

FORMARTINE AREA BUS FORUM

MINUTES OF MEETING ON THURSDAY 1st NOVEMBER 2018

STAFF ROOM, ELLON COMMUNITY CAMPUS, ELLON

In Attendance

Councillor I. Davidson (Aberdeenshire Council) (Chair)

Councillor R. Thomson (Aberdeenshire Council)

Councillor A.L. Kloppert (Aberdeenshire Council)

Councillor I. Taylor (Aberdeenshire Council)

Samantha Rawlins (Community Planning Officer, Formartine)

Mike Rawlins (Turriff and District Community Council)

Rachel Milne (North East Transport Training)

Hilda Drummond (Potterton Bus User)

George Scott (Ellon Bus User)

Sheila Scott (Ellon Bus User)

Kathryn Morrison (Ellon Bus User)

Sheila Noble (Ellon Bus User)

Sheila McKay (Ellon Bus User)

Eileen Milne (Ellon Bus User)

Margaret Simpson (Ellon Bus User)

Dorothy Cummine (Ellon Bus User)

Margaret Thom (Ellon Bus User)

Lesley Clare (Ellon Bus User)

Helen McGillivray (Ellon Bus User)

Elsie Gill (Ellon Bus User)

Colin Frost (Ellon Bus User)

Ian Jukes (Ellon Bus User)

Ray Kenyon (Newburgh Bus User)

Anne Kenyon (Newburgh Bus User)

Pat Buchan (Oldmeldrum Bus User)

Ethel McCurrach (Turriff Bus User)

David Emslie (Turriff Bus User)

Jacqueline Hill (Ythanbank Bus User)

Amanda Simpson (Foveran Bus User)

Amanda Keith (Foveran Bus User)

Brian Simpson (Foveran Bus User)

Ron Peterson (Foveran Bus User)

Tony Joyce (Bus User)

Jodee Joyce (Bus User)

David Rait (Bus User)

Eric Harper (Bus User)

Audrey Harper (Bus User)

Audrey Kemp (Bus User)

Colin Kemp (Bus User)

Steven Lowe (W & G Coaches)

Dougie Bain (Bains Coaches)

Daniel Laird (Commercial Director, Stagecoach North Scotland)

Neil Stewart (Principal Officer, Passenger Transport Unit, Aberdeenshire Council)

Marion Mackay (Principal Officer, Passenger Transport Unit, Aberdeenshire Council)

Jim Bowe (Principal Officer, Passenger Transport Unit, Aberdeenshire Council)

Susan Watt (Senior Transport Officer, Passenger Transport Unit, Aberdeenshire Council)

Apologies

Jim Bruce (Glack/Daviot Resident and Bus User)
Lorraine Bruce (Glack/Daviot Resident and Bus User)
Pam Young (Newmachar Community Council)
Ian Young (Bus User)
Robert Martin (Oldmeldrum Bus User)
Lorna Owen (Ellon Bus User)
Fiona Jones (Bus User)

1. Welcome and Introduction

Councillor Davidson welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were given.

2. Minutes of Meeting on 3rd May 2018

The minutes were approved.

3. Matters Arising from the Minutes

Jim Bowe provided the following update on behalf of Aberdeenshire Council:

- 3.1 In response to the claim that a bus stop pole on Snipe Street (Ellon) is obscured by overgrown trees, he confirmed that the site was inspected, resulting in the bus stop being moved to a more visual location and we will continue to monitor the situation.
- 3.2 In response to the request for an update on the re-instatement of the bus shelter on Market Street (Ellon) for northbound travel, he confirmed that the shelter was replaced in May 2018, including a Real-time display screen.

Daniel Laird provided the following update on behalf of Stagecoach Bluebird:

