

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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COMMITTEE Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure

DATE 23<sup>rd</sup> February  
2010

CORPORATE DIRECTOR Gordon McIntosh

TITLE OF REPORT Multi-Operator and Through Tickets for Aberdeen City

REPORT NUMBER EPI/10/060

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to advise members of discussions with First Aberdeen, Stagecoach Bluebird and Aberdeenshire Council in relation to a Multi-Operator Ticketing Scheme and Through Ticketing Scheme for bus services within Aberdeen City.

### 2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee,

- a) agree to the establishment of a through ticketing scheme on the Buchan/King Street corridor to the Aberdeen Royal Hospital site (route 14)
- b) agree in principle to the establishment of a multi-operator ticketing scheme subject to a more detailed report on its operation being submitted to Committee in due course
- c) instructs the Corporate Director for Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure to progress the negotiations on ticketing schemes as set out in the report

### 3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There will be start up costs for marketing and publicity, which can be covered from within existing budgets and jointly funded with operators.

### 4. SERVICE & COMMUNITY IMPACT

A key aim of the Community Plan is to ensure that all citizens have access to a range of transport options that reflect differing needs of age, gender, disability and income. The Single Outcome Agreement items 1,2,10, 12 and 14 also sets a priority of delivering local and regional transport strategy objectives that improve the public transport network.

The Vibrant, Dynamic & Forward Looking document sets out a commitment to work to improve public transport in and to our city and to improve access.

## 5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Once the schemes are set up, there will be an administrative and technical resource required to manage the scheme, which can be met from existing resources.

## 6. REPORT

### **Current Ticketing Practice**

The Local Transport Strategy, Regional Transport Strategy and National Transport Strategy all set out the importance of interchange, partnership and improved ticketing in public transport.

The Quality Partnership for Public Transport in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire also sets out improved ticketing and multi-operator ticketing as an ambition.

Within Aberdeen the two major operators are First Aberdeen and Stagecoach Bluebird. Aberdeen City Council supports two night bus services (Garthdee and Northfield) and jointly funds service 93 (Peterculter – City Centre) with ASDA and Sainsbury's through developer contributions. Aberdeenshire Council supports a large portion of the bus network in the Aberdeenshire area through local operators. Bain's Coaches operates a small number of commercial services in the two authorities' areas.

Purchasing a ticket in Aberdeen, on a bus service, only allows you to travel on the services provided by that operator. To travel on another operators bus services would require the purchase of a second ticket from the other operator.

For many people, this can be a barrier, an inconvenience or a financial disincentive to bus use.

Discussions in 2009 with management at First Aberdeen and Stagecoach Bluebird highlighted an opportunity to develop a Multi-Operator Ticket for the Aberdeen City area and officers have been working on draft agreements to take forward for 2010.

### **Legislation**

The Competition Act 1998 and Office of Fair Trading Guidelines have a number of restrictions on ticketing agreements between bus operators, but exemptions and standard methodologies introduced over the years have allowed significant progress in some parts of the UK. With the co-ordination and management of a ticketing scheme by a Local Authority, bus operators are more likely to co-operate and want to work together towards growing the bus market. Whilst it is not possible for the Council to independently set prices for ticketing agreements between operators, the legislation does allow for an agreement to be put in place to arrange for reimbursement of revenue between operators for the ticketing agreement.

## Through Ticket - King Street / St. Machar Interchange

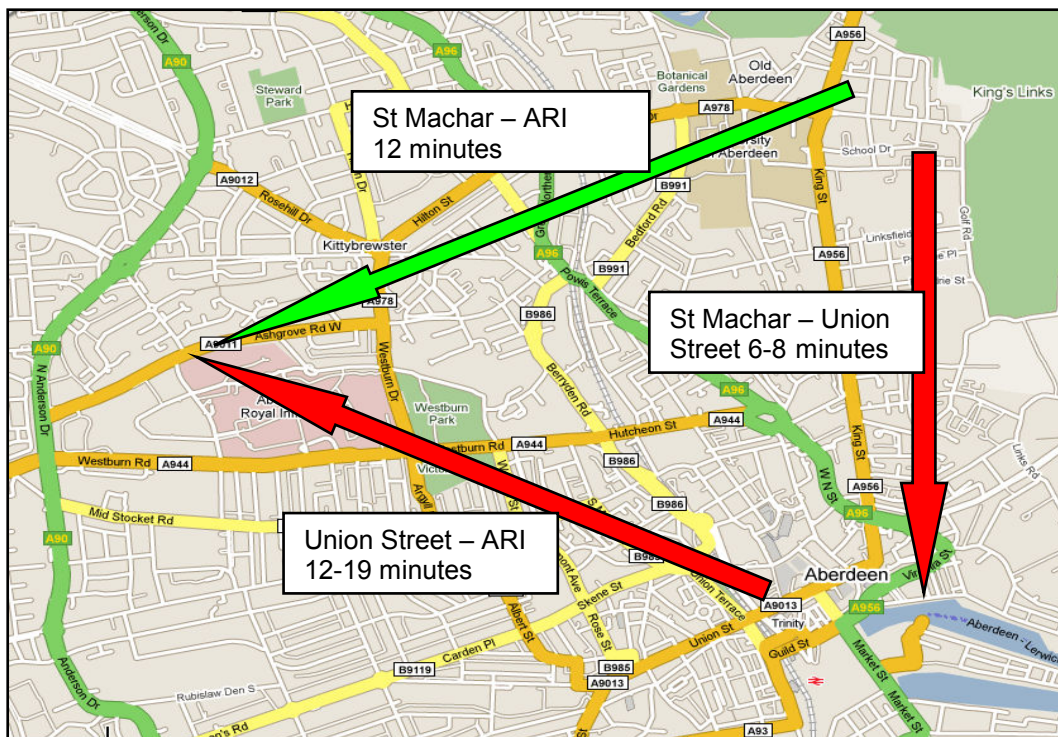
In order to promote through travel from the Buchan / King Street corridor at St Machar Drive to Aberdeen Royal Infirmary (reducing the journey time for passengers from the North to ARI by avoiding the City Centre), a through ticket has been proposed to the bus operators.

