

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education Operational Delivery Operational Delivery
DATE	Date of Committee 1: 16 May 2019 Date of Committee 2: 16 May 2019
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Lochside Academy – Transport and Safe Routes to School – Annual Update 2019
REPORT NUMBER	PLA/19/235
DIRECTOR	Rob Polkinghorne
CHIEF OFFICER	Gale Beattie / Mark Reilly
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TERMS OF REFERENCE	Terms of Ref Committee 1: Purpose 1 Terms of Ref Committee 2: Purpose 1

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 Education Operational Delivery Committee: To update members on the performance of the transport services and arrangements for pupils accessing Lochside Academy and on the success of provisions in relation to the safe walking routes to Lochside Academy.
- 1.2 Operational Delivery Committee: To update members on the performance of the transport services and on the success of provisions in relation to the safe walking routes to Lochside Academy and to seek approval to amend the transport arrangements to Lochside Academy.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Education Operational Delivery Committee: -

- 2.1 Note the outcome of the 2019 annual review for transport and safe routes to school for Lochside Academy.

That the Operational Delivery Committee: -

- 2.2 Approves the removal of 1 vehicle from the service 21, Cove/Charleston – Lochside Academy.
- 2.3 Approves the removal of the service 22A, Leggart/Balnagask – Lochside Academy, from Leggart so that the service starts and ends at Balnagask; and
- 2.4 Agrees that no further changes are required for the Safe Routes to School.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Background

- 3.1.1 At the Education and Children’s Services Committee meeting on 16th November 2017, the committee instructed: *“the Interim Head of Planning and Sustainable Development and the Head of Public Infrastructure and Environment to undertake annual updates reviewing the success of the provision of the free bus travel and the safe routes to school, with the first review to be undertaken in March 2019 and thereafter annually at the end of the third school term with the outcome of each review to be reported to the relevant Committee at the earliest possible opportunity prior to the end of the fourth school term each year.”*
- 3.1.2 Due to Committee dates and timescales, to ensure a report could be presented in line with the above instruction, the data for this annual update relates to the academic terms from 21st August 2018 to 21st December 2018, inclusive.
- 3.1.3 At the Education Operational Delivery Committee of 17th January 2019, the committee instructed: *“to instruct the Chief Officer Operations and Protective Services to undertake a survey of children crossing Wellington Road at lunchtime and outwith school hours and to bring a report back to Committee in May 2019 detailing any necessary measures to improve road safety, with the report to include the ongoing work being undertaken by the school in respect of road safety education.”*

3.2 Current Transport Provision

- 3.2.1 The Council currently subsidises 6 buses operated by First Aberdeen and First Aberdeen commercially provides 5 bus services as follows:
 - Service 21A/21B: Cove/Charleston – Lochside Academy (Aberdeen City Council)
 - Service 22A/22B/22C: Leggart/Balnagask/Torry – Lochside Academy (Aberdeen City Council) (4 vehicles)
 - Service 31: Torry – Lochside Academy (First Aberdeen) (2 vehicles)
 - Service 181/182/183: Kincorth – Lochside Academy (First Aberdeen)
- 3.2.2 Pupils in Kincorth, Leggart and Torry receive free transport between 07:00 – 18:00 and this is provided as an annual bus pass loaded onto the pupils Accord Card. Pupils in Cove pay to use bus services.