- 3.3 In response to Councillor Hassan's survey undertaken in the Oldmeldrum area to gauge passengers' thoughts on bus services, he confirmed that due to financial constraints, it is not possible to introduce additional journeys at the moment.
- 3.4 In response to the repeated request for a southbound evening journey on Services 290/291 (Methlick - Aberdeen) to be re-timed to provide an appropriate arrival time in Aberdeen for those attending evening events, he confirmed that, as from 19 November 2018, there will be a departure from Methlick at 1840 hrs (1918 hours ex Belhelvie).
- 3.5 In response to the complaint that Stagecoach Bluebird did not operate a "normal" Monday service on Easter Monday, on Service 308 (Inverurie – Aberchirder), he apologised for this and arrangements have been put in place to ensure that this is not repeated.
- 3.6 Regarding the repositioning of the sign to remind passengers that the seats downstairs on the Buchan Xpress services are strictly for people with restricted mobility, as it is obscured if somebody is sitting in the seats, he confirmed that advice had been sought on this, resulting in no action being taken.
- 3.7 In response to the request for an earlier first bus on Saturdays (Service 62) from the Esslemont Circle/Ness Circle area of Ellon to Aberdeen, for passengers to commence work at 0800 hours, he confirmed that a departure at 0704 hours from Esslemont Circle, which will arrive in Aberdeen at 0739 hours, will be introduced on 19 November 2018.

- 3.8 In response to the claim regarding Service 62A (Ellon - Balmedie - Aberdeen) not serving the correct bus stops on Union Street on Sundays, he confirmed that this was rectified.
- 3.9 In response to the request for Service 35 to be re-routed within Aberdeen City, to provide passenger access to Union Terrace or Union Street, he confirmed that this would not be possible as it would currently involve an additional vehicle being allocated to the corridor due to the additional time required and this was not viable at present.
- 3.10 In response to the claim that the display screens at Union Square Bus Station do not always work, with particular regard to Services 60/61 (Aberdeen - Peterhead), he confirmed that this has been investigated and all the screens are currently in operation.

It was raised from the floor that the screens don't always display the correct information, resulting in passengers missing their bus service.

Daniel Laird confirmed that this would be investigated. He advised that the tannoy system is currently utilised at the Bus Station, however the control team have received requests for it to be used more frequently during periods of service disruption, which appears to be working well.

- 3.11 In response to the claim that frequent late running and/or breakdowns are resulting in insufficient seats being available at Newmachar, he confirmed that there has been a reduction in the volume of breakdowns over the last 6 months and additional peak journeys will be introduced as from 19 November 2018.

He also confirmed that the company continues to state the business case for newer vehicles for this corridor. However, any investment requires consideration by Stagecoach Group and the company must compete with companies elsewhere in the UK.

- 3.12 The 2215 hours ex Aberdeen - Banff via Union Terrace will be re-instated to allow passengers to travel home from His Majesty's Theatre and the Music Hall (once refurbishment completed), also with effect from 19 November 2018.
- 3.13 In response to the claim that, on 17th February 2018, a new driver operated the wrong way around Balmedie on the 1006 hours ex Ellon – Aberdeen, he confirmed that the driver has been re-instructed accordingly.
- 3.14 In response to the request for only low floor vehicles to be allocated to Service 62 (Ellon – Aberdeen), he confirmed that only low floor buses would be allocated from 19 November 2018, but Service 62 will be replaced by Service 54 (see section 4.1 below).
- 3.15 In response to the complaint that passengers with "Megarider" tickets were not compensated for non-operation of certain services during the extreme weather conditions at the end of February 2018, with particular reference to Service 63 (Aberdeen - Newburgh - Peterhead), he confirmed that this has been dealt with on a case by case basis.

4. Stagecoach Bluebird Update

Daniel Laird provided the following update:

4.1 Following a review, proposed revisions to the majority of services in the area have been the subject of public consultation. These take account of reliability issues and the dualling of the A90 between Balmedie and Tipperty, with changes implemented on 19 November 2018.

He summarised as follows:

- Service 35 (Aberdeen - Banff - Elgin): to address punctuality and reliability issues on the corridor
- Service 54 (Aberdeen - Ellon and Ellon Town) replaces the existing Ellon Town Service and Service 62/62A (Ellon - Balmedie - Aberdeen), the latter no longer being commercially viable in its current format. A number of Ellon - Aberdeen journeys have been combined with journeys on the existing Service 54 (Ellon Town Service) to provide a number of through journeys between the outlying areas of Ellon and Aberdeen via Foveran and Balmedie (approximately 2 hourly), but resulting in an overall reduction in the number of journeys to/from Aberdeen, including the withdrawal of the Sunday service.
- Service 60/61 (Aberdeen - Ellon - Peterhead): all Monday to Saturday daytime journeys will operate via the A90 dual carriageway direct between Ellon and Aberdeen, and will divert to serve Balmedie in the evenings and on Sundays. Passengers travelling on a Sunday to/from Peterhead will benefit from a half hourly frequency for most of the day on Service 60 and 63.
- Service 63 (Aberdeen - Newburgh - Peterhead): all journeys will serve Balmedie (approx. half-hourly peak; hourly inter-peak).
- Services 67/68/X67/X68 (Aberdeen - Ellon - Fraserburgh): all journeys on Service 67 will operate via the A90 dual carriageway, divert to serve Foveran only, then re-join the A90 to Aberdeen and vice versa. All journeys on Service 68 will operate via the A90 dual carriageway direct between Ellon and Aberdeen, except on evenings and Sundays when they will serve Foveran, then as per 67 route above.

