

Transport and Environment Committee

10:00am, Thursday, 19 March 2013

Kirkliston Public Transport Issues: Response to Petition

Item number	7.3
Report number	
Wards	1 - Almond

Links

Coalition pledges	P18 , P47
Council outcomes	C07 , C08 , C09 , C022
Single Outcome Agreement	SO1

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Kirkliston Public Transport Issues: Response to Petition

Summary

The petition to the Council on Kirkliston Public Transport asserts:

- that Kirkliston is poorly served by public transport;
- that Kirkliston suffers through not being served by Lothian Buses, with a resultant high fares cost penalty and poor access to a comprehensive bus network;
- that the public transport network has not evolved in response to the expansion of housing in Kirkliston;
- that bus services for Kirkliston have recently been cut by some 50%;
- that the Council has a responsibility to provide adequate bus services for Kirkliston through subsidy; and
- that the Council should encourage more bus operators to serve Kirkliston.

The background of recent bus service changes in Kirkliston is explored, together with issues around the relationship between the Council and Lothian Buses.

Funding issues are discussed and actions are proposed to help address the issues raised in the petition.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Committee:

- 1 agrees the actions proposed to address the issues raised in the Petition;
- 2 notes that Kirkliston Community Council will be consulted on proposed improvements;
- 3 notes the intention to tender for a Framework Contract covering the supply of Supported Bus Services;
- 4 notes the intention to retender bus service 63 under the above Framework Contract; and
- 5 advises the Petitions Committee of the decision of the Transport and Environment Committee and to note that an update will be provided in the Petitions Committee Business Bulletin.

Measures of success

Successful implementation of a package of improvements to public transport provision in Kirkliston.

Financial impact

Funding totalling £215k can be applied to enhancing public transport in Kirkliston in coming years. This funding is available on a one-off basis, as a result of a Section 75 Agreement covering the north Kirkliston housing developments. The funding will become available during financial year 2013/2014.

Future consideration will be given to the use of other funding, including savings made in contributions to West Lothian Council contracts, to help address the issues raised in the petition.

Equalities impact

Successful implementation of enhancements to public transport will improve bus network connectivity and inclusiveness in the community.

Sustainability impact

Changes to the bus network in Kirkliston will reduce car dependency and improve accessibility for many, so improving sustainability.

Consultation and engagement

Consultations with Kirkliston Community Council (KCC) have taken place over the content of the Petition, and will take place over proposals for enhancements or changes to bus services resulting from new developments in Kirkliston.

KCC has undertaken its own survey of residents' public transport priorities and aspirations, and the results will be taken into account in any decision making.

Ward Councillors have been consulted on the contents of this report.

Background reading/external references

None.

Kirkliston Public Transport Issues: Response to Petition

1. Background

- 1.1 At the meeting of the Petitions Committee on 3 December 2012, a petition was considered as follows:

We the people of Kirkliston call upon the City of Edinburgh Council to urgently conduct a review of public transport in Kirkliston and South Queensferry. Kirkliston residents have long suffered poor public transport options.

Kirkliston is one of the few areas where Edinburgh Council taxpayers are not serviced by Lothian Buses. As a result, quality, frequency, cost and lack of integration has long been a source of frustration. Onward travel is not coordinated and is very expensive due to the number of different operators.

In October 2012, despite the village increasing significantly in size, over 50% of current bus routes have been cut or severely curtailed with no direct services to the airport, nor to Edinburgh shopping and leisure complexes. Sunday services are reduced to a single route with no links between Kirkliston and South Queensferry.

Students living in the village are severely impacted as they cannot reach college, as are older residents who will lose daytime access to the hospital. This petition recognises (1) socially necessary bus services are vital to any community; (2) Kirkliston is an expanding community with increasing public transport demands. A commercially viable set of services is likely to be possible if a holistic view is taken, but in the interim it is incumbent upon Edinburgh Council to set up sufficient routes to ensure access to wider community resources - this should include temporarily subsidising routes if necessary, but as a minimum the Council must actively encourage bus companies to run more routes via Kirkliston.

