

---

**SUPPORTED BUS SERVICE CONTRACTS EXTENSION**

---

**Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor David Lyonette, Transport Portfolio**

**Responsible Director - Richard Alty,  
Assistant Chief Executive (Regeneration)**

---

**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To seek Council approval to waive Contract Procedure Rules to allow a limited extension of the current short term supported bus service contracts which are due to cease on 4 April 2009. This is to allow more time for discussion and debate about the long term contracts that need to be put in place after the expiry of the current contracts.

**Summary**

2. Arriva made changes to commercial bus routes<sup>1</sup> on 20 July 2008, following a period of evidence collection, including analysis of a questionnaire circulated to nearly every house in the Borough and information on travel patterns held by the Council.
3. Cabinet (29 April 2008 – C219) put in place a set of supported bus service contracts from the same date that complemented the commercial network and served areas that were not covered by Arriva. The expiry date for these contracts was set as 4 April 2009, since they were only intended to cover the period required to review travel needs as the commercial network settled down. **Appendix 1** lists these current contracts, which are operated by Arriva following a competitive tender process.
4. An evidence collection process has been undertaken as soon as possible after the introduction of the new bus network – there was a necessary delay to allow for travel patterns to stabilise as users become familiar with the new bus routes. This process included interviewing passengers on bus, the provision of a questionnaire, analysis of ticket machine data and a Talking Together event in November 2008.
5. It is now considered preferable to extend the existing contracts for a further four weeks to allow for more consideration of the evidence, which means that the expiry date of the current contracts would be postponed until 2 May 2009. This extension will allow more time for members of the Economy & Environment Scrutiny to complete a full investigation

---

<sup>1</sup> Under the 1985 Transport Act, bus companies may decide to operate bus routes at their own commercial risk, under the regulatory control of the Traffic Commissioner. As businesses, bus companies provide buses to make money, not meet social need. Local Councils may choose to pay for additional bus services where there is unmet travel need, although these cannot compete with commercially provided bus services.

---

into the issues, before Cabinet discusses the findings of the review at their meeting on 17 February 2009.

6. Due to the short timescales, it is not possible to comply with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules to secure the provision of supported bus services until May 2009. It is also not considered expedient to seek tenders for a period of one month, given the costs involved and the potential confusion caused to bus passengers. Approval is therefore sought to extend the contracts listed in Appendix 1 until 2 May 2009 at an estimated cost of £40,472.

### **Recommendation**

7. It is recommended that:
  - (a) Current contracts for supported bus services to be extended from 4 April 2009 until 2 May 2009.

### **Reasons**

8. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:
  - (a) In order for appropriate analysis of the evidence collected to be carried out for the new contracts.
  - (b) To ensure that the proposed solutions to identified travel needs are the most beneficial for local people.
  - (c) To ensure that there is continuous provision of supported bus services until the new contracts come into effect on 3 May 2009.

**Richard Alty,  
Assistant Chief Executive (Regeneration)**

Gill Hutchinson: Ext 2761

## Background Papers

- (i) Cabinet 29 April, 2008 - Minute C219
- (ii) Cabinet 2 December 2008 – Minute C112

S17 Crime and Disorder	This report has no implications for Crime & Disorder.
Health and Well Being	This report has no implications for Health.
Sustainability	Provision of supported bus services contributes to the ability of local people to choose to travel more sustainably.
Diversity	The extension will enable the needs of Adult Social Service users to be assessed more fully.
Wards Affected	All
Groups Affected	As detailed in the report.
Budget and Policy Framework	The principle of providing supported bus services is set out in the Council's Bus Strategy. Budget implications are as set out in the report.
Key Decision	Yes
Urgent Decision	The decision is urgent in order to meet procurement deadlines. The contents of this report have been considered by the Economy & Environment Scrutiny Committee.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	Contributes to the Sustainable Transport Network work strand in the Greener theme.

## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis

9. Arriva North East purchased the business of Stagecoach in Darlington on 26 August 2007, after gaining the approval of the Office of Fair Trading (OFT). Arriva made changes to their commercial bus routes on 20 July 2008, following a period of evidence collection including analysis of a questionnaire circulated to nearly every house in the Borough and information on travel patterns held by the Council.
10. The Council introduced a set of supported bus service contracts from 20 July 2008 that are operated by Arriva following a competitive tender process. These were designed to complement Arriva's network to meet travel needs that they do not meet commercially (Cabinet Report 29 April 2008 – C219) and were let until April 2009 whilst further evidence was being collected about how the new bus network was performing. This evidence is being used in the decision making process about longer term contracts from 2009.
11. An evidence collection process has been undertaken as soon as possible after the introduction of the new bus network – the necessary delay allowing for travel patterns to stabilise as users become familiar with the new bus routes.

### Evidence Collection

12. The evidence collection process was focused on current journeys and associated actual travel needs and identifying unmet needs that could potentially be provided for by supported bus services. The evidence collection process used the following sources:
  - (a) face to face interviews – on board bus journeys operated on behalf of Darlington Borough Council
  - (b) a questionnaire available from several locations in the Borough and on line
  - (c) Ticket machine data for existing supported bus services (including concessionary fare pass use figures)
  - (d) Feedback received about the changes to the local bus network made by both Arriva and the Council on 20 July 2008.
  - (e) Information on the travel needs of Adult Social Care service users
13. Briefings about the evidence collection process and consultation arrangements were given to Members, the Association of Parish Councils & Meetings and Darlington Transport Forum.
14. A summary of the evidence analysed to date and the proposed response to it were presented at a Talking Together event in the Dolphin Centre on 20 November 2008. This event was attended by Members of the Economy & Environment Scrutiny Committee before their meeting on 21 November 2008, where they considered the evidence as well as the feedback from the Talking Together event. It has become clear that more time for consideration of the evidence would be desirable as the review has progressed, for example to allow members of Scrutiny to carry out further investigation into the issues through a Task & Finish Group.