When the AWPR is fully open, Service 747 (Peterhead/Ellon - Aberdeen Airport) is proposed to extend from the airport via the AWPR towards Stonehaven and the Mearns coast, with the frequency enhanced to hourly and a weekend service also added. There will be opportunities for users of the Fraserburgh - Aberdeen services to make connections at Ellon Park and Ride.

5. Aberdeenshire Council Update

Neil Stewart referred to the handout (also provided separately) and gave the following update:

5.1 Transport Focus undertakes an annual Bus Passenger Survey (BPS) and, whilst the 2016 survey was funded by Transport Scotland, the Regional Transport Partnerships (RTPs) and operators, the 2017 survey was funded by the main national operators based upon their operational areas and not, as previously was the case, geographically based on the RTP regions.

For north east Scotland, this was therefore primarily a survey of Stagecoach Bluebird and First Aberdeen routes, but the former's City services were not included on this occasion.

Supplementary funding from Nestrans enabled Transport Focus to extract the relevant results for Aberdeenshire and enhance the Aberdeenshire responses, with additional samples taken from further Stagecoach routes and a supported service route operated by MW Nicoll. The resultant survey was undertaken between 11 September and 17 December 2017, and comprised 649 users in Aberdeenshire.

The principal finding of the autumn 2017 BPS was that Aberdeenshire bus users showed an increased level of satisfaction with the overall service, and also in 25 of the 33 specific aspects of bus service delivery, compared with the spring 2016 BPS.

Overall positive satisfaction with Bus Service Delivery increased by 2%, with the most significant increases (i.e. > +5%) being recorded in the categories of Punctuality (+7%), Length of Time Waiting for a Bus (+7%), Personal Safety at Bus Stop (+9%), Ease of Getting On and Off Bus (+7%), Time Taken to Board the Bus (+8%) and Nearness to Kerb (+8%).

Comparisons with the Nestrans area

The Aberdeenshire results compare favourably with the Nestrans area as a whole in most of the specific categories, the most significant differences in responses relating to driver behaviour, with positive satisfaction in Aberdeenshire outscoring that for the Nestrans area as a whole in the categories of Greeting/Welcome from Driver (+9%), Helpfulness of Driver (+7%) and Time Given to Get to Your Seat (+7%).

Positive satisfaction levels in Aberdeenshire also exceeded those in the Nestrans area as a whole by more than 5% in the categories of Information at Bus Stop (+6%), Personal Safety at Bus Stop (+6%), Smoothness of Journey (+6%) and Interior Cleanliness/Condition of Bus (+6%).

Comparisons with the English rural authorities

Benchmarking of local satisfaction levels was undertaken for each service delivery category against seven comparable English rural authorities covered by the same 2017 Transport Focus BPS, namely Cornwall, County Durham, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, Northumberland, Oxfordshire and Worcestershire.

Positive satisfaction levels for Aberdeenshire exceeded those for the benchmark English rural county authorities in the Transport Focus 2017 BPS in 25 of the 32 categories where like for like comparisons could be made.

Positive satisfaction levels in Aberdeenshire were more than 5% greater than the average across the seven English rural authorities in the categories of Personal Safety at Bus Stop (+8%), Freedom of Graffiti/Vandalism at Bus Stop (+6%), Freedom of Litter at Bus Stop (+6%), Overall Satisfaction with Bus Stop (+6%), Interior Cleanliness/Condition of Bus (+6%) and Comfort of the Seats (+6%).

The English rural authorities, on average, scored significantly higher than Aberdeenshire in only 3 categories, these being Value for Money (+7%), Ease of Getting On and Off Bus (+7%) and Provision of Grab Rails on Bus (+10%), the latter two results suggesting that buses are more accessible in other comparable areas of the UK.

