 6 between Bo'ness and Falkirk. This journey was only used by one person.
- One early morning journey on service 15 (Alloa to Falkirk) was withdrawn between Kincardine and Carronshore. This journey was only used intermittently by one person travelling between these points.

Appendix 2

Bus Service changes introduced in August 2006

In 2006 a number of local bus contracts were due to expire. Prior to issuing new contracts an in depth review was carried out of the contracts due to expire. The review indicated that many of the services or journeys did not carry many of passengers and thus did not warrant them being continued. Also, as a result of other service changes introduced by First, many passengers could travel on commercial services or journeys provided by that company.

- Withdrawal of services 580 and 592 linking Falkirk, Maddiston, Avonbridge, Slamannan, Airdrie / Caldercruix. Partial replacement provided by new service 20 linking Falkirk and Caldercruix only, Airdrie service available from Caldercruix. Reduced frequency between Avonbridge and Slamannan and no service direct between Avonbridge and Limerigg, all journeys operate via Slamannan. The majority of the passengers that travelled on these services were carried locally between Airdrie and Caldercruix. There are other local services on which these passengers can travel. The average number of passengers carried per day from Standburn was one. Other passengers can be catered for on other commercial or tendered services between Limerigg, Slamannan, Avonbridge, Maddiston, Whitecross and Falkirk.
- Withdrawal of last Falkirk to Limerigg journey on weekdays. The average number of passengers carried on this journey was three.
- Revised Sunday timetable between Falkirk and Limerigg only, fewer journeys but standard headway (2 hourly) instead of previous gaps. No Sunday journeys to Caldercruix, evening service reduced. Over a period of three weeks only three passengers travelled to or from Caldercruix.
- Reduction in number of buses operating direct (i.e. via Redding Road) between Maddiston and Falkirk from basic service of one an hour to one every two hours due to replacement of services 580 and 592 with new service 20. Alternative service operates every ten minutes via St Margaret's (First 1 and 2). Service 42 also provides an additional service between Whitecross and Falkirk.
- Between Newlands Road and Redding Cross fewer buses now operate but the proposed Tesco store may result in further service changes with a probability of more services operating through this area.
- New service 20 does not serve the section of route between Maddiston Stance and Bowhouse Roundabout as all journeys operate via Whitecross.
- Service 8 was withdrawn in the evenings after the 1755 hours departure from Falkirk. Also early Saturday and Sunday morning journeys will be withdrawn. Alternative services are available to both North and South Gates of Westquarter Valley. The maximum number of passengers on any one journey was four. Many journeys operated with no passengers.
- Late evening service to Hallglen from Falkirk was withdrawn; alternative service 9 through Glen Village is available. Passenger loadings on this journey averaged 3 per day.
- Service 18 (Falkirk, High Station, Lionthorn) with no direct replacement. Other services are available along all parts of this route with exception of the High Station forecourt. Alternative limited service to this point is provided by services 17 and 42. An average of

eighteen passengers per day was carried on the twenty journeys scheduled to operate on this service. On average only two passengers per day started their journey at Falkirk High Station.

- Early morning service 578 from Slamannan and California be rerouted to omit Lionthorn and Slamannan Road due to nil demand in these areas.
- Early morning services 3, 4 and 4A between Tamfourhill (3) / Camelon (4/A) and Falkirk retimed slightly to allow for more efficient use of vehicles but continue to operate.
- Service 4A withdrawn in the evening and on Sunday mornings reducing Camelon Ochiltree to one bus an hour to and from the town centre as elsewhere (Tamfourhill, Langlees, Hallglen, etc). The maximum number of passengers carried on any of the evening journeys was four. Sunday daytime service 4A continues to operate.
- Evening service ended earlier on services 3 and 4. The maximum number of passengers travelling on the journeys withdrawn was two.
- Merchiston Avenue continued to be served by service E43 although the last journey into Falkirk (approx 1845) and last journey from Falkirk (2015) will be withdrawn. No passenger demand.
- Service 5 to operate a reduced service on Saturday early mornings between Langlees and Falkirk. Only one passenger was carried on each of the journeys that were withdrawn.
- The last departure from Falkirk to Bo'ness via Grangemouth Old Town was withdrawn on weekdays (currently 2315 from Falkirk) the last bus departing at 2215 in future. The Saturday service did not change. The 2315 journey carried an average of two passengers per day. This journey was subsequently re-introduced by First.
- The additional short journeys between Allandale and Falkirk on service X37 withdrawn with the exception of the early weekday morning journey. Alternative commercial services are available for all the withdrawn journeys with the exception of the little used early departure on Saturday mornings. Saturday daytime frequency reduced to hourly the same as the weekday frequency. Other frequent services are available between Falkirk and Bonnybridge Toll. On Saturday the average number of passengers carried per journey was 4. However, the majority of passengers travelled on the section of route between Bonnybridge Toll and Falkirk for which other services are available.
- The last departure from Stirling on service 24 was withdrawn. Alternative service X39 is available 20 minutes later operating the same route as far as Haggs. Few passengers carried to any point on the section of route between Haggs and Banknock.
- The first journey from Stirling to Falkirk via Larbert on service 38 withdrawn. No one used this journey, so alternative provision is not needed.

Appendix 3

Bus Service changes in October 2007

On Monday to Saturday, the two main services are:

E1 Falkirk, Callendar Park Flats, Hawley Road, Laurieston, Polmont Gilston Park, Redding, Reddingmuirhead, Maddiston to Whitecross; and

E3 Dollar Avenue, Williamson Place Asda to Finistere Avenue and Callendar Park Flats.

