

Swann opens PPE manufacturing facility

Health Minister Robin Swann has officially opened a manufacturing facility on the outskirts of Londonderry which supplies vital PPE to health workers in Northern Ireland.

Minister opens new Viewpoint during visit to north Antrim coast

Rural Affairs Minister Edwin Poots MLA has officially opened the newly redeveloped Magheracross Viewpoint site between Portrush and Bushmills and made a visit to Portaneevy Viewpoint on the International Appalachian Trail near Ballintoy on the north Antrim coast.

Good news for Tullideph/Ancrum area on bus services #dundeewestend



I have today welcomed news that bus passengers in the Tullideph Road/Ancrum Road area are likely to again have a bus service near to them, after months of being left high and dry without a bus service following Xplore Dundee re-routing Service 17 away from the area.

The re-routing of Service 17 earlier this year so it now goes right along City Road was really bad news for the Tullideph Road and Ancrum Road area as it left them without any bus service.

I felt strongly that every effort should be made to serve Tullideph Road and Ancrum Road particularly because the Morven Terrace and Ancrum Place sheltered housing with many elderly folk has been left without easy access to a bus. Many constituents raised this concern with me.

The council is proposing a new 204 tendered bus service – a service number previously used but this new service would cover a very different route and would miss out much of the old 204 route.

However, the new 204 service route is sufficiently close to the Ancrum Road and Tullideph Road areas that it could be slightly re-routed to cover the area and this needs to be done – otherwise many residents and particularly older folk are left without any bus services.

I took this to Dundee City Council's City Development Committee when it was agreeing to bus tenders including the 204 and it was agreed that the viability of having the 204 cover parts of Tullideph Road and Ancrum Road would be looked at. The issue is the high camber on the Ancrum Road/Logie Street junction that had to be road tested to ensure safe for a bus to use.

The council's Team Leader, Parking & Sustainable Transport has advised me :

"The routes are currently being registered with the traffic commissioner and will start on 16 August 2021. We have agreed the routing of the 204 with the operator (Stagecoach) so that it will operate via Tullideph Road. I am not expecting this to be rejected by the Traffic Commissioner's office.

We will prepare publicity for each of the new services and publicise via the council website in advance of the services operating and communicate with key stakeholders including elected members. I am hopeful of this all being completed next week."

This looks very positive in giving the Tullideph area a bus service back. I am not pretending it is perfect – it'll be a daytime hourly service but it is a whole lot better than no bus service at all and I am grateful to transportation officers for taking on my route change suggestion.

It is important that tendered bus services actually cover the areas that are isolated from bus services. Real practical action is needed to ensure the newly tendered services work for local people.

It is also important that the older people across the city who relied on the currently suspended Blether Bus minibus service are given access to public transport and I am assured council officers are also working on that.

Last call for vaccination centre first doses

Northern Ireland's seven regional vaccination centres will close for first dose COVID-19 vaccines this weekend.

Mallon grants final planning permission for Casement Park stadium

Infrastructure Minister Nichola Mallon MLA has today granted final planning approval for the new stadium at Casement Park.