

School Transport and First ScotRail Enhanced Glasgow Oban Rail Service

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 Members of the Oban Lorn and the Isles Area Committee requested a report updating them on the decision to transport some pupils within the Dalmally corridor to school by train to Oban High School using the enhanced Glasgow Oban rail service, this report outlines the latest position.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 Members are invited to note the contents of this report.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1. On 19th February 2013 the Scottish Transport Minister announced that First ScotRail is funding a major enhancement to the train service between Glasgow and Oban. From a service of three trains a day the frequency of service will increase to six trains a day from 18 May 2014. The ScotRail franchise has been extended and as part of the negotiations with Transport Scotland, ScotRail had set aside funding for improvements and then decided how this should be spent. A significant sum was put towards the Oban line enhancement and ScotRail invited the Council to consider the option of using rail to transport pupils.
- 3.2. The proposed option was presented at the Oban Lorn and the Isles Business Day on 8th May 2013, and subsequently approved by the Council on 27 June 2013.
- 3.3. Following the Council decision, and in accordance with the commitment to carry out consultation with the affected communities, there has been Council representation at a public meeting in Dalmally and at the Connel Community Council. A meeting has also been scheduled with the Taynuilt Community Council on 9th December, and a verbal update will be provided directly to the Committee.
- 3.4. Concerns and issues raised at these meeting were fully acknowledged by Council officials to the Council, and are currently being addressed in partnership with HiTrans and ScotRail.

3.5 The Enhanced Train Service

3.5.1 By agreeing to transport pupils by rail the council will be helping to secure the long term future of the enhanced train service. The enhanced timetable designed to accommodate school transport will be as follows (the trains for school times are in bold red) :-

	M-S	M-S	M-S	M-F	Sch	S	M-S	M-S
Oban Leave	0513	0857	1211	1441	1611	1611	1811	2037
Connel	0524	0908	1223	1452	1622	1622	1823	2048
Taynuilt	0536	0920	1235	1506	1634	1634	1835	2100
Loch Awe	0549	0935	1250	1521	1649	1649	1850	2113
Dalmally	0555	0940	1302	1526	1654	1654	1858	2119
Glasgow Arrive	0837	1159	1529	1747	----	1919	2118	2330
	M-S	M-S	M-S	M-S	Sch	M-S	M-S	
Glasgow Leave	0520	0821	1037	1221	----	1637	1821	
Dalmally	0751	1042	1301	1444	1705	1859	2040	
Loch Awe	0756	1047	1306	1449	1710	1904	2045	
Taynuilt	0811	1103	1322	1505	1725	1920	2101	
Connel	0822	1114	1332	1515	1736	1930	2111	
Oban Arrive	0835	1127	1345	1528	1749	1943	2124	

CODES : M-S = Operates Mondays to Saturdays
M-F = Operates Mondays to Fridays
Sch = Operates on Schooldays only
S = Operates on Saturdays only

3.5.2 Although the enhanced train service will come into effect from 18 May 2014 pupils will not start to travel by train until August 2014.

3.6 Pupils Transferred to Train, Current and Proposed Arrangements

3.6.1 Estimates, based on current pupil numbers, are that 114 Oban High School pupils between Dalmally and Connel can be transferred to the train. With the distribution of pupils as follows :-

Connel	17
Taynuilt	56
Loch Awe	7
Dalmally	34

3.6.2 Pupils between stations or who do not have a safe walking route to their nearest station will be carried by bus either all the way to Oban or to Loch Awe, Dalmally or Taynuilt stations. All pupils who live where there are safe walking routes will be expected to walk to the appropriate station for the train.

3.7 Pupils are currently transported on four buses, all of which are registered local services. Transferring the pupils to the train will save three of these

buses and put some additional mileage on to another existing bus contract. The annual saving to the council is estimated at over £40,000.

3.8 All transport arrangements described above work in reverse for the homeward journey in the afternoon.

3.9 Summary of Benefits to school pupils and to the wider community

- The pupil's annual rail season tickets allow unlimited travel.
- Attending after school activities will be easier with no additional charge for travelling home on later trains at 1811 and 2037 whereas at present there are additional costs for pupils travelling home later by bus or coach.
- Pupils will be able to attend local GP or other appointments and travel to or from school outwith the usual time at no additional charge.
- Journeys at other times will be possible via the use of the annual season ticket.
- There will be financial saving to the Council on school transport costs.
- The enhanced train timetable will give all year round commuting possibilities into Oban for others.
- HiTRANS have indicated that they may be prepared to fund cycle facilities at stations.
- Where there is a sufficient increase in usage ScotRail have indicated that they would ask Transport Scotland if they would be prepared to fund improved waiting facilities at stations.
- Oban High School pupils travelling on the train will help to secure the long term future of the enhanced train timetable.
- Two full time traincrew jobs will be created based in Oban and should more than compensate for any loss of bus work at school times.
- The enhanced train timetable will substantially reduce the waiting time for foot passengers travelling from the islands and who require onward transport.

4.0 CONCLUSION

4.1 It is responsibility of the Council to implement school transport solutions which are safe, timely, reliable and provide best value for money.

- 4.2 The issues of concern which have been raised by the communities involved are currently being addressed by the Council in partnership with HiTrans and ScotRail.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Policy – None

5.2 Financial – Annual savings of £40,000

5.3 Personnel – None

5.4 Equal Opportunities - None

5.5 Legal .None

5.6 Risk - None

5.7 Customer Service - additional benefits for pupils and the wider community.

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