2. Main report

- 2.1 Kirkliston is served by a mixture of bus services, some commercial and some subsidised, the latter funded or part funded by the City of Edinburgh Council or by neighbouring Councils. Full details of all bus services appear as Appendix 1 to this report.

- 2.2 It is clear from the text of the petition that a major source of discontent is the fact that the town is not served by Lothian Buses. Therefore, residents do not benefit from the low flat-fare policy that the company operates.
- 2.3 Lothian Buses plc is some 91% owned by the Council, the remainder being owned by East Lothian, Midlothian and West Lothian Councils.
- 2.4 Although the Council is the majority shareholder, the Council has no power to interfere in the operation of the company, its services, policies and decisions, and is prevented from doing so by the provisions of the Transport Act 1985. The company operates independently of the Council, and all company decisions are made by the company's Board of Directors.
- 2.5 The Council cannot instruct Lothian Buses to serve Kirkliston or any other area, nor can it restrict the areas that the company chooses to serve. The Council can, however, continue to encourage Lothian Buses and other bus operators to serve Kirkliston.

Fares

- 2.6 Bus fares are entirely a matter for the bus operators themselves, and the Council has no locus in the issue except within a Supported Bus Service Contract, where single fares are usually stipulated and cannot be changed without the permission of the Council.
- 2.7 The perception that bus operators other than Lothian Buses charge high fares is the result the company's low-fares policy. Bus operators working mainly in city environments can take advantage of high demand and shorter journeys to offer low fares. Other operators, without these advantages, are forced to charge fares at a level that is economic for their operation.
- 2.8 Fare levels are decided by each operator taking into consideration overheads, passenger volume, competition from other bus operators and the operator's perception of fares acceptable to the customer. The Council has no input to this process, and neither the Council nor any other body approves fares.

Ticketing

- 2.9 Integrated ticketing for bus services is an aspiration of the Council. However, there are legal and financial impediments to its introduction. Schemes such as London's *Oystercard* and the Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) *Zonocard* cannot be replicated outside these areas.
- 2.10 London's *Oystercard* is facilitated by the unique legal status of Transport for London (TFL), and the SPT *Zonocard* scheme pre-dates the Competition legislation which prevents the implementation of such schemes elsewhere.

- 2.11 In general, bus operators see integrated ticketing as a financial risk, and are reluctant to embrace the idea. Large operators such as Lothian Buses, First and Stagecoach seek to encourage customer loyalty by offering ticket packages within their own networks, of which Lothian Buses' *Ridacard* is an example.
- 2.12 The co-ordination of bus services operated by different operators is illegal under Competition legislation, as it is seen as an attempt to stifle competition and so manipulate the market for bus services.
- 2.13 However, as a first step towards achieving inter-availability of ticketing, Transport Scotland is encouraging bus operators to move towards Smart Ticketing (ie paperless transactions using Smartcards such as the National Entitlement Card).
- 2.14 Some Scottish Councils are already experimenting with this approach, and this move would bring some of the technical and business aspects of potential area ticketing schemes closer to fruition.
- 2.15 As part of this process, the Deputy First Minister launched the 'Saltire Card' concept in October 2012. The Saltire Card is envisaged as an electronic purse, similar to London's Oyster Card, which can be pre-loaded with money to be used across the public transport networks.
- 2.16 A fully-functioning ticketing scheme of this sort is still some way off; however, in the meantime, Kirkliston residents can make use of First's network tickets for journeys within the company's network to help reduce costs.
- 2.17 Also available in the Edinburgh area is the *One-ticket* multi-operator ticket product, which can be used on the services of all participating bus and train services within the SEStran area. Details of this product can be seen at www.oneticket.co.uk.