These services were not changed

Monday to Saturday evenings there were two services - E2 and E5. In view of the very low use of these journeys (usually one or no passengers). They were discontinued. The passenger numbers are shown below.

On Sundays the only service that operated was service E5 (five journeys only) between Avonbridge, Standburn, Maddiston, Reddingmuirhead, Laurieston, Hawley Road, Callendar Park Flats, Town Centre Bainsford, RSNH, Larbert Cross, Denny to Strathcarron and Fankerton. This service was an amalgam of various Monday to Saturday journeys (E1, E2 and First service E43). Details of passenger usage of the various journeys are detailed below.

Apart from people travelling between Finistere Avenue/Callendar Park and Falkirk town centre (see below), there was very limited or no demand for travel on this service. Best value dictated that the service was not reinstated. Passenger numbers are shown below.

The only relatively significant numbers of passengers were travelling between Finistere Avenue/Callendar Park and Falkirk town centre. Although the numbers were low and for a very short distance, they were sufficient for further consideration to be given to maintaining a service, but not as part of the main contract.

Monday to Saturday evenings there were two services E2 and E5.

On service E2 there were three journeys in the evening service between Falkirk, Laurieston, Polmont Station, Brightons Cross to Maddiston and Standburn. Passenger usage on these journeys is as follows:

18:55 Falkirk Royal Infirmary to Standburn, Monday to Friday no passengers, Saturday 1 passenger Falkirk Royal Infirmary to Maddiston.

19:30 Standburn to Falkirk Royal Infirmary, Monday to Friday 1 passenger Polmont Station to Falkirk town centre. Saturday no passengers

21:00 Standburn to Falkirk Royal Infirmary Monday to Friday 1 person travelled between Laurieston and Falkirk East Bridge Street. Saturday no passengers travelled on this journey.

On service E5 there was one evening journey Monday to Saturday at 20:10 between Falkirk, Callendar Park Flats, Hawley Road, Laurieston, Polmont Gilston Park to Standburn.

As with service E2, the number of passengers using this service was very low. On the weekday journeys surveyed, only 3 passengers boarded at Falkirk ASDA (1 travelled to Callendar Park Flats and 2 to Reddingmuirhead). On the Saturday journey, 3 passengers boarded at Falkirk

ASDA and all got off at Callendar Park Flats, 1 passenger boarded at Laurieston and travelled to Polmont St Margaret's. No passengers travelled to Reddingmuirhead, Maddiston or Standburn.

On Sundays the only service which operated was service E5 (five journeys only) between Avonbridge, Standburn, Maddiston, Reddingmuirhead, Laurieston, Hawley Road, Callendar Park Flats, Town Centre Bainsford, RSNH, Larbert Cross, Denny to Strathcarron and Fankerton. This service is an amalgam of various Monday to Saturday journeys (E1, E2 and First service E43). Details of passenger usage of the various journeys are detailed below:

12:18 journey from Falkirk to Avonbridge carried nobody.

13:10 journey from Avonbridge to Fankerton picked up the first passenger at Polmont Gilston Crescent, 2 others boarded at Laurieston, and 9 were picked up at Callendar Park Flats, 3 at Finistere Avenue and 1 in Falkirk Town Centre. 2 passengers got off at East Bridge Street, 6 in the Town Centre, 5 at the hospital, 2 at the Central Retail Park and one at Merchiston Avenue. From Merchiston Avenue the bus then ran empty to Fankerton.

15:25 journey from Fankerton to Avonbridge. The first passenger to board the bus was at the Central Retail Park in Falkirk. 11 Passengers were picked up in the section of route between Central Retail Park and East Bridge Street, 8 got off at Finistere Avenue or Callendar Park Flats. The remainder got off at Hawley Road, Laurieston and Polmont Gilston Park. The bus then ran empty to Standburn.

17:10 from Avonbridge to Fankerton. One person boarded at Standburn and travelled to Polmont Gilston Crescent. One person travelled from Laurieston to the town centre. 6 people were picked up at Callendar Park Flats, all travelled to the town centre. The bus then ran empty to Fankerton.

19:25 from Fankerton to Avonbridge only one passenger was carried on this journey and he/she travelled between Falkirk town centre and Callendar Park Flats.

To confirm the above, further surveys were carried out.

12:18 journey from Falkirk to Avonbridge, one passenger carried from Asda to Redding and one passenger from Laurieston to Polmont St Margaret's. One person travelled a short distance from Wallacestone Brae to Wallacestone Brae, the bus then empty to Avonbridge.

13:10 Avonbridge to Fankerton. Bus empty from Avonbridge until St Margaret's where one person boarded and travelled to Laurieston, 2 people boarded at Gilston Park one travelled to the Town Centre and one to the Infirmary. 3 People boarded at Callendar Park Flats and one alighted each at East Bridge St, Newmarket St and the Central Retail Park. One person got on at Finistere Ave and travelled to the Central Retail Park. The bus operated empty to Fankerton.

15:25 Fankerton to Avonbridge operated empty to the Central Retail Park. 3 people boarded at the Central Retail Park, 3 people at Newmarket St and 4 at East Bridge St. 1 person alighted at the Infirmary, 2 at Finistere Ave, 5 at Callendar Park Flats and 1 at Gilston Park. The bus travelled empty to Avonbridge.

17:10 Avonbridge to Fankerton. Bus operated empty for the duration of this journey.

19:25 Fankerton to Avonbridge. Bus operated empty for the duration of this journey

This bus operated empty between 1643 and 2105.

The only requirement for travel is for people travelling to and from Finistere Avenue/Callendar Park and Falkirk town centre.