3.3 Transport Performance

- 3.3.1 The transport has, on the whole, performed well. There has been close partnership working between School, Public Transport Unit and First Aberdeen to address any concerns and ensure services operate appropriately. Services have not operated perfectly every day and there are some ongoing problems. At the same time, efforts have been made in partnership to address concerns and problems as they arise, and monitoring and close working with First Aberdeen will continue over the 2019/20 academic year.
- 3.3.2 The bus pass loaded onto the Accord Card has worked relatively well, although this has been labour intensive due to the volume of lost/damaged cards. No alternative has been progressed to date, but other smart ticketing options will be reviewed with First Aberdeen and Transport Scotland over the course of the next year.
- 3.3.3 Bus use has been monitored via passenger reports from the ticket machines and by on-site observations. While buses can on occasion run quite full and require pupils to stand, it is considered that there is enough capacity to accommodate all the passengers.
- 3.3.4 The services 21A and 21B from Cove average around 50-60 passengers in the morning and 30-40 passengers in the afternoon. There is always a minimum capacity for 140 passengers on the buses operating in Cove. It is therefore considered that 1 high-capacity vehicle operating around Cove and Charleston would be sufficient to meet the current demand.
- 3.3.5 The services 22A, 22B, 22C and 31 from Leggart, Torry and Balnagask, average around 250-300 passengers in the morning and afternoon. There is always a minimum capacity for 400 passengers on the buses operating in these areas, so it is considered there is sufficient capacity for the demand. The supported service 22 is the busiest, with very little spare capacity, so no reduction is recommended. There have been no passengers recorded boarding in Leggart as pupils are instead boarding the Kincorth services. For bus services to operate to/from Leggart, as there is no turning point, they must travel to Milltimber to cross the River Dee and use this to turn, which adds considerable mileage onto the bus contracts and therefore cost. It is therefore recommended to remove the service 22A from Leggart and direct pupils in the area to use the Kincorth service 181 which can be boarded/alighted on Stonehaven Road.
- 3.3.6 The services 181, 182 and 183 from Kincorth average around 160-180 passengers in the morning and afternoon. There is always a minimum capacity for 210 passengers on the buses operating in Kincorth, so it is considered there is sufficient capacity for the demand and no changes would be recommended.

3.4 Transport Feedback

3.4.1 Feedback has been received that buses operate full/over-capacity. This is predominantly because pupils may need to stand. As has been detailed, there is sufficient capacity on the vehicles and standing is permitted on local bus services. Buses have a maximum capacity which includes seated passengers and standees, and this will never be exceeded. The seating/standing capacity does vary slightly from vehicle to vehicle, but a general average for each vehicle type, is as follows:

- Single Deck: 40 seated / 30 standing
- Double Deck: 78 seated / 22 standing
- Articulated (Bendy bus): 50 seated / 90 standing

3.4.2 The transport that was approved by the Council was for pupils in Kincorth and northern Torry to use the existing services 3 and 18 and Balnagask area to use standalone supported local bus services, as such a seat per pupil was never guaranteed or expected. The transport requirement was approved based on bus capacities, which included standing passengers and the buses would operate as any local bus service would, with standees. First have already put on additional school only services to cope with the demand, which is substantially better than it could have been if we were solely reliant on the 3 and 18. If a seat per passenger was required there would need to be an increase in vehicle resource deployed, which would come at additional cost. This would be a requirement of around 3 extra vehicles at an estimated cost of £150k. Such an increase in cost could not be met by exiting budgets. As there is sufficient capacity and additional vehicle resource than originally considered, no change is recommended at this time.

3.4.3 A request has been made for bus services to operate into the school grounds later in the afternoon to collect pupils who have been attending extra-curricular activities, as a number of pupils are not attending these because they do not want to walk to Wellington Road to catch a bus home. The pupils have a bus pass valid until 6pm, which is an enhancement over any other pupil who receives school transport in Aberdeen, which is for school times only. The walking route between the school and Wellington Road has been deemed safe. The Council provides a bus pass for after-school activities and this is deemed sufficient. In addition, there is no available budget to meet further transport needs at Lochside, accordingly it is not recommended to make any further changes.

3.4.4 A request has been made to extend the bus pass or provide transport for pupils who attend activities after 6pm, which tend to be more ad-hoc, e.g. parents evening, shows, etc. As noted above the provision at Lochside is already an enhancement and the 6pm bus pass meets the finish time of day to day extra-curricular activities. Increasing the time or providing specific transport would incur an additional cost, and there is no available budget to meet further transport needs at Lochside, accordingly it is not recommended to make any further changes.

3.4.5 The feedback received to date has largely been received via Lochside Academy and through enquiries from parents/carers. As there are no significant changes being recommended to transport, at this time, further consultation was not undertaken. The Council worked closely with Parent Councils and Community Councils in advance of the school opening to go over what was being implemented and to use their input where possible.

