

POSTBUS SERVICES WITHIN THE OBAN, LORN AND THE ISLES AREA

1. SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to inform members that Royal Mail has advised the Council of their intention to withdraw PostBus Service 187 between Salen and Ulva Ferry on the Island of Mull and also PostBus Service 192 between Dalmally and Bridge of Orchy.

2. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that members note the intention of Royal Mail to withdraw these services and agree that financial support from the Council should not be given to either service.

3. BACKGROUND

For the past two years there has been a marked change of policy towards PostBus Services by Royal Mail. At one time, the policy was to convert as many rural mail runs as possible to PostBus services in order to obtain the benefits of fuel duty rebate and gain whatever level of passenger revenue could be generated. However, it now appears that the financial incentive in favour of PostBus operation has disappeared and many routes throughout the country are likely to be withdrawn as passenger-carrying vehicles fall due for replacement.

PostBus Service 187 operates between Salen and Ulva Ferry on the Island of Mull using a Peugeot 406 Estate car that has reached the end of its lease. The service operates twice-daily leaving Salen at 0535 and 0915 on Mondays and 0620 and 1015 during the remainder of the week except Sundays. The service receives no financial support from the Council. To the year ended 20th November 2004 the service carried a total of 65 passengers. £12,763.33 of financial support from the Council would be required to maintain the service for a year. This figure represents a subsidy of £196.36 per passenger. Such a high level of subsidy cannot be justified.

Postbus Service 192 operates between Dalmally and Bridge of Orchy also using a Peugeot 406 Estate car that has reached the end of its lease. The service leaves Dalmally at 0900 and follows a circuitous route to Cruachan Power Station then returns to Dalmally for 1050 for the journey to Bridge of Orchy. Several farms are served before the vehicle returns to Bridge of Orchy at 1322 for the journey back to Dalmally. This service also receives no financial support from the Council. To the year ended July 2004 the service had not carried a single passenger. Accordingly, there can be little justification for the retention of this service.

5. IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Policy – Consistent with Council's policy of not supporting transport services whose costs are well in excess of the Councils' Guideline Criteria.

5.2 Financial – None

5.3 Personnel – None

5.4 Equal Opportunities – None

5.5 Legal – None.

For further information please contact D. Blades (01546 604193).

D Duthie
Head of Transportation and Infrastructure

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