Recent Bus Service Changes in Kirkliston

- 2.18 Some of the changes to bus services in the rural west of the Council area were the result of decisions made by the operators of commercial bus services.
- 2.19 Stagecoach decided that the experimental rerouting of service 747 (Dunfermline/Inverkeithing – Edinburgh Airport/Riccarton Campus) via Kirkliston was not sustainable and reverted to the original route on 12 November 2012. The company cited poor timetable conformity and low passenger numbers as reasons for this change.
- 2.20 First service 631 (Livingston-Uphall-Broxburn-Winchburgh-Kirkliston-Barnton-Ocean Terminal) was withdrawn by the company on 29 October 2012 for commercial reasons. West Lothian Council considered subsidising the service, but decided against the idea.

- 2.21 CEC has contributed to service 7 (Queensferry-Kirkliston-Winchburgh-Broxburn-Uphall-Livingston-St John's Hospital) for many years, on the grounds that it provided a direct link to St John's Hospital for residents in Queensferry and Kirkliston.
- 2.22 During 2012, West Lothian Council (WLC) re-tendered many of its subsidised bus services, including service 7. This Council was not consulted at any stage in this process, however, a number of alternative timetables were considered for the service.
- 2.23 A contract was awarded, again without consultation with the City Council, and it became apparent that the desired direct connection to the hospital was no longer available throughout much of the day.
- 2.24 The Convener has written to WLC on this issue, expressing the view that the new contract does not deliver the level of access to St John's Hospital that was previously available to Queensferry and Kirkliston residents and questioning the value of continued financial contributions to it.
- 2.25 First's commercial service 651 (Dunfermline-Rosyth-Inverkeithing-Queensferry-Kirkliston-Winchburgh-Broxburn-Uphall-Livingston Centre) now provides the link to Livingston for Queensferry and Kirkliston during off-peak hours, Monday to Saturday, however to reach St John's Hospital residents must change buses at Livingston Centre. As a result, some passengers will pay two fares each way for the trip.
- 2.26 However, despite the removal of two commercial bus services from Kirkliston, and the timetable alteration of service 7, all journeys previously available can still be made, albeit by changing buses and with increased journey times and cost.
- 2.27 Through Horsburgh service 63 (Queensferry-Kirkliston-Newbridge Gyle-Hermiston Gait), Queensferry and Kirkliston benefit from a direct service to the Gyle Centre and Hermiston Gait shopping centres. Service 63 is subsidised by the Council.

Responsibilities of the Council

- 2.28 The Transport Act 1985 permits, but does not require, local authorities to provide socially-necessary bus services where these are not provided by commercial bus services.
- 2.29 In the Council area, the number of bus services provided in this way is relatively small. Nonetheless, the Council spends £1.1m per annum on such services. Most of the services consist of enhancements or extensions to existing bus services, or contributions to other Council's subsidised services because there is a demonstrable benefit to Edinburgh residents.

2.30 Some are stand-alone services designed to provide specific links to opportunities for employment, leisure, shopping and education. Horsburgh service 63 is an example of this type of subsidised service.

Expansion of Kirkliston

2.31 The considerable development which will increase the number of homes in Kirkliston by 610 has been progressing for the past few years. As part of the planning process, contributions totalling £215K have been secured towards the cost of transport enhancements to benefit Kirkliston residents.

Proposals

2.32 Among the measures being considered to provide public transport improvements for Kirkliston are:

- Providing a link to the tram line, in due course, by means of service 63.
- Diversion of Horsburgh service 63 to serve north Kirkliston via the new access road linking the B800 and Stirling Road. This modification can be made quickly and would result in a more direct route, avoiding the present doubling-back that takes place in Main Street/Stirling Road.
- Re-tendering of service 63 to establish the costs of frequency enhancements, route alterations and extensions.
- Possible diversion of some journeys on First service 38 to serve the new housing, however no final decision will be taken on this issue until consultation with Kirkliston Community Council has been completed.