3.5 Transport Recommendations

3.5.1 It is recommended to remove the service 21B and re-route the service 21A, operating as a service 21 around Cove and Charleston to Lochside Academy.

3.5.2 It is recommended to remove the service 22A from Leggart and for the service to start and end at Balnagask. Pupils in Leggart can utilise the service 181.

3.5.3 No other changes to the current provision are recommended.

3.6 Safe Routes to School

3.6.1 Since opening, there have been no recorded road traffic collisions regarding a school pupil. The road safety measures that have been installed and the success of these measures were reported to Education Operational Delivery Committee (EODC) in January 2019.

3.6.2 EODC instructed that a survey be undertaken to record the crossing of Wellington Road by school pupils. The survey was undertaken on Tuesday 5th March over three time periods 08:00 – 09:00 (School start time 08:35), 12:30 – 14:15 (Lunch break 13:15-14:05) and 15:00 – 16:15 (School end time 15:45). During these time periods there is a part time 20mph speed limit in place along the route.

3.6.3 A second survey was undertaken the next day which recorded very different results (far fewer pupils crossing at all points and all times). This was in part put down to the inclement weather experienced on the second day, for this reason, the results of the first day have been used to support this report.

3.6.4 Pedestrians are provided with a signalised crossing at the Charleston Road junction and a toucan crossing at the Wellington Circle junction. There is a difference in the pedestrian interaction with these crossings as the Charleston Road junction will provide a green man for pedestrians in a cycle with other junction users e.g. vehicles will be released in sequence with a “walk with” pedestrian facility. The toucan crossing will operate by pedestrian/ cyclist demand i.e. when the button is pressed.

3.6.5 Pedestrians, including school children have been observed using the crossings and also crossing outwith these safe crossing points. The survey was undertaken to quantify the issue.

- 3.6.6 A total number of pupil road crossings of 373 were recorded with an additional 132 other pedestrians crossing the road too. Of these, 59 pupil and 13 other pedestrians were noted as crossing outwith the official crossing points. 16% of pupil movements and 10% of adults used an uncontrolled route to cross the road. Non-compliant (arrive on red and cross entirely against the red man) and anticipatory pedestrians (arrive on red, start to cross before the green man appears, finish on green man) were also observed at the crossing points.
- 3.6.7 The majority of pupils used the formal crossings in the morning, lunchtime and afternoon however the percentage of uncontrolled crossing actions was higher at lunchtime. Pupils were observed bypassing the toucan crossing, walking past the guard rail and crossing further up the road where they had to climb over the central reserve barrier to get over to the second carriageway. Pupils generally travelled in groups during the lunch break.
- 3.6.8 School have worked with pupils throughout the year to remind them of the dangers of crossing Wellington Road at uncontrolled crossing points, particularly at lunchtimes when this has been more predominant. In September 2018 a Theatre Company presented road safety performances to all S1 and S5/6 pupils, which was well received by pupils.
- 3.6.9 Following on from a very successful safe travel event for all P7 pupils from the associated Primary Schools which took place at the Beach Ballroom in March 2018, a similar event was held at Lochside Academy in March 2019. Police Scotland were in attendance and the officer spoke to pupils about staying safe when travelling. During the event pupils were tasked with looking at safe routes to Lochside, raising awareness of what needs to be taken into consideration to ensure safe travel.
- 3.6.10 *The effect of traffic signal strategies on the safety of pedestrians*: TRL (2009) assessed pedestrian types, behaviours and motivations. It then recommended the use of the most responsive signal control strategy available, especially where traffic levels are high; consider cycle times which are as short as possible to minimise pedestrian waiting times; and minimise disruption to pedestrian desire lines.
- 3.6.11 The study recognises that while improvements can be made to infrastructure to encourage behaviour change, that “pedestrians crossing the road act according to their own convenience; if a gap in the traffic presents itself, they will cross; and they will tend to follow their desire lines in preference to diverting to a formal crossing.”
- 3.6.12 The recommendations mentioned above in 3.6.10 have been employed across the city, and with the delivery of the two formal crossing points installed on Wellington Road.
- 3.6.13 A previous desktop study was carried out and reported to this Committee on 29th May 2018 regarding the use of pedestrian guardrail. It recommended that the extensive use of guard rail was counterproductive as it encouraged increased driver speeds, restricting the path width for pedestrians, could result in pedestrians being trapped on the road and was unsightly. The report also

noted that the provision of barrier along the extent of the route could not be achieved due to the presence of bus stops.

