

Transport and Environment Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 19 March 2013

Dumbiedykes Public Transport Access: Response to Petition

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| Item number | 7.4 |
| Report number | |
| Wards | 15 - Southside/Newington |

Links

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|--------------------------|---|
| Coalition pledges | P33 |
| Council outcomes | CO8 , CO9 , CO10 , CO22 |
| Single Outcome Agreement | SO1 , SO2 |

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Executive summary

Dumbiedykes Public Transport Access: Response to Petition

Summary

The petition to the Council on Dumbiedykes Bus Service asserts:

- that residents of Dumbiedykes, especially disadvantaged groups, have difficulty accessing services and facilities in the Southside area; and
- that the residents wish to petition for a change of route for bus service 36, or for a new service, to link the Holyrood Valley with the Southside of the City.

The background of current public transport provision in the area is explored, together with some suggestions for assisting residents in achieving their aims.

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

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 1 notes that a demographic survey of the Dumbiedykes area is planned, to establish the transport need of residents;
- 2 notes that community representatives will be included in this process;
- 3 notes that a comprehensive report detailing the result of the demographic study and proposals for addressing the issues raised in the Petition will be brought to the Committee in due course;
- 4 notes that further discussions will take place with bus operators with a view to bringing forward improvements public transport access for Dumbiedykes; 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

Completion of the proposed demographic study and the formulation of proposals to address the issues raised in the Petition, for submission to the Committee in June 2013.

Financial impact

Funding of the proposed demographic study is to be met from existing budgets.

Equalities impact

There are no equalities impacts as a consequence of this report. An equalities assessment has been commenced in anticipation of a report being submitted to the Committee on 4 June 2013.

Sustainability impact

There are no sustainability impacts as a consequence of this report. A sustainability impact assessment has been commenced in anticipation of a report being submitted to the Committee on 4 June 2013.

Consultation and engagement

Consultation with representatives of the community in Dumbiedykes will take place as part of the transport needs study and subsequently on any recommendations proposed for the June 2013 Committee report.

Background reading/external references

Report: Lothian Buses Service Revisions: Transport, Infrastructure and Environment Committee, 5 August 2008.

Report: Subsidised Local Bus Services: Transport, Infrastructure and Environment Committee, 26 May 2009.

Dumbiedykes Public Transport Access: Response to Petition

1. Background

- 1.1 At the meeting of the Petitions Committee on 22 January 2013, a petition was considered as follows:

We the residents of Dumbiedykes, especially the elderly and disabled and mothers with buggies, experience difficulty in accessing local services, retail opportunities and community facilities in the Southside area. We, the residents of the Dumbiedykes estate wish to petition for a change of route for the 36 bus or for a new service to link Holyrood Valley with the Southside of the City.

2. Main report

- 2.1 Dumbiedykes consists of a community close to the city centre.
- 2.2 The general focus of the community has traditionally been the Southside area of the city, where shopping and other facilities are located.
- 2.3 Until 2005, the Council funded bus service 60, which connected Holyrood Road and Dumbiedykes to the Southside via the Pleasance, West Richmond Street, Nicolson Street, Nicolson Square, Marshall Street, and Potterrow, returning via the Forrest Road one-way system and then via the outward route reversed.
- 2.4 The service operated on a limited timetable from 08:00 to 19:00 hours, Monday to Saturday. At that time, the annual subsidy for service 60 amounted to some £70,000.
- 2.5 The service was provided by a number of bus operators over the years, but in the final phase was operated commercially by Mac Tours, then a subsidiary of Lothian Buses plc.
- 2.6 In October 2008, service 60 was withdrawn entirely as part of a package of service cuts by Lothian Buses. A report on the service revisions was considered by the Transport, Infrastructure and Environment Committee on 5 August 2008.

- 2.7 No new contract covering service 60 was proposed as Lothian Buses commercial service 36 (Ocean Terminal-Stockbridge-West End-City Centre-Holyrood) was by that time operating via Holyrood Road, providing a regular direct link to the City Centre.
- 2.8 At this point the route was taken over by Edinburgh Coach Lines, who operated it commercially, operating a Monday to Friday only service. Edinburgh Coach Lines withdrew the service in July 2009.
- 2.9 Service 60 was included in a large supported bus service tendering exercise in 2009, the results of which were reported to Committee on 26 May that year.
- 2.10 With limited budget availability, this exercise involved prioritising services. Service 60 had a very low score due to the availability of service 36 close by. As a result, the recommendations did not include awarding a contract for service 60.