2.33 Other issues that the Council could explore in connection with the Petition are:

- The potential for improving the low level of service between Kirkliston and Queensferry on Sundays;
- The potential to reinstate service 631 in some form, through discussions with West Lothian Council;
- Re-establishment of the direct link between Queensferry, Kirkliston and St John's Hospital, Livingston, through discussions with West Lothian Council. If this proves too costly, consideration will be given to using this budget to benefit public transport provision in the area;

- The provision of Bustracker displays at selected bus stops in Kirkliston. This will depend on vehicles on First's service 38 being suitably equipped, which is planned under expansion of the Real Time Information (RTI) system in the SEStran area. This issue is addressed in the Community Council's survey (see Appendix 2), and the results will be acted upon. It is expected that the Sustran RTI system will be operational by November 2013.

2.34 It should be noted that Kirkliston Community Council has carried out a survey of residents' priorities in public transport provision. An analysis of the results of this survey appears as Appendix 2 to this report.

2.35 The views evident in the survey will be taken into account in any decisions about alterations or additions to the network in the Kirkliston area.

Procurement Issues

2.36 Amendments to the bus service network in Kirkliston will require procurement through the usual procedures, which can be very time consuming.

2.37 To simplify this process for both the current issues in Kirkliston and for future Supported Bus Service procurement, consideration is being given to the introduction of a Framework Contract for supported bus services.

2.38 A report on this specific issue will be put before the Committee later in 2013.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that Committee:
- 3.1.1 agrees the actions proposed to address the issues raised in the Petition;
 - 3.1.2 notes that Kirkliston Community Council will be consulted on proposed improvements;
 - 3.1.3 notes the intention to tender for a Framework Contract covering the supply of Supported Bus Services;
 - 3.1.4 notes the intention to retender bus service 63 under the above Framework Contract; and
 - 3.1.5 advises the Petitions Committee of the decision of the Transport and Environment Committee and to note that an update will be provided in the Petitions Committee Business Bulletin

Mark Turley

Director of Services for Communities

Links

Coalition pledges	P19 - Keep Lothian Buses in public hands and encourage the improvement of routes and times. P47 – Set up a city-wide Transport Forum of experts and citizens to consider our modern transport needs.
Council outcomes	CO7 – Edinburgh draws new investment in development and regeneration CO8 – Edinburgh’s economy creates and sustains job opportunities CO9 – Edinburgh residents are able to access job opportunities C022 – Moving efficiently – Edinburgh has a transport system that improves connectivity and is green, healthy and accessible.
Single Outcome Agreement	S01 - Edinburgh’s economy delivers increased investment, jobs and opportunities for all
Appendices	Appendix 1: Kirkliston Bus Services Appendix 2: Kirkliston Community Council Bus Survey: Analysis

Appendix 1: Kirkliston Bus Services

Horsburgh Service 7 (Queensferry-Kirkliston-Winchburgh-Broxburn-Uphall- St John's Hospital-ASDA-Livingston Bus Stn-Morrisons).

Cost to the Council: £80k *per annum*.

This subsidised service currently provides three morning and four evening direct journeys between Queensferry and Livingston (including St John's Hospital) Monday to Saturday. These journeys are provided under WLC's contract. The remainder of the service is provided commercially by Horsburgh, and consists of a 30-minute frequency service operating between Livingston and Winchburgh only. The cost to extend every second journey to Queensferry (i.e. hourly) and so restore the direct link to St John's Hospital is estimated at £70k *per annum*.

First Service 38/X38 (Stirling-Falkirk-Polmont-Linlithgow-Winchburgh-Kirkliston-Edinburgh)

This commercial service is Kirkliston's principal link with Edinburgh and Linlithgow. The service operates on a 20-minute frequency Monday to Saturday and a 30-minute frequency on Sunday. In addition, limited-stop X38 journeys operate at peak times on weekdays. The service operates from early morning until late at night every day.

Horsburgh Service 63 (Queensferry-Kirkliston-Newbridge Gyle-Hermiston Gait)

Cost to the Council: £106k *per annum*.

