ARGYLL and BUTE COUNCIL
BUTE and COWAL AREA COMMITTEE

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES 2 MAY 2006

WITHDRAWAL OF ROYAL MAIL POSTBUS SERVICE BETWEEN DUNOON and TIGHNABRUAICH

1. SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to advise members of Royal Mail's intention to withdraw the PostBus service between Dunoon, Tighnabruaich, Kames and Colintraive and to recommend where appropriate what, if any, alternative services can be provided.

2. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that members

(a) note the contents of the report
(b) note the community transport measures within the Rural Transport Grant paper
(c) authorise the Director, Development Services to inaugurate such alternative services as are possible within current budgetary constraints.

3. BACKGROUND

Royal Mail have intimated their intention to withdraw the PostBus service between Dunoon, Tighnabruaich, Kames and Colintraive. Changes to mail delivery times coupled with the inadequacy of the existing vehicle to deal with the quantity of mail and passengers are given as the main reasons why the service is to be withdrawn. It is understood that Royal Mail is having to make changes to their business to meet targets set for them.

The Council has supported the Tighnabruaich PostBus service financially for a number of years. To year-end 31st March 2006 the Council provided a subsidy of £5,265 to meet the loss incurred in the operation of the service. The service carried 4,059 passengers last year representing a subsidy of £1.30 per passenger and good value to the Council. Royal Mail have consulted the Council in connection with their proposal and in discussions with Royal Mail one suggestion put forward was to offer a grant to allow operation of a larger vehicle. However, the offer was declined as the journeys themselves will disappear as delivery and collection times are to be altered anyway.

Although 4,059 passengers may seem a reasonable number it should be noted that for this particular service, operating as it does, twice a day six days per week, the average number per journey is only 3 or 4. However, patronage is not evenly spread and it is understood that the busiest journey is the outward journey from Dunoon at 1350 hrs.

The basic timetable for the services is as follows:-

Mondays to Fridays
0650 Dunoon to Kames
0820 Kames to Dunoon
1350 Dunoon to Kames
1500 Kames to Dunoon via Colintraive
Saturdays
0650 Dunoon to Kames
0820 Kames to Dunoon
1150 Dunoon to Kames via Colintraive
1340 Kames to Dunoon

Existing Council funded services do operate at or near some of the PostBus timings or
could be altered slightly to provide replacements.

Service 479 operates at 0640 on schooldays only from Dunoon to Colintraive but is
under consideration for diversion to Kames for school transport reasons with a return
from Kames around 0747.

Service 478 operates at 1326 on Mondays and Thursdays from Dunoon to Portavadie.
Service 479 operates at 1525 on schooldays from Dunoon to Colintraive but is under
consideration for diversion to Kames.
Service 479 operates at 1450 on Wednesdays and Fridays during school holidays
from Dunoon and has a connection at Auchenbreck for Kames.

Service 478 operates at 1437 from Kames to Dunoon on Wednesdays only.
Prices would have to be sought for provision of the journey on Mondays, Tuesdays,
Thursday and Fridays.

Service 478 operates from Dunoon to Portavadie on Saturdays at 1128 but does not
return.

Prices would have to be sought for the provision of journeys on the days that these
journeys do not operate. To cover all the journeys will cost substantially more than the
amount currently paid to maintain the service. Given current budgetary constraints it is
unlikely that any more than £15,000 per annum could be devoted to the service. It is
recommended that funding be concentrated on replacing the 1350 hrs Monday to
Friday journey from Dunoon and that further information is sought from Royal Mail as
to carryings on individual journeys.

Members are also asked to note the Rural Transport Grant proposals in which it is
recommended that small grants be made to the Cowal Desire project and Kilfinan
Community Bus whose work in the area will ensure that vulnerable members of the
affected communities still have adequate access to transport.

5. IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Policy – Consistent with Council's core policy of providing access.

5.2 Financial – Cost contained within the Public Transport Budget.

5.3 Personnel – None

5.4 Equal Opportunities – None

5.5 Legal – None.

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

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