

## Potential For Replacement Of Withdrawn Journeys On Lothian Buses Service 18

### Executive of the Council

30 November 2004

#### Purpose of report

- 1 To respond to Councillor Mrs Elaine Aitken's Emergency Motion of 14 October 2004, as follows:
  - a *Council expresses concern at Lothian Buses decision to stop running evening and Sunday services from Colinton, Fairmilehead, Oxfords, Longstone and Sighthill to the new Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh as from 17 October 2004.*
  - b *Council notes that Lothian Health is focussing its out-of-hours service at the RIE which means more people will need to travel to the hospital at precisely the time when the No 18 will no longer be running.*
  - c *Council requests talks with Lothian Buses and calls for an urgent report from the Director of City Development detailing ways in which this vital social service can be continued, if necessary through a supported bus contract.*

#### Main report

##### Background

- 2 Lothian Buses operates commercial bus service 18 between the Gyle centre in the west of the city and the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh (RIE) in the southeast.
- 3 The service is co-ordinated with the company's service 32, also operated commercially, allowing passengers to interchange at the RIE.
- 4 Before 17 October 2004, service 18 operated between approximately 0430 and midnight (Monday to Friday), 0500 to midnight on Saturday and 0730 to midnight on Sunday. Service frequency was 30-minutes.
- 5 Lothian Buses advise that the commercial performance of services 32 and 18 has not been good, with service 18 performing significantly poorer than service 32.

- 6 On that basis, the company took the decision to curtail service 18 from 17 October 2004 in order to reduce losses.
- 7 From that date the Monday to Saturday timetable ended at around 2000, and the Sunday service was discontinued. However, the remaining 18 timetable continues to cater for hospital visiting times on Mondays to Saturdays. The frequency of the service is unchanged.
- 8 On the journeys that were removed from the timetable, the number of passengers carried per journey to and from the RIE averaged less than five, which is economically unsustainable.
- 9 The removal of service 18 at these times may make the journey from some areas to the RIE less convenient, but the journey can still be made, by changing buses at convenient points.
- 10 On the same date, Lothian Buses service 8 (Muirhouse-City Centre- RIE) was enhanced under a Supported Bus Service Contract let by the Council, and funded through the City Growth Fund.
- 11 Under this contract, service 8 will operate over its full route at all times. Previously the service terminated at Surgeon's Hall in the evenings and on Sundays. The contract is for a period of three years.
- 12 As a result of this, the service to the hospital on the Bridges corridor has been considerably strengthened at these times, allowing greater scope for interchange for those affected by the withdrawal of service 18. The extension of service 8 also allows a continued link between the hospital and Moredun/Craigour and Gilmerton Road.
- 13 The table below shows some travel options for the areas mentioned in the motion, with interchange points and ample journey times. The list is by no means exhaustive, and by changing to some First services *en route* these journeys can also be made. Longstone already has a direct link to the RIE in the evenings and on Sundays, and, in any case Lothian Buses service 18 does not serve Longstone directly.

Locale	Time of Travel	Service Option	Interchange	Journey Time
Colinton	Evenings	10 changing to 33	Princes Street before The Mound	48
		16 changing to 38	Morningside Station / Balcarres Street	29 - 44
	Sundays	16 changing to 38	Morningside Station / Balcarres Street	42
Fairmilehead	Evenings	4 changing to 33	Haymarket Dairy Road	49
	Sundays	11 changing to 38	Morningside Station / Balcarres Street	40
Oxgangs	Evenings	4 changing to 33	Haymarket Dairy Road	45
	Sundays	16 changing to 38	Morningside Station / Balcarres Street	38
Longstone	Evenings	33	direct	36
	Sundays	33	direct	45
Sighthill	Evenings	3 changing to 24	Lady Road / Cameron Toll	43
	Sundays	3 changing to 38	Lady Road / Cameron Toll	54

- 14 The cost of replacing all the lost journeys on service 18 through the use of a Supported Bus Service Contract is estimated by Lothian Buses to be £1,670 per week (£86,840 per annum).
- 15 The cost to provide journeys from noon to 2000 on Sundays only is estimated by Lothian Buses to be £500 per week (£26,000 per annum). The Supported Bus Services budget is already fully committed for the foreseeable future. Given the known low level of patronage on these journeys, the Supported Bus Service Contract option could not be recommended as best value even were funding available.
- 16 The support and enhancement of services 18 and 32 was originally considered by City Development officials and Lothian Buses under proposals for an application to the Scottish Executive under the Bus Route Development Grant Scheme (BRDG). However, it was agreed that, because of their poor commercial performance, neither service was suitable for inclusion.
- 17 Funding under BRDG rules is intended for the establishment of new, or the enhancement of existing, bus services which show clear potential for growth in patronage, to the extent that, after a period of three years, the service can continue without subsidy.
- 18 As the new RIE has been open for two years and no growth has occurred it is unlikely that the very substantial growth needed to move the service to break-even would occur over the next three years.
- 19 In that event, service 18 might well benefit from service enhancements, which might restore a level of service similar to that pertaining prior to the recent service reductions.

### **Financial Implications**

- 20 None.

### **Recommendations**

- 21 To note the contents of this report.
- 24 To note that the cost of replacing some or all of the journeys withdrawn from service 18 cannot be met from existing budgets.

- 25 To note that the enhancement of orbital bus services may be addressed under the Council's *Integrated Transport Initiative*.



**Andrew Holmes**  
Director of City Development

17.11.24

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<b>Appendices</b>	None.
<b>Contact/tel</b>	Ewan Horne - 0131 469 3633
<b>Wards affected</b>	All.
<b>Background Papers</b>	None.

**Agenda item:**

**Report title:           Potential For Replacement of  
Withdrawn Journeys on Lothian Buses  
Service 18**

In accordance with the Council's Standing Orders, the contents of this report have been noted by the appropriate Executive Member.

Without prejudice to the integrity of the report, and the recommendations contained within it, the Executive Member expresses his/her own views as follows:

**Signed:**



**Date:** 17<sup>th</sup> November 2004

**For information** – Standing Order 57(1) states:

"Heads of Department will prepare reports, with professional advice and recommendations, on matters requiring decisions by the Executive:

- a report seeking decisions on matters of corporate strategy, corporate policy and corporate projects will be submitted direct to the Executive
- a report seeking decisions on matters relating to the special responsibilities allocated to an individual member of the Executive will be submitted, in the first instance, to that member. The member will add his or her own recommendation to it before submission to the Executive. Where the Executive member disagrees with the advice and the recommendation of the officers, the Executive member will also state his or her reasons."