This subsidised service provides an hourly link between Queensferry, Kirkliston and Newbridge to RBS Gogarburn, the Gyle Centre, Edinburgh Park, Stevenson College, Bankhead Industrial Estate, Edinburgh Park Station and Hermiston Gait Retail Park. The timetable operates between 0730 and 2007 Monday to Friday and between 0830 and 2007 on Saturday. There is no Sunday service.

Stagecoach Service 51 (Dunfermline-Rosyth-Ferrytoll-Nth Queensferry-Queensferry-Kirkliston-Newbridge-Livingston)

This commercial service provides four journeys between Dunfermline and Livingston on Saturday and Sundays only, between 1000 and 1755. The service effectively operates a reduced version of First's service 651 at weekends, and is the only link between Kirkliston and Queensferry on Sundays when service 651 does not operate. Essentially the service provides access to employment and shopping opportunities at either end of the route.

First service 651 (Dunfermline-Rosyth-Ferrytoll-Nth Queensferry-Queensferry-Kirkliston-Newbridge-Livingston)

This commercial service provides an hourly service between Dunfermline and Livingston, from 0810 to 1943 (Monday to Friday) and from 0910 to 1943 on Saturdays. There is no Sunday service. On Saturdays, service 651 is interleaved at certain times with Stagecoach service 51, so for instance providing Kirkliston with links to Livingston at 0910, 0932, 1010, 1110, 1132, 1210, 1310, 1410, 1432, 1510, 1610, 1632, 1710, 1810 and 1910. As with Stagecoach service 51, the service provides access to employment and shopping opportunities at either end of the route.

Appendix 2: Kirkliston Community Council Bus Survey: Analysis

The survey was carried out by Kirkliston Community Council using *Survey Monkey*, 11-26 Jan.

There were 448 responses; compared to Kirkliston's population of nearly 4,000 (2001, main settlement only) a response rate of over 10%, and approaching the figure of 500 which a 'professional' opinion poll would regard as the minimum.

General

Using Survey Monkey does not ensure that all respondents are from Kirkliston, or prevent multiple entries. However, there is no evidence that the survey has been skewed as a result, and it was advertised only within Kirkliston itself.

I would suggest that the survey is very robust given the circumstances.

Respondents were predominantly female (62.8%); reflecting the gender of bus users (Scottish figures 61% female, 38% male). The age profile compared to national bus users has over-representation of middle aged groups, and under-representation of older and particular younger age groups. It is not generally representative of the population of Kirkliston.

National bus users			Survey age range		Kirkliston population	
	2007	2010				
16-19	10.2	13.1	0 - 20	3.9%	0-19	26.6%
20-29	24.1	17.8	21 - 30	8.5%	20-29	9.4%
30-49	27.8	26.9	31 - 50	42.3%	30-49	25.2%
50-59	10.7	11.6	51 - 65	27.3%	50-64	21.6%
60-69	14.1	14.4	66 +	18.0%	65+	17.2%
70+	13.2	16.1				

exactly corresponding age bands not available

SURVEY QUESTIONS

Q1 - Which bus services do you believe are most important? Please indicate your top 2 priority services.

Respondents were asked which two bus services are most important. Firstbus 38 scored almost 70%, by Horsburgh 63 (44%) and 7 (38%). Stagecoach 747 scored 19%. Assuming most respondents are current bus users, and answered in terms of which services are most important to themselves, the request to choose 2 bus services may overemphasise some scores, as respondents may give a 'second vote' to a service they never use.

Q2 - Which bus services are you most likely to use in future? Please indicate the two that you are most likely to use in future.

Respondents were asked which two bus services they are most likely to use in future. However, with no evidence for the basis for respondents' answers, the question is of limited use. Compared to question 1, the 38 and 747 score almost exactly the same, but the 63 scores around (8%) higher, the 7 (8%) lower. One might speculate that respondents have a fairly consistent view of the 38 and 747, whilst that of the 7 and 63 is interchangeable.

Q3 - What destination not covered by an existing service would be most beneficial?

