

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

REPORT

TO: Social Work Committee	Subject: REVIEW OF TRANSPORT
FROM: Jim Dickie Director of Social Work	
DATE OF COMMITTEE: 22 August 2000	
REPORT AUTHOR: Ronnie Paul	
REF: RP/MMcC	

1.0 Content & Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update committee regarding the review of transport services used by the Social Work Department, anticipated savings made and future plans for improving efficiency of transport services across this department.

2.0 Use of Transport

- 2.1 As described in previous report of November 1999 transport usage can be split into three main headings:

- ~ Client Transport
- ~ Staff Transport
- ~ transport of Materials and Equipment.

- 2.2 **Client Transport** - Currently 83% (£1.6 million) of the Transport budget within the Social Work department is utilised in supporting clients in attending a wide range of activities each day.

- 2.3 **Staff Transport** - There is currently 5% (£92,000) of the transport budget allocated for use by operational staff in providing direct services to clients.

- 2.4 **Transport of Materials & Equipment** - The department currently utilises 12% (£203,099) of the Transport budget in the delivery of materials and equipment.

- 2.5 Table A shows the breakdown of these budget allocations across the different service types.

- 2.6 **Taxi Costs** - In addition to the transport costs above the department also spends approximately £200,000 in taxi hires annually. These costs are met from a variety of Child Care and Community Care budgets and are for regular transport journeys which are established as part of individuals care plans.

TABLE A

Category	Budget
Client Transport	1,660,004
Day Centres - Elderly	487,261
Day Centres - Learning Disability	761,049
Day Centres - Physical Disability	54,480
Community Groups/Voluntary Orgs.	147,153
Childrens Services	104,625
Lunch Clubs	105,436
Staff Transport	92,361
Alert Mobile Attendants	14,265
Community Service Orders	36,620
Home Care	41,476
Transport Meals & Equipment	203,099
Disability resource Centre	42,607
Meals on Wheels	31,229
Miscellaneous Projects	129,263
Totals	1,955,464

3.0 Review of Transport Services

3.1 Process of Review

- 3.1.1 A detailed review of all transport provision and associated costs was undertaken across the department. The review included consultation with Unit Managers, Area Team staff, Internal Transport staff and Finance Department staff.
- 3.1.2 As part of the review all Units looked at the detail of and level of current transport provision. All Unit Managers reviewed current bus/taxi runs to get clients to and from units and also all other transport provision i.e. if buses remained at Units throughout the day were they being fully utilised? Details of all bus runs were then collated, including information on average numbers of clients using buses and actual length of time buses were in use per day. This data was then collated across the six area teams who in consultation with Finance Department and Internal Transport staff looked at the wider use of transport across the authority with a view to making more efficient use of available transport.
- 3.1.3 The review work is ongoing and the following report details progress to date and issues still requiring to be addressed.

3.2.0 **Client Transport**

3.2.1 **DAY CENTRES - ELDERLY**

This service type attracts a high proportion of the transport budget (25%). There are four large day care units within this category and also five Residential Homes who provide day care facilities for part of week.

3.2.2 Transporting of clients to and from these units is by a variety of methods. Of the four Day Centre's, two use Internal Transport buses/drivers, one uses only taxis and one uses taxis plus private mini bus hire. Within these large units the organisation of daily transport runs is a complex and time consuming task. Clients attendance at Units is flexible and ever changing therefore bus routes too have to be constantly revised. Where taxis are used amendments to pick up routes appeared more straightforward. Another advantage of using taxis or smaller buses was that the time clients spent in transit was drastically reduced. Within the five day care facilities which operate within residential settings one uses an Internal Transport bus and driver, two have mini buses on long term hire from Internal Transport which are driven by Social Work staff - it was found that the mini buses are all fairly well utilised outwith day centre hours - and two use private hire buses.

3.2.3 From costings and statistics collated it is apparent that costs vary significantly from unit to unit, the cost of transport per user per session ranges from £3 to £15 across the variety of Units - see Table B below.