Current Transport Options

- 2.11 Dumbiedykes residents can make use of Lothian Buses service 36 to access the city centre. By changing buses in Princes Street to one of the many bus services using the Bridges Corridor, shopping and other facilities in the Southside can be accessed.
- 2.12 The advantages of this are the use of fairly frequent services to reach the desired destination, and access to the much wider bus network.
- 2.13 The disadvantages of this option are the increased journey time, the need to change buses (which may be difficult for those with mobility difficulties) and the need to pay more than one fare, unless a National Entitlement Card (NEC) is used, or, where only Lothian Buses services are used, a Ridacard.
- 2.14 The prospect of diverting service 36, as the Petition suggests, was very recently discussed with Lothian Buses. However the company is unwilling to introduce a diversion to the route. It is the company's view that such a diversion would require more resources and, in all likelihood, negatively affect current patronage. Both would affect the commercial viability of the service.
- 2.15 Dumbiedykes Road and Viewcraig Street have walking links to Brown Street, which leads to the Pleasance. These footpaths are well-lit, however the gradients may be challenging for those with impaired mobility.
- 2.16 Nonetheless, the footpaths provide access to West Richmond Street, where the local medical centre is located. In addition, Lothian Buses service 14 (Muirhouse-Leith-Bridges-Prestonfield-Niddrie-Greendykes) can be accessed at West Richmond Street, providing connections to other areas of the city.

2.17 A walk of some 290 metres (Viewcraig Street, Holyrood Road, St John Street) takes residents to the Canongate, where Lothian Buses service 35 (Ocean Terminal-Leith-Canongate-Fountainbridge-Chesser-Sighthill-South Gyle-Airport) is accessible. Service 35 generally operates on a 12-minute frequency, and can provide Dumbiedykes with a link to South Bridge, as well as many other destinations in the city.

2.18 Other Accessible Transport options are currently available to some Dumbiedykes residents:

Dial-a-Bus – this service provides transport from home to local shopping centres for people who cannot manage by ordinary bus. Users normally have 1-2 hours to shop before being taken home. The drivers are happy to assist with bags.

Dial-a-Ride – this service provides a through-door transport service for people with limited mobility who are unable to use ordinary buses.

Taxicard – this scheme is for people who either cannot use, or can only use buses with assistance. It allows users to make up to 104 subsidised trips per year, with a maximum subsidy of £3.00 per trip.

Lothian Community Transport Services – provides an accessible and affordable ‘self-drive’ or ‘with-driver’ minibus hire service to community and voluntary groups in Edinburgh on a not-for-profit basis, predominantly in the east side of Edinburgh.

South Edinburgh Amenities Group (SEAG) – provides a minibus hire service to community and voluntary groups in Edinburgh on a not-for-profit basis predominantly in the south side of Edinburgh. Recent discussions with SEAG indicated the group’s willingness to serve Dumbiedykes.

Proposals

2.19 In order to establish the transport needs of the Dumbiedykes community, a study of the current demography of the area will be carried out, in consultation with community representatives.

2.20 The results will be assessed, and comprehensive evaluated proposals will be brought forward to help address the concerns raised in the Petition.

2.21 Further discussions will take place with bus operators with a view to bringing forward improvements public transport access for Dumbiedykes.

2.22 A further report will be brought to the Transport and Environment Committee in June 2013. This will detail the results of the demographic study, and will outline options for improving public transport access.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
- 3.1.1 notes that a demographic survey of the Dumbiedykes area is planned, to establish the transport need of residents;
 - 3.1.2 notes that community representatives will be included in this process;
 - 3.1.3 notes that a comprehensive report detailing the result of the demographic study and proposals for addressing the issues raised in the Petition will be brought to the Committee in due course;
 - 3.1.4 notes that further discussions will take place with bus operators with a view to bringing forward improvements public transport access for Dumbiedykes; 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

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| Coalition pledges | P33 – Strengthen Neighbourhood Partnerships and further involve local people in decisions on how Council resources are used. |
| Council outcomes | CO8 – Edinburgh’s economy creates and sustains job opportunities. CO9 – Edinburgh residents are able to access job opportunities. CO10 – Improved health and reduced inequalities. CO22 – Moving efficiently – Edinburgh has a transport system that improves connectivity and is green, healthy and accessible. |
| Single Outcome Agreement | SO1 – Edinburgh’s economy delivers increased investment, jobs and opportunities for all. SO2 – Edinburgh’s citizens experience improved health and wellbeing, with reduced inequalities in health. |
| Appendices | None |