15. The forthcoming Task and Finish Group meetings in February 2009 will consider all the evidence outlined above, including a further 2 months worth of ticket data and analysis of questionnaires returned after the initial deadline. Members of Scrutiny require a full analysis of the evidence collected to be made available, in order for them to make a recommendation to Cabinet. They will also have access to the results of tenders requested by Cabinet for the continued long term provision of existing supported bus services and variations on a small number of them..
16. Due to the timescales involved, it is not considered expedient to seek tenders for the operation of supported bus services for one month. It would also incur additional costs disproportionate to the length of the contract and potentially cause confusion to bus passengers if the operator changed. It is also not possible to extend the existing contracts under the Contract Procedure Rules, since such an extension is outside the contract terms. Members are therefore requested to agree the waiver of the Contract Procedure Rules, so that the existing contracts can be extended by one month until 2 May 2009.
17. Extending the current contracts by one month will allow for more analysis and discussion of the evidence collected about the travel needs that could be met by supported bus services. This will enable Cabinet to have access to as much information as possible at their meeting on 17 February, when they are due to decide on what long term contracts should be procured. It is not possible, under procurement and service registration rules to introduce the long term contracts before 3 May 2009.

### **Budget Implications**

18. Extending the current contracts from 4 April 2009 until 2 May 2009, would cost £40,472 and this sum can be funded within the proposed budget

### **Consultation**

19. The current operator of the short term contracts, Arriva, has been consulted on the possibility of extending these contracts, and is willing to operate them until 2 May 2009.

## Current Contracts

<b>Contract No – Service Number</b>	<b>Times of Operation</b>	<b>Route</b>
DBC0812 - 5A	Monday - Saturday	Brafferton diversion
DBC0805 - 14	Monday - Friday early morning	Morrisons - Town Centre - Skerne Park
DBC0805 - 14	Saturday morning	Morrisons - Town Centre - Skerne Park
DBC0816 - 16	Monday - Saturday	Newton Aycliffe - Mowden - Town Centre
DBC0807 - 2	Saturday morning	Town Centre - Branksome
DBC0807 - 2	Sunday morning	Town Centre - Branksome
DBC0811 - 12	Monday - Friday early morning	Town Centre - DTVA
DBC0811 - 12	Saturday morning	Town Centre - DTVA
DBC0806 - 7	Monday - Friday early morning	Town Centre - Durham
DBC0806 - 7	Saturday morning	Town Centre - Durham
DBC0801 - 13a/b	Monday - Friday early morning	Town Centre - Firthmoor
DBC0801 - 13a/b	Saturday early morning	Town Centre - Firthmoor
DBC0801 - 13a/b	Sunday morning	Town Centre - Firthmoor
DBC0801 - 13a/b	Sunday -Thu eve	Town Centre - Firthmoor
DBC0801 - 13a/b	Monday - Thursday evening	Town Centre - Firthmoor
DBC0801 - 13a/b	Sunday	Town Centre - Firthmoor
DBC0811 - 12	Sunday	Town Centre - Hurworth - Neasham
DBC0811 - 12	Monday - Saturday evening	Town Centre - Hurworth - Neasham
DBC0804 - 4	Monday - Friday early morning	Town Centre - Minors Crescent
DBC0804 - 4	Saturday morning	Town Centre - Minors Crescent
DBC0810 - 3	Monday - Saturday evening	Town Centre - Mowden
DBC0814 - 20	Monday - Saturday	Town Centre - Neasham
DBC0808 - 11	Saturday morning	Town Centre - Red Hall
DBC0808 - 11	Sunday morning	Town Centre - Red Hall
DBC0817 - 17/18	Monday - Saturday	Town Centre - Sadberge
DBC0813 - 30/31a	Monday - Saturday evening	Town Centre - Skerne Park/Albert Hill and Mowden Circulars
DBC0813 - 30/31a	Sunday	Town Centre - Skerne Park/Albert Hill and Mowden Circulars
DBC0803 - 9	Monday - Friday early morning	Town Centre - Springfield
DBC0803 - 9	Sunday -Thursday evening	Town Centre - Springfield
DBC0803 - 9	Monday - Thursday evening	Town Centre - Springfield
DBC0803 - 9	Sunday	Town Centre - Springfield
DBC0815 - 19	Monday - Saturday	Town Centre - West Park
DBC0802 - 10	Saturday early am	Town Centre - Whinbush

<b>Contract No – Service Number</b>	<b>Times of Operation</b>	<b>Route</b>
DBC0809 - 6a	Daily late eve	Town Centre - Whinfield
DBC0809 - 6a	Monday - Saturday evening	Town Centre - Whinfield

Durham County Council Contracts (partly subsidised by Darlington Borough Council):

- 1 Service 1b – Daily early Saturday morning and daily evenings – Town Centre to Crook via Bishop Auckland
- 2 Service 6a+b – Monday to Saturday evenings – Town Centre to Harrowgate Hill via Longfield Road
- 3 Service 7 – Monday to Friday early morning – Town Centre to Thinford
- 4 Service 8c – Monday to Friday – Town Centre to Bishop Auckland