TABLE B

Unit	Cost Per Client Per Session
IT BUS/DRIVER	
Monklands HFE	15
Alexander Resource Centre	11
Antonine Centre	4
PRIVATE HIRE/TAXI	
Muirpark	4
Leslie House	3
Stewarton Day Centre	3
Harry Walker Day Centre	3
SELF HIRE BUS	
Burngreen HFE	3
Chilterns HFE	3
Average	5

3.2.4 At this point in the review savings of £11,300 have been implemented. These savings have been achieved from day care provision operating within the Residential sector due to the streamlining of transport arrangements and the combining of some bus runs. Work is ongoing to rationalise the cost of transport within this sector whilst improving the quality of service provided to users. This includes investigating the variety of methods by which transport is currently being provided, looking at feasibility of some units changing their method of transport provision i.e. if a unit is only using larger type internal transport buses would it be more cost effective and client friendly for them to use a combination of transport methods. In relation to Monklands HFE - which shows the highest cost per user - discussions have already taken place with Internal Transport and staff are in the process of obtaining quotations from taxi companies with a view to adjusting current transport provision.

3.2.5 DAY CENTRES - LEARNING DISABILITY

This service type is the largest user of transport and accounts for 39% of the budget. Five large day centres for clients with learning disabilities operate throughout the authority. All except one operate solely by the use of Internal Transport buses and drivers to bring clients to and from their unit. The one exception, Edward Lawson, operates by a combination of Internal Transport buses, private hire buses and taxis. Similar to Elderly Care Day Centres the organisation of bus runs is complicated and time consuming.

3.2.6 Savings of almost £30,000 have been implemented within this category. The bulk of this saving is due to one unit reducing their number of Internal Transport buses/drivers from four to three. Costings are fairly consistent across the five units, with costs per user per transport session ranging from £7.00 to £9.00 - see Table C below.

TABLE C

Unit	Cost Per Client Per Session
Edward Lawson	7
Buchanan	7
Hallcraig	8
Orbiston	9
Aldarlee	9
Average	8

3.2.7 As part of discussions with Unit Managers it was highlighted that the majority of people attending this type of provision are in receipt of Mobility Care Allowance. Council policy needs to be revisited with consideration being given to whether clients should contribute towards transport costs. The review should also consider transport in terms of promoting and encouraging independence among client users.

3.2.8 **DAY CENTRES - PHYSICAL DISABILITY**

Only one unit, the Five Day Centre, falls within this category and budget allocation is £54,480. Previously the centre was being serviced by both Internal Transport buses and by some private hire vehicles. Savings of almost £13,000 have been identified by combining the runs onto the Internal Transport bus and therefore ensuring vehicle is fully utilised throughout the course of the day. Costs for this unit are around £5 per user per session.

3.2.9 **COMMUNITY GROUPS/VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS**

The Social Work Department funds transport for 20 Community Groups/Voluntary Organisations at a cost of £136,000 per annum. These groups are run mainly in the evenings and are attended by community care client groups. Due to the timing of group meetings transport costs are high, the current Internal Transport contract requires the department to pay premium overtime rates for all buses/drivers hired in the evenings. The review also highlighted the fact that the Social Work department has to pay for drivers time from 5pm onwards and not just for the length of the hire i.e. if a club requests first client to be picked up at 7pm and last client to be dropped off at 10pm Social Work is charged for 5 hours not 3! This is obviously an area of concern and consideration will be given in the future to look at alternative methods of supporting these valuable community services. A review of Policy is required, considering criteria for and funding levels which should be adhered to in supporting same. Costing per user per session varies from £2.00 to £12.00 across this service type and table D below provides detail per group.

