



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Neil Gray MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care
Health and Social Care
Scottish Government, St Andrew`s House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG
Date : 26 June 2024
Our Ref: KB3259



Keith Brown MSP

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

Rural Clackmannanshire Public Transport Links to Healthcare

As MSP for Clackmannanshire and Dunblane, I am contacting you in respect of the above issue having met with representatives of Muckhart Community Council (MCC), within my constituency.

My constituents say that they have had no bus service for Muckhart since 2022, when the 202 service, which was trialled as an alternative to the discontinued x53, stopped servicing Muckhart. They say that this effectively cut off anyone who didn't have their own form of transport, particularly as there is no safe route to walk or cycle between Muckhart and Dollar. With a population including a large proportion of those over 60, as well as families with young children, this was a huge blow to the community. The population of Muckhart is also expanding with the building of 50 family homes including 12 social housing units. This increases the housing stock by 50% and the community fears this will put considerable pressure on the limited services available, leading to increased vehicle usage.

Muckhart Community Council have been working on a viable solution to this matter since that time, including discussions with representatives of Glenfarg Community Transport (GCT), who have successfully been running community transport in their area since 2023. Indeed, they were recently awarded Best Bus Service 2024 at the Scottish Transport Awards and will be taking over the 202 service in September when Stagecoach stop running it. The aim is for Muckhart to be added to the route once again, giving residents public transport access to essential services and the ability to link with the H2 service which runs from Dollar to Forth Valley Royal Hospital. However, this is proving to be problematic as they seek funding and practical assistance.

It is the belief of MCC and residents of the community that easy access to health services should be a basic right. As we are all encouraged to seek more environmentally friendly means of travel, whilst also enduring a cost of living crisis, they feel that they are beset with obstacles and would like to know what the Scottish Government, including you as Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care, are



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doing to make it easier for rural communities to implement solutions. They believe that it is the responsibility of government to make sure that access to health services is not blocked by a deficiency of public transport.

I would be grateful if you would please consider the comments of my constituents, with particular attention to the need for equitable health service access, and offer them an update on what is being done to ensure that community wellbeing is at the forefront of government plans. I thank you for your assistance in this matter and look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'KB', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Keith Brown MSP
Clackmannanshire and Dunblane constituency