



## Transport Scotland Bus Priority Rapid Deployment Fund – Proposed Bid by Glasgow City Region Transport Transition Plan Group

Committee Operations

Date of meeting 21 August 2020

Date of report 4 August 2020

### Report by Assistant Chief Executive

#### 1. Object of report

To update the Committee on Transport Scotland's Bus Priority Rapid Deployment Fund (BPRDF), and a proposed bid by the Glasgow City Region Transport Transition Plan (GCRTTP) Group.

#### 2. Background

- 2.1 Further to a letter from the Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity to councils and Regional Transport Partnerships in late May, SPT was invited to become a member of the Transport Transition Plan group for the Glasgow City Region. Further to the update provided to the Partnership in June<sup>1</sup>, SPT has undertaken significant work in supporting the Group, in terms of analysis, evidence-gathering, information sharing, liaison, and development of proposals, with a specific focus on preparing a city region Transport Transition Plan, and the development of a bid for Transport Scotland's Bus Priority Rapid Deployment Fund.
- 2.2 In support of the Scottish Government's route-map out of lockdown, the Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity announced the creation of the BPRDF on 16 July 2020<sup>2</sup>. The £10 million fund, open to bids from local authorities, will provide funding for temporary bus priority infrastructure, with the intent of reducing the impact of congestion on the busiest routes as progress is made through and out of the COVID-19 crisis in line with the Scottish Government's route-map. It is anticipated that the impacts of measures delivered via this fund, in tandem with separate Transport Scotland funding for active travel measures (Spaces for People<sup>3</sup>), will serve to provide an alternative to private car use, thereby reducing congestion and pollution in affected areas, and improve accessibility. A key criteria of the BPRDF is that the proposals in any bid must have the support of local bus operators.
- 2.3 Measures eligible for funding via the BPRDF include:
- Reallocation of road space to bus;

<sup>1</sup> Sections 3.2 and 3.3, [http://www.spt.co.uk/documents/latest/p260620\\_Agenda9.pdf](http://www.spt.co.uk/documents/latest/p260620_Agenda9.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.transport.gov.scot/public-transport/buses/bus-priority-rapid-deployment-fund/>

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.transport.gov.scot/news/10-million-to-support-pop-up-active-travel-infrastructure/>

- Reallocating parking or loading;
- Bus lanes;
- Bus gates;
- Traffic light prioritisation;
- Bus stops, waiting facilities and signage to support the temporary measures; and
- Management support e.g. for related planning, procurement, regulations and evaluation.

2.4 SPT welcomes the establishment of the fund as the provision of bus priority interventions will provide much needed support to the network as society emerges from lockdown. While bus services are, at the time of writing, operating at around 90-100% of pre-Covid levels, the impacts of physical distancing mean that only around 50% of capacity is available on each bus. Bus priority measures therefore provide a boost to enable maximising use of that capacity, reduce delays, and improve journey times and reliability, notably within the current context of a continual rise in private car use and the negative impacts of that e.g. congestion.

### **3. Outline of proposals**

- 3.1 Following the launch of the BPRDF, the Glasgow City Region Transport Transition Plan Group has been working to prepare a bid for submission, in line with the emerging Transport Transition Plan for the city region, which will form a separate report to the Strategy and Programmes Committee on 28 August. SPT has dedicated significant staff resource to help develop both the bid and the plan, and has procured consultancy support to assist the GCRTTP Group in that regard. Further, SPT has facilitated engagement with bus operators throughout the bid development process.
- 3.2 At the time of writing, a bid is nearing completion, with submission proposed for week ending 7 August 2020. Attached at Appendix 1 is a presentation prepared by the consultants which provides a summary of GCRTTP draft bid proposals as they currently stand. It is worth highlighting that, despite the temporary nature of the initiatives therein, the BPRDF and the draft bid will likely set the scene and appetite for future investment in bus in Scotland, particularly in light of the Programme for Government announcement in late 2019 by the Scottish Government of the proposed £500 million investment in bus over coming years, and the developing Strategic Transport Projects Review. Similarly, the GCRTTP bid will influence the development and direction of the Glasgow Bus Partnership, which was in the process of being revitalised at a city region level immediately prior to the Covid-19 crisis beginning.
- 3.3 It is important to note that discussions are continuing with the Ayrshire Roads Alliance, North Ayrshire Council and Argyll & Bute Council, at SPT's instigation and in association with Swestrans and Hitrans, in relation to any requirements the transport networks of these areas may need in following the route-map out of lockdown. Further meetings are planned, with a focus on communicating a collective response to Transport Scotland in order that any potential funding which may be available to support initiatives is secured.

### **4. Conclusions**

As members are aware, the challenges facing the bus network of the west of Scotland before the Covid-19 crisis took hold were already significant. The last few months of

lockdown have only served to worsen those challenges at an unprecedented scale. The BPRDF is therefore a welcome step in the right direction in showing support for bus. It is worth highlighting that the draft bid as it stands must be considered in the fairly constrained context within which it has been developed – for example, the relatively limited funding of £10million Scotland-wide from the BPRDF, and the impacts and views of other sectors and modes, and the very tight timeframe. Notwithstanding this, the draft bid is ambitious and innovative in its scope, and should funding be forthcoming, its effects will be closely monitored and evaluated to inform future plans and projects, including the developing Regional Transport Strategy. Officers will continue to progress matters and keep the Committee informed of any outcomes in that regard.

## 5. Committee action

The Committee is recommended to note this report and the draft GCRTTP bid proposals contained in the presentation in Appendix 1.

## 6. Consequences

Policy consequences	<i>In line with the RTS.</i>
Legal consequences	<i>None at present.</i>
Financial consequences	<i>From existing budgets.</i>
Personnel consequences	<i>None at present.</i>
Equalities consequences	<i>Relevant impact assessments have been undertaken as necessary.</i>
Risk consequences	<i>None at present.</i>

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