5.2 Marion Mackay provided the update on the Turriff A2B Service:

Following funding from EU through the G-Patra scheme, the majority of the subsidised Service 257 (Turriff Town) and 258 (Turriff Circular) will be replaced by a dial-a-bus service as from Monday 19 November 2018. The service will be operated by two Council minibuses, liveried as A2B dial-a-bus, and will continue to serve the current routes/areas, but will also divert off the main roads upon request to provide a door-to-door service when required.

Marion Mackay advised that passengers need to register to use A2B dial-a-bus and all journeys should be pre-booked and she provided details of how bookings are made.

Stagecoach Bluebird will continue to operate the schoolday only journeys (Monday to Friday) on the Circular service but the following journeys which are not commercially viable will be withdrawn: 0635 hours and 0712 hours ex New Byth – Turriff (Service 258: Monday to Friday) and the 0835 hours ex Turriff (High Street) – Turriff Primary School (Monday to Friday on schooldays only).

- i) Query as to how the service will operate to a timetable, whilst picking up passengers not on the route.

Marion Mackay advised that the advertised timetable will be a guide. When passengers phone to book they will be provided with an estimated time of pick up based on the Council's scheduling software.

- ii) Query as to how passengers residing outside the operational area will be aware of the booking arrangements required prior to travel.

Marion Mackay advised that the service is currently being publicised, for example leaflets are available at various establishments and posters on buses informing passengers of the need to phone A2B to register for the service.

- iii) Query regarding alternative booking arrangement for those who don't have a telephone.

Marion Mackay advised that passengers are encouraged to telephone by calling 01467 535 333, between 0900 hours and 1530 hours on Mondays to Friday, but they can also email their booking requests on a2bdialabus@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

- iv) Query as to where the journeys commence, coupled with where passengers can be picked up, and whether all passengers travel free.

Marion Mackay confirmed it is proposed that the Turriff Town service operates at similar times to the current timetable, with passengers being able to choose to board at bus stops or from agreed alternative locations, such as outside their homes. All passengers will travel free of charge. She also highlighted that if there are no passengers booked onto a journey then the journey won't operate.

- v) Query as to whether passengers can book onto the service if not registered, coupled with whether there will be sufficient seating capacity to accommodate current passenger demand or could passengers be left at bus stops over the first couple of weeks.

Marion Mackay advised that it is proposed that over the first two weeks, passengers will be able to travel on the Town Service without booking, with the service picking up at bus stops but passengers are encouraged to book. She also advised that the minibus should be able to accommodate passenger demand but this would be monitored.

- vi) Complaint that Turriff Community Council were not notified of the change to the service until the last two weeks, coupled with complaints that no consultation or publicity on the change of service has been undertaken, resulting in passengers being left confused.

Marion Mackay advised that posters have been displayed on buses and also at other local facilities. She highlighted that a drop-in session is being held for passengers on Wednesday 7th November 2018 at the car park next to Tesco.

- vii) Query as to whether passengers can book after 3.30pm if they are unsure of their travel arrangements or have to attend urgent appointments.

Marion Mackay advised that whilst the A2B general enquiries number is open till 5pm (Monday to Friday) bookings are not taken after 3.30pm. However before 3.30pm "same-day" bookings may be possible, usually requiring a minimum of an hour's notice.

- viii) Query as to whether you can book a single or a return journey.

Marion Mackay confirmed that you can book either single or return journeys.

- ix) Query as to whether the A2B dial-a-bus is available on Sunday to attend church services.

Marion Mackay confirmed that the A2B does not operate any Sunday services.

- x) Request for the Oldmeldrum A2B dial-a-bus to be re-instated. Also, a comment was made about the difficulty of getting from Oldmeldrum to the new Inverurie health hub.

Marion Mackay advised that the Oldmeldrum town service was withdrawn due to very low patronage and there are currently no plans for the service to be re-instated.

6. Public Transport Infrastructure / Information

Jim Bowe provided the following update on Infrastructure:

- Ellon Park and Ride

The land has now been cleared of vegetation and the process of locating the water main pipework has commenced. Subject to findings, it is anticipated that the specification and tender will be developed in December 2018, with works on the next phase commencing in March 2019. The works will involve extending the car park and creating a new busway in the vicinity of the current turning circle, extending via the old road. The new busway will accommodate 3 bus bays with enclosed shelters allocated to each of the three bus stances plus a further three bus bays will be allocated for buses to layover. It is anticipated that the works will be completed by June 2019.