Aberdeenshire Council support bus services 290/291 from Tarves and Methlick and are also involved in discussions.

The interchange plans include a number of elements, funded by Nestrans:

- Shelters, raised kerbs, lighting (complete 2009)
- Marketing distributed along the routes of the services (March 2010)
- Marketing issued by ARI for appointments for people originating along the routes (March 2010)
- On Bus Audio Visual displays (eg "You are approaching the Interchange for the Hospital") (Possible 2010, depending upon funding via advertising and with ongoing costs funded by operators and a successful NESTRANS capital bid for supply and installation from their 2010/11 budget)
- Integrated Ticket covering all operators for one ticket to the hospital (2010) from this corridor
- Possible linkages with Ellon Park and Ride to the Hospital with one ticket
- Further transport information available at interchange points on walking and cycling and local community notice boards (March 2010)
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There are potential journey time benefits for the passenger as demonstrated on the following diagram.



A through ticket agreement would allow:

- Passengers from north of Aberdeen to purchase one ticket that would allow them to travel to St Machar Drive on a Stagecoach service.
- Transfer at St Machar Drive onto a First Aberdeen bus service 14.
- Use the same ticket to travel to ARI.
- With possible return and season variations.

The cost of the ticket will be set by the operators at a commercial level.

The reimbursement model is likely to be complex, to take account of the mileage operated, number of journeys made on a through ticket, standard fare for the individual journeys and quality of the service.

### **Multi-Operator Ticket**

As Aberdeen City has two commercial operators with substantial bus networks, the travelling public can benefit by being able to purchase one ticket to travel on both networks. This could be a day ticket allowing unlimited travel all over the City on any bus or a season ticket allowing unlimited travel anywhere within Aberdeen City and a corridor within Aberdeenshire, such as to Stonehaven.

Stagecoach Bluebird offer tickets on a corridor basis (eg MegaRider for Stonehaven – Aberdeen or Ellon – Aberdeen).

First offers unlimited travel across their whole city wide network by means of their commercial First Day, First Week, First 4 weeks and First 12 Weeks season tickets. First also offers First Annual season tickets direct to employers with active Green Travel Plans for employees use.

It is proposed to introduce various Multi-Operator Ticket Schemes for:

- a) Aberdeen City boundary, unlimited travel on all bus services within Aberdeen City
- b) Unlimited travel on all operators services on each radial corridor (eg different schemes for Stonehaven – Aberdeen, Inverurie – Aberdeen, Westhill – Aberdeen, Peterhead – Aberdeen) and within the City.

There will be different lengths of tickets, e.g. daily, 3 monthly and commercially determined fares to ensure sustainable growth of the bus market.

The Council would manage agreements between bus operators that would reimburse revenue from the ticket, which would be charged at a commercial rate ideally lower than the total cost of the two constituent tickets.

The reimbursement for the Aberdeen City ticket ( a) above) is currently proposed to be based upon the mileage operated by services within the city boundary. This will initially allow for a fair and measurable methodology for reimbursing revenue to operators.

Discussions with operators on how to reimburse on the radial corridors including the City area are ongoing and likely to involve a more complex method of reimbursement.

### **Next Steps**

Discussions with operators and Aberdeenshire Council are ongoing, a progress report will be submitted to the next meeting of this Committee. It is anticipated that such schemes could be operational in 2010 with annual reviews of the reimbursement mechanisms.

The Local Authority Bus Operators Forum (LABOF) has formed a Task and Finishing Group to assist with the progression of the schemes and to look at the wider remit of smart cards, electronic ticketing and other similar measures.

These proposals support the Regional Bus Action Plan, which was approved by the Council in 2009.

### **7. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS**

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### **8. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None