Hospitals (Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh 49%, Western General Hospital 25%) are the overwhelmingly preferred 'new' destinations; to a surprising extent given respondents' age profile (though it is conceivable that many health workers live in the area). With these exceptions, there is little sign of a clear specific preference, although a number referred to Livingston locations.

Edinburgh Airport employs 2,500 (400 are Edinburgh Airport employees)

Q4 - With the arrival of the Tram service in 2014, if a bus link to the Trams was available from Kirkliston would you be interested in using it?

and

Q5 - If a service did provide a link to a tram stop in future, which tram stop would be most beneficial?

There was a very positive response to the concept of using a bus link to the tram (over 73%). However, Q5 suggests that this may reflect an intention to use a link as a direct service: 25% preferred a bus-tram interchange at the airport, which is illogical if they intend to use a bus link to access the tram route. The rest preferred a range of other interchanges; this may well reflect a welcome for the concept, but uncertainty about how it would work in detail.

Q6 - Which of the following services do you think should be re-routed via Kirklands Park Street? (Please choose as many as appropriate)

Q6 asked which of the 38, 651, 63 and 7 should be routed via Kirklands Park Street. A clear majority (58%) want none of them to be (re)routed. The next highest response was the 63, at only 20%. Note that in every case, the score for routing via Kirklands Park St differed depending on the direction (e.g. 63 northbound 20%, southbound 16.1%). This question produces inconsistent results.

Q7 - If you believe at least one service should be re-routed in Q6, which service(s) should be re-routed?

Q7 was answered only by those who supported rerouting in Q6; therefore by less than half the respondents. Amongst this group, the most popular option was to reroute every bus operating the relevant service (36%). However, ambiguity in the question (which service(s) should be re-routed?) might have led some respondents to interpret 'service' as meaning 'bus route', whilst others interpret it as 'some of the buses operating one route'.

It is therefore risky to draw detailed conclusions from this question. Speculatively, perhaps all it suggests is that, whilst only a minority supports any rerouting, that minority would only be satisfied if all buses (or at least all buses on one route) were rerouted.

Q8 - If you believe at least 1 service should be re-routed in Q6, which service(s) should be re-routed? (skip question if you don't believe any should be re-routed)

Q8 concerned potential *Bustracker* locations. 2 clear preferences emerge: 'Library heading south' (202140) and 'Dentist heading east' (202130). Respectable scores were gained by 'Opposite George's heading east' (202120) and 'Stirling Rd heading east' (202110) followed by 'Community Church heading West' (247780).

Q9 - Which buses do you currently / previously use and frequency?

and

Q10 - What is your main reason for using the bus?

Q9 and Q10 asked about services 38, 631, 651, 7 and '757'. 63 is not included, and '757' appears to be a transcription error for 747. This limits their usefulness, as they are not comparable to Q1 and Q2. However, it is evident that service 38 is by far the most heavily, and frequently, used bus.

Notwithstanding the 38% given to service 7 in Q1 (which two bus services are most important?), in Q9 it emerges that it is used about the same as the 631, 651 and '757'; and that usage is predominantly occasional. This reinforces the suggestion that it initially scored well only because respondents were asked to identify **two** important services.

Q11 - If you don't regularly use the bus, please let us know why.

Answers to Q11 indicated that cost and poor evening frequencies are the main reasons for not using buses; followed by the lack of an early morning service. 'Car is more convenient' (22%) scores much less than in many surveys, being outscored by 'no bus to my destination'.

Q12 - Are you male or female?		
AnswerOptions	Response %	Response Count
Male	37.2%	160
Female	62.8%	270
<i>Answered Question</i>		430
<i>Skipped Question</i>		18

Q 13 - What is your age?		
AnswerOptions	Response %	Response Count
0 to 20	3.9%	17
21 to 30	8.5%	37
31 to 50	42.3%	183
51 to 65	27.3%	118
66 or older	18.0%	78
<i>Answered Question</i>		433
<i>Skipped Question</i>		15

Chris Day

Project Officer

8 February 2013