



Transport Scotland Bus Partnership Fund

Date of meeting 11 December 2020

Date of report 17 November 2020

Report by Chief Executive

1. Object of report

To update the Partnership on the launch of Transport Scotland's Bus Partnership Fund.

2. Background

2.1 Further to a previous report¹, on 9 November 2020, the Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity announced the launch of the Bus Partnership Fund (BPF)², part of a £500million investment by the Scottish Government in bus priority infrastructure, along with the Managed Motorways project being led by Transport Scotland. The Scottish Government has said that the BPF is a key part of the "green recovery" from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, its purpose being to tackle the negative impact of congestion on bus services, so that journeys are quicker and more reliable, thereby encouraging more people to travel by bus.

2.2 In bidding for the fund, Transport Scotland emphasise that a partnership approach is expected between local authorities, Regional Transport Partnerships, operators and other relevant parties, complementing the powers afforded by the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019, the guidance and regulations for which are due to be developed in parallel with the BPF bidding process. The closing date for applications for the BPF is 16 April 2021, although there will be the opportunity to submit further bids in October 2021.

3. Outline of Proposals

3.1 The initial tranche of funding available through the BPF is expected to be used to resource the development of business cases for large scale projects, and also any "quick wins", namely smaller infrastructure projects which are ready to deliver and align with the long-term vision of the BPF.

3.2 Application criteria have been developed in line with the aims of the BPF and these are noted below:

- Applications must be from partnerships working towards Bus Service Improvement Partnership (BSIP) status, as defined by the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019. Transport Scotland has provided a guidance note on BSIPs as part of the BPF application pack;
- There must be a lead local authority, as "Accountable Officer" for the funding;
- The infrastructure projects will be owned by local roads authorities, in recognition of their statutory role in maintaining the local road infrastructure;

¹ Section 3.2.3 of this report: http://www.spt.co.uk/documents/latest/SP201120_Agenda8.pdf

² <https://www.transport.gov.scot/public-transport/buses/bus-partnership-fund/>

- In accordance with the Place Principle, which was adopted by the Scottish Government in 2019, bidding partnerships are asked to take a collaborative, place-based approach to the proposed developments;
- All partners should sign the application to indicate their commitment; both to the partnership and the proposed developments; and
- In applying, partnerships accept that initial funding awards and any future tranches of funding awarded will be subject to evaluation by Transport Scotland.

4. Conclusion

As members are aware, the negative impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on bus patronage has been significant, and a strong, co-ordinated effort by all stakeholders in the bus industry will be required to grow patronage to pre-Covid levels and beyond. In line with that, the BPF goes some way in providing an opportunity to deliver improvements in the bus network in the west of Scotland. Similarly, the Managed Motorways project, being led by Transport Scotland and with SPT represented on the project board, offers the chance for significant bus improvements on the trunk road network. The opportunity to dovetail, and thereby strengthen, BPF projects with Managed Motorways initiatives will be considered as the BPF application process progresses.

Officers are engaging with councils and other partners to establish arrangements for the development of bids, and SPT will play a key role in those processes. For example, discussions are underway through the auspices of the Glasgow Bus Partnership, and officers will also engage with Ayrshire councils and Argyll and Bute Council to progress matters in those areas, seeking to ensure that the whole of the SPT area benefits from the BPF.

The significant previous work undertaken by SPT and partners in developing large-scale proposals for bus (e.g. the Strathclyde Bus Investment Programme developed for the City Deal, the West of Scotland Public Transport in the Conurbation Study, the Streamline and Fastlink Statutory Quality Partnerships, and others) provide a solid base for bid development, and officers will keep the Partnership updated as matters progress.

5. Partnership action

The Partnership is recommended to note the contents of this report.

6. Consequences

Policy consequences	<i>Bids will be developed in line with the current and developing RTS.</i>
Legal consequences	<i>None at present.</i>
Financial consequences	<i>None at present.</i>
Personnel consequences	<i>None at present.</i>
Equalities consequences	<i>None at present.</i>
Risk consequences	<i>None at present.</i>

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