3.6.14 It is recommended that no further action is undertaken along the route as the route has a 20mph speed limit along most of its length, the crossings are well used morning and afternoon and railings could create further issues. The school has provided education to pupils regarding safe travel along the road. Behaviour change in 100% of pupils is not realistic or achievable.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The current transport provision for Lochside Academy is met from existing budgets, although the Lochside element represents a considerable proportion, with around 14% of the school transport spend. It is anticipated that making the recommended changes will save in the region of £30-40k, which will contribute towards achieving savings targets and meeting cost pressures within the school transport budget.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no legal implications as a result of the recommendations in this report.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

	Risk	Low (L), Medium (M), High (H)	Mitigation
Financial	As a result of continuing transport services for Lochside Academy there is a significant risk in overspend of the School Transport budget.	H	Officers will work closely with Education to identify reductions in transport to mitigate the risks of overspend.
Legal	N/A	N/A	N/A
Employee	N/A	N/A	N/A
Customer	N/A	N/A	N/A
Environment	N/A	N/A	N/A
Technology	N/A	N/A	N/A
Reputational	As the supported services are open to the general public and these are operated into the school grounds there is a risk that members of the	L	As the services only operate between Torry/Cove and the school this will be of little benefit to the general public, as such it is not anticipated there will be many members

	public may be able to alight from the bus and enter the school grounds without signing in.		of the public utilising these services and this has not been a problem over the course of the 2018/19 Academic Year.
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7. OUTCOMES

Local Outcome Improvement Plan Themes	
	Impact of Report
Prosperous Economy	Investment in Infrastructure - a high quality public transport system is important for any thriving economy in transporting people to work and education and directly support the business and education sectors and ensures the workforce can travel effectively and that all have access to appropriate education opportunities and access to all facilities in a cost-effective way. The provision of transport to Lochside Academy will ensure appropriate access to education.
Prosperous People	Children are our future; Best Start in life, safe and responsible - by ensuring that all pupils at the school have appropriate means by which to travel to school, the Council will be helping to improve equity in educational outcomes.

Design Principles of Target Operating Model	
	Impact of Report
Customer Service Design	<p>Co-design: We will design our services with input from our customers to better meet their needs - the services and routings have been designed following feedback from the school community.</p> <p>Prevention and Early Intervention: We will design services to focus on upstream prevention and early intervention to reduce costs while improving outcomes for individuals and families – the provision of these bus services ensure equal access to the school, preventing any concerns for those travelling some distance from the school who would have been required to walk alongside and cross busy roads and the provision of free transport will ensure families do not face financial burdens for their children travelling to the school, given its location.</p>
Organisational Design	Outcome Led: We will commission services organised around the LOIP outcomes - the services

	provided ensure access to Education, recognising that children are our future and are safe and responsible.
Partnerships and Alliances	Shared vision and values: While recognising and respecting differences – and welcoming dialogue and debate – sufficient common ground must be found for our partnerships and alliances with others to be viable – partnership working with our partner First Aberdeen to ensure the services meet the needs of the pupils travelling to Lochside on the commercial bus services while also ensuring there is no significant impact to the traveling public as a whole.

8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Equality & Human Rights Impact Assessment	Not Required
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not Required
Duty of Due Regard / Fairer Scotland Duty	Not Applicable

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 9.1 Lochside Academy – Road Safety Update - OPE/19/039
<https://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=620&MId=6197&Ver=4>
- 9.2 Subsidised Transport and Safe Walking Routes to Lochside Academy – PLA.18.001
<https://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=619&MId=6185&Ver=4>
- 9.3 The effect of traffic signal strategies on the safety of pedestrians: TRL (2009): J Kennedy, M Crabtree, J Castle, J Martin and M Elliot.
<https://trl.co.uk/sites/default/files/PPR414.pdf>

10. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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