

# **West Lothian Council supports local bus services**

**West Lothian Council has awarded almost £47,000 in contracts to support local buses during the festive period.**

The festive services will run two hourly on Christmas day and New Year's Day and for the first time will include services to Greenrigg and Bridgend.

Each year the council invests funding to ensure residents have bus services over the festive period, which has a particular benefit to those working.

The council has historically provided an additional level of local bus provision on Christmas Day, Boxing Day, 1 January and 2 January.

Around 80% of the bus network is provided by commercial companies who, generally, do not operate on these dates. The subsidised bus network is also reduced, leaving gaps in the network.

The festive service will provide a two hour service between 7am and 7pm and is aimed at ensuring as wide a coverage as possible.

Services to St John's Hospital are an important part of the service, with access to health care and essential work travel being the main focus.

The Executive approved the council's £46,700 investment that

will provide the following services on Christmas Day and 1 January.

- X22 Shotts – Edinburgh via Whitburn, Blackburn, Seafield, Livingston Village, Livingston Centre, Dedridge East, Mid Calder, East Calder & Wilkieston.
- X25 Blackridge – Livingston via Armadale, Bathville, Bathgate, Deans North, Ladywell East & Alderstone Road
- 26 Fauldhouse – Livingston via Whitburn, Bathgate, Bents, Stoneyburn, Loganlea, West Calder & Polbeth.
- X27 Whitburn– Edinburgh via Blackburn, Seafield, Eliburn – Livingston Centre, Dedridge East, Mid Calder, East Calder & Wilkieston
- X28 Bathgate – Edinburgh via Deans North, Knightsridge, Craigshill, Dedridge East, East Calder & Kirknewton
- X38 Linlithgow – Edinburgh via Winchburgh

The services will provide coverage in all areas except Dechmont, Torphichen, Westfield, Philpstoun, Breich. Following passenger feedback, a service will now include the villages of Greenrigg and Bridgend.

Commercial local bus operators will operate reduced services on Boxing Day and 2 January. Council officers have held discussion with local bus providers and Lothian County has confirmed an intention to operate a limited service on 26 December.

This service is expected to be lower than a Sunday, but sufficient to ensure people can access St John's Hospital and Livingston Centre for the main part of the day.

On Sunday 2 January, Lothian Country, at this stage, also plan on operating a normal Sunday service. McGill's Scotland East has indicated that they will not be operating on any of the festive dates.

Nicola Gill, West Lothian Council's Passenger Transport Manager said: "It is important that people can access

important services, such as Health care, visit friends and family and attend their work and the Festive Bus Services aims to provide that support to local people during a time when the main commercial bus service winds down.

“We are pleased to be able to support these services that people rely upon.”

by Stuart Somerville Local Democracy Reporter

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