Query for an update on the entrance to the facility, in regard to the broken gateway.

Jim Bowe confirmed that our consultants are currently exploring solutions.

- Oldmeldrum Hub

We are currently progressing the project in conjunction with the Landlord, the housing developer Scotia Homes

- 6.1 Query whether journeys on Service 35 (Elgin - Banff - Aberdeen) travelling from Elgin will have sufficient seating capacity on arrival at Oldmeldrum Interchange, after picking up passengers at the Oldmeldrum hub, in particular on the peak journeys.

Councillor Davidson, with agreement from Daniel Laird, advised that the operator would monitor developments and act accordingly.

- 6.2 Claim that a Stagecoach Bluebird employee had informed a passenger, who had queried that buses were operating early, that the timetable information displayed in the bus shelters in Foveran was incorrect, and to contact Aberdeenshire Council.

Daniel Laird confirmed that all services are registered with the Traffic Commissioner and the data is then downloaded by the Council to produce timetables displayed at bus stops. He also confirmed that approximate times are used in rural locations and that he would look at the times provided at Foveran, in consultation with the Council.

- 6.3 Request for a Real-Time Passenger Information facility at Foveran

Jim Bowe confirmed that this would be investigated.

- 6.4 Query as to whether Stagecoach Bluebird timetables will be available to the public prior to 19 November 2018.

Daniel Laird confirmed that the timetables are available on-line and the Buchan booklet is currently being printed and will be available in advance of 19 November 2018.

7. Service 35 (Aberdeen - Elgin)

- 7.1 Repeated claim regarding frequent late running or non-operation of journeys and that there are “unsuitable” and “poor” vehicles operating on the corridor resulting in frequent breakdowns, citing frequent faults with the door mechanism. This was coupled with a repeated request for new vehicles.

Daniel Laird acknowledged this and referred to his earlier comments (see 3.11 above), whilst Susan Watt highlighted the importance of providing dates and times of issues, and also reporting them as soon as possible after their occurrence.

- 7.2 Repeated request for the re-instatement of Service 35A, with journeys operating via Riverside Drive (Dyce) and Berryden Road (Aberdeen).

Daniel Laird confirmed that Service 35A would not be re-instated, due to low passenger demand.

- 7.3 Claim that the 0918 hours ex Banff - Aberdeen, on 19 October 2018, slowed down for a passenger waiting at a bus stop in Oldmeldrum but then didn't actually stop until further down the road. It is alleged that, when the passenger finally managed to board the vehicle, the person who was training the driver was verbally abusive to the passenger.

Daniel Laird confirmed that this is totally unacceptable behaviour for a Stagecoach Bluebird employee and the member of staff concerned would be identified and interviewed accordingly.

- 7.4 Claim regarding buses not leaving from the allocated stance at Union Square Bus Station, resulting in passengers being left.

Daniel Laird confirmed that at times, buses may have to leave from alternative stances in the peak times, due to insufficient space and delayed services. However, this should be communicated to passengers.

- 7.5 Request for the destination screens on the rear of the vehicles to be lit up, in particular in the evenings.

Daniel Laird confirmed that the display screen should be lit up in the evening and that specific complaints in this regard would be followed up.

8. **Service 54 (Aberdeen - Balmedie - Ellon and Ellon Town) (incorporating former Service 62: Aberdeen – Balmedie - Ellon)**

- 8.1 Request for the early morning journeys departing from Esslemont Circle and Ness Circle (Monday to Friday) to be re-instated for passengers travelling to work in Aberdeen, as the first departure on the new timetable will be 0753 hours ex Esslemont Circle, which connects with a bus to Aberdeen arriving in the City after 0900 hours.

Neil Stewart confirmed that this matter is currently under discussion with Stagecoach Bluebird, with a view to re-instating at least one earlier journey from Esslemont Circle. He also confirmed that the revised service is registered to operate along Hospital Road (Ellon) on a trial basis and this will be monitored over the next few months.

(For information, Stagecoach will re-instate a departure from Esslemont Circle at 0652 hours with effect from 21 January 2019)

- 8.2 Request for additional journeys between Aberdeen and Esslemont Circle/Ness Circle as a 2 hourly service was not considered adequate.

Daniel Laird confirmed that it is not possible to serve all areas on an hourly basis and also maintain commercial viability, but the service would be monitored over the coming months.

