

Council agrees to fund festive bus services across West Lothian

West Lothian Council has agreed almost £40,000 worth contracts to keep buses running over the Christmas and New Year holidays.

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 aims to provide a largely two hourly service between 7am and 7pm on Christmas day and New Year's Day, with a more frequent service being provided on Boxing Day and 2 January to ensure as wide a coverage of the main cross county routes as possible.

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

The Council Executive approved a £37,350 investment that, alongside the commercial network, would provide services on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and 1 and 2 January.

Commercial bus services will operate a limited timetable over

the festive period, in addition to the subsidised services listed below.

Tom Conn, the Executive councillor for the Environment and Sustainability said: "West Lothian Council doesn't operate bus services, but the Festive Bus Services aims to provide support to local people during a time when the main commercial bus service – which accounts for 80% of buses in West Lothian – winds down.

"The restrictions on our budget mean that we can't provide services that help everyone in all scenarios, but our festive services have a particular emphasis on ensuring people can access health care, visit friends and family and attend their place of work."

The council will fund these services over the festive holidays: –

X18 Whitburn – Edinburgh via Armadale, Bathgate, Dechmont, Uphall, & Broxburn

X27 Bathgate – Edinburgh via Deans North, Knightsridge, Craigshill, 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 & Kirkliston

72 Fauldhouse – Kirkliston via Longridge, Whitburn, Blackburn, Seafield, Eliburn, St John's Hospital, Howden, Livingston Centre, Pumpherston, Uphall, Broxburn & Winchburgh.

74 Fauldhouse – Livingston via Bents, Stoneyburn, Loganlea, Addiewell, West Calder, Polbeth and Dedridge West.

X40 St John's Hospital – Edinburgh Royal Infirmary via Livingston Centre, Mid Calder, East Calder & Calderwood will

operate a special service of 2 return journeys on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day to provide hospital visiting opportunities with a Sunday commercial service operating on 2 January.

By Stuart Sommerville Local Democracy Reporter