TABLE D

Group/Organisation	Total Funding For Transport	Cost Per User Per Session
VAMW Club	13,789	2
Arthritis Care - Airdrie	790	2
Arthritis Care - Coatbridge	2,483	3
Arthritis Care - Cumbernauld	1,970	4
Airdrie Blind Club	3,160	4
Coatbridge Blind Club	3,160	4
Enable Monklands	9,480	4
Enable Firhill	3,477	6
Six Circle Club	9,480	6
Three Doves Club	9,480	6
Arthritis Care - Cumbernauld	2,709	6
New Venture Club	4,740	7
Shotts Disabled	8,126	7
Enable Bellshill	14,220	7
Enable Wishaw	10,342	7
Strathkelvin ATC	11,286	8
Disport	5,910	9
Enable Cumbernauld	7,757	9
Joes Fun Club	5,910	10
Monklands Disabled Riding	5,417	12
Average		6

3.2.10 In addition to routine hires the department also historically funds a variety of ad hoc trips and annual bus runs for these community groups. It has been identified that savings could be achieved of approximately £5,000 per annum in this area.

3.2.11 LUNCH CLUBS

The department currently funds transport costs for 31 lunch clubs throughout the authority. The review highlighted that reconciling transport costs for lunch clubs was difficult. Historically transport costs were not only incurred via Internal Transport, for meal delivery and transporting clients, but also via Catering Direct who as part of the cost of a meal had an element built in for meal delivery. This method of charging means that it is difficult to provide an accurate cost of a delivered meal. Agreement has now been reached with Internal Transport that they should invoice Social Work only for those vehicles who transport clients to and from Lunch Clubs. All transport costs associated with the delivery of meals are to be charged to Catering Direct. This department appreciates that catering charges will most certainly be increased following this change and it is recommended that a proportion of savings identified from this

service be set aside to offset anticipated increase in meal charges. Anticipated savings identified £53,000 less amount to be held to offset increased Catering charges £25,000, net saving therefore £28,000.

3.2.12 **CHILDRENS SERVICES**

There are five Young Persons Support Units across the department anticipated transport costs are around £100,000 per annum. All five units have mini buses on long term hire via Internal Transport and all units require to hire in additional vehicles during school holiday periods throughout the year. No savings have yet been identified within this sector with vehicles appearing to be well utilised.

3.2.13 There are 5 Residential Child Care Units within the authority and all have recently been provided with People Carrier vehicles from monies provided by the Scottish Executive for developing residential services for children. The people carriers are used for a wide range of transport purposes in the same way as a car is used within a family.

3.3 **Staff Transport**

3.3.1 The total budget for transport within this category is £92,361. Vehicles for Alert Mobile Attendants, Community Service Order staff and Home Care are funded from this budget. These vehicles are for use by staff to provide direct service to clients. At this point no significant savings have been made within this area.

3.4 **Transport Meals & Equipment**

3.4.1 **DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTRE**

The two Disability Resource Centres within the Department currently have a variety of vehicles on hire from Internal Transport - total annual cost of these vehicles is £42,600 per annum. These vehicles are to allow for the delivery and fitting of occupational therapy equipment within clients own homes. This council, by means of a member officer group, is currently in the process of reviewing the Disability Resource Centre service across the authority - transport provision to this service will be considered as part of this review process. No savings identified at present.

3.4.2 MEALS ON WHEELS

A number of small vans are on permanent hire from Internal Transport and are spread across area teams to allow for the delivery of meals to clients home addresses. The current costs to the department of this service is £29,000 per annum. A small saving of £2,100 has been made within this area. The future direction for meals on wheels will be subject to a separate review at which time further consideration will be given to transport issues.

3.4.3 MISCELLANEOUS PROJECTS

There are a wide variety of vehicles/projects funded within this category. These include Airdrie Recycle Project, Bellshill Laundry Project and vehicles used for delivery of mail within the department. Table E below provides details of vehicles and costs linked to this heading. A saving of £5,000 is anticipated within this area. The savings resulted from a withdrawal of transport provision from a variety of Shopper bus runs across the authority and a planned underspend in budget held to cover additional work/repairs and maintenance and drivers assessments.