- 8.3 Request for re-instatement of the evening and Sunday services between Esslemont Circle/Ness Circle to Aberdeen.

Daniel Laird confirmed that there was insufficient passenger demand in the evenings and Sunday to justify this on a commercial basis.

- 8.4 Request for the journey times on Service 54 (Aberdeen - Ellon) to be reduced, in particular at peak times, highlighting that buses can sometimes stop for up to 12 minutes at various locations so they do not operate ahead of schedule.

Daniel Laird confirmed that the new timetable is designed to address timing issues on the corridor and will be monitored over the coming months, however it will need time to bed-in. He also highlighted that it was difficult to accommodate all passenger travel needs on the corridor.

9. Services 60/61/67/68 (Aberdeen - Ellon/Peterhead) & (Aberdeen - Ellon - Fraserburgh)

- 9.1 Repeated request for additional peak time journeys to/from Aberdeen, particularly p.m., to be re-routed via Ellon town centre, as there are considerable gaps during these periods and a high proportion of passengers cannot drive to/from Ellon Park & Ride and journey times on the proposed service 54 are almost twice as long from Aberdeen to Ellon (Bridge Street).

Daniel Laird confirmed that it is difficult to strike a balance between the demands of Ellon passengers and those travelling longer distances to the likes of Fraserburgh and Peterhead, the latter requesting faster services and as few stops as possible. He confirmed that the situation would continue to be monitored.

- 9.2 Complaint regarding the reduction in the level of service to/from Foveran, particularly during the peak periods, highlighting that the volume of new housing is increasing in the village.

Daniel Laird reaffirmed that Foveran will be served at least hourly during the inter peak period, but 4 additional a.m. peak journeys and 3 additional p.m. peak journeys have been introduced in response to feedback received during the consultation period and it is believed that the new timetable meet passenger demand.

- 9.3 It was pointed out that the 0835 hours ex Aberdeen – Peterhead via Newburgh and Cruden Bay (Monday to Friday) is wrongly numbered as a service 60 in the timetable, and should be renumbered Service 63.

Daniel Laird confirmed that this would be rectified in the next reprint.

10. Services 290/291/292 (Aberdeen - Tarves/Methlick/Ellon)

- 10.1 Query regarding the current road closure at Ythanbank, affecting Service 292, and what measures are in place for passengers affected on the route.

Susan Watt confirmed that notices have been displayed on the vehicles and at all relevant bus stops, three weeks prior to the start date, informing passengers of the closure and to contact the Council's Passenger Transport Unit, so that alternative transport can be arranged. She asked the person to speak to herself after the meeting to discuss this matter.

- 10.2 Query as to what plans are in place for bus operations during winter conditions, highlighting that in March 2018 buses were unable to serve Udney Station, Cultercullen and Belhelvie over a 2 week period due severe weather. This was coupled with a request for buses to operate via B977 to serve Belhelvie, when the Udney Station to Belhelvie section is impassable.

Daniel Laird confirmed that this request would be considered and also referred to similar problems between Cruden Bay and Newburgh. He advise that winter plans are in place, but highlighted that the changing conditions can impact on this.

Susan Watt confirmed that the B977 route has been used previously, in particular due to road closures, but it would depend on the winter conditions at that time and if it was safe to use it as an alternative.

- 10.3 Query as to why the Stagecoach Bluebird app does not take into consideration any route changes on the corridor over the winter period, or during road closures.

Daniel Laird confirmed that the app is currently unable to take into account any route diversion but this is being investigated.

11. Service 308 (Inverurie – Turriff/Aberchirder)

- 11.1 Request for a weekday inter-peak return journey (0920 hrs ex Turriff and 1220 hrs ex Inverurie) to be re-routed to serve Meikle Wartle, to provide a facility for those travelling to/from Inverurie for shopping and medical appointments.

Neil Stewart confirmed that the inter-peak journeys were removed from Meikle Wartle due to extremely low patronage of 1 passenger per journey but if such a diversion was possible with no cost implications, it would be arranged in conjunction with Stagecoach Bluebird.

Marion Mackay confirmed that the Inverurie A2B operates via Meikle Wartle to Inverurie on Tuesdays, principally for shopping purposes.

12. Date of Next Meeting

- 12.1 Councillor Davidson confirmed that the next meeting of the Forum is planned to take place in Oldmeldrum in spring 2019. Full details will be advised in due course.