TABLE E

Miscellaneous Projects - Detail of Budget and Estimated Costs

Cost Centre	Description	Pre Review Costs	Post Review Costs	Savings
SAO98	Shopper Runs	3,720	0	3,720
SLA52	Recycle Project	4,891	4,891	0
UMS09	Laundry Project	2,500	2,103	397
SA099	Additional Work/Repairs & Drivers Assess	77,017	75,787	1,230
SA099	HQ External Hires	16,495	16,495	0
SA099	Internal Mail Run	19,182	19,182	0
SA099	Replacement Vehicles	5,458	5,458	0
Totals		129,623	123,916	5,347

3.5 Taxis

3.5.1 Across the six Area Teams approximately £200,000 is committed annually in transporting clients by private taxi hires. Taxi fares appear to be inconsistent across the authority. Staff have been made aware of the importance of seeking a number of quotations prior to establishing a regular hire with any company. Autoroute software will be purchased for use by area teams to allow staff to check accurate mileage of all journeys prior to obtaining taxi quotes.

3.5.2 It is anticipated that savings could be made were the department to set up contracts with local firms for the annual supply of taxis. The department aims to progress this matter in the very near future with the advice and assistance of Internal Transport staff in drawing up tender documents.

4.0 Anticipated Budgetary Savings

4.1 As part of the budgetary process the Department was required to make £100,000 savings in transport. Table F below shows detail of where savings were made across the various service types as well as highlighting any shortfalls in current budget allocations per service type.

TABLE F
Transport - Revised Costings 2000/01

	<u>Pre Review</u> <u>Costs</u>	<u>Post Review</u> <u>Costs</u>	<u>Savings</u>
<u>Client Transport</u>	£1,773,234	£1,660,004	£113,230
Day Centres - Elderly	£498,598	£487,261	£11,337
Day Centres - Learning Disability	£791,765	£761,049	£30,716
Day Centres - Physical Disability	£67,428	£54,480	£12,948
Community Groups/Voluntary Organisations	£152,421	£147,153	£5,268
Lunch Clubs	£158,397	£105,436	£52,961
Childrens Services	£104,625	£104,625	£0
<u>Staff Transport</u>	£94,863	£92,361	£2,502
Alert Mobile Attendants	£11,265	£14,265	-£3,000
Community Service Orders	£35,890	£36,620	-£730
Home Care	£47,708	£41,476	£6,232
<u>Transport Meals / Equipment</u>	£210,613	£203,099	£7,514
Disability Resource Centre	£42,607	£42,607	£0
Meals on Wheels	£33,396	£31,229	£2,167
Miscellaneous Projects	£134,610	£129,263	£5,347
TOTALS	£2,078,710	£1,955,464	£123,246
Anticipated Savings			£123,246
Less Anticipated Increase In Catering Charges (Lunch Clubs)			£25,000
Net Savings			<u>£98,246</u>

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 This review to date has identified net savings of £98,000 . Changes affected by the review include:

~	streamlining of transport runs across residential elderly day care units	£11,300
~	reduction in numbers of buses servicing day centres for clients with learning disabilities	£30,000
~	combining bus runs to one Internal Transport vehicle within day centre for clients with a physical disability	£13,000
~	reduction in level of support for Community Groups towards annual trips and outings	£ 5,000
~	adjustments to method by which department is charged for transport costs associated with Lunch Clubs	£28,000
~	withdrawal of shoppers bus service and planned cutback within miscellaneous category	£ 5,000

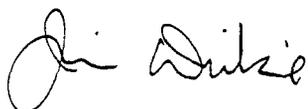
5.2 The review has also highlighted a number of key areas where further work is required:

- ~ within day centres elderly care further work is required to investigate reasons behind significant variances in transport across units. Within Monklands HFE - work will continue to progress costings for alternative transport service;
- ~ Day Centres - Learning Disability review of Council Policy regarding clients contributing towards cost of transport and consideration of transport provision in relation to promoting and encouraging independence among client users;
- ~ review of Council Policy in relation to funding of transport for Community Groups;
- ~ Taxi usage - establishment of contract with local taxi firms for annual supply of taxi services across department.

6.0 Recommendations

Committee is asked to

- (1) Note progress to date.
- (2) Note future work which is to be undertaken.



Jim Dickie
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25 July 2000