

## **Report to Partnership Meeting 28 November 2014**

### **RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY**

#### **Bus Investment Fund – Local Authority & Community Transport Applications**

##### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To advise Members of successful applications to the Scottish Government Bus Investment Fund which were led by either Local Authorities or Community Transport providers within the HITRANS and financially supported by HITRANS through match funding contributions.

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##### **Background**

The Bus Investment Fund (BIF) operates as a challenge fund open to applications from public transport authorities working in partnership with operators, community transport, NHS, and other public or private sector partners.

The aim of the fund is to incentivise and enable partnership working to help improve bus services, partnerships, standards and infrastructure for communities across Scotland. The fund will support and encourage all relevant authorities to take up partnership working to help increase the standard of bus services to increase patronage thereby achieving a greater modal shift

The fund will run for two years and Transport Scotland have awarded funding to 13 projects with this second round announced in November 2014.

##### **Moray – Urban Freedom Health Cycle**

Moray Council successful application focuses on access to health and healthy living in Moray. It will see services enhanced to the new Forres Medical Centre by increasing the frequency on an existing bus service. In addition to this other bus service frequency enhancements and Sunday services are planned elsewhere in Moray as part of Stagecoach's contribution to the project. The project will also see bike racks installed on buses and some on bus bike carriage to allow people to access the Moray coast for cycling.

Bus interchange and information facilities will also be enhanced should the project secure funding.

HITRANS have agreed to provide match funding of £20,000 over two years towards this project from the Business Plan allocation for BIF support.

##### **Argyll & Bute: Oban to Fort William Sunday Service**

Argyll and Bute Council were successful with their application for funding to support the development of a Sunday service on the route between Oban and Fort William which will provide improved onward connections to Inverness and Skye for the Oban area and access to the islands and south of Oban for people in Fort William and surrounds.

The proposal is operate three journeys each way on summer Sundays and reduce this to two journeys during the winter at times similar to the weekday service giving a consistent seven day a week service to test the market in the hope that the enhancement may be continued commercially or become sustainable with minimal financial support.

The provision of the service is an important and necessary addition to the public transport network of the area and it is hoped that passenger facilities at Oban, Fort William and key points along the route can also be improved as part of the project.

The project is supported by The Highland Council and HITRANS including a £5,000 contribution towards the total project cost of £101,840.

### **Tasga Uibhist Community Transport**

Tasga Uibhist application to the Bus Investment Fund will allow the improvement of an invaluable community transport scheme within the HITRANS area.

Tasga Uibhist provide a vital local service and this proposal in partnership with Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar, Tagsa Uibhist and HITRANS will help enable much needed investment in the demand responsive services which they provide to the local community in North Uist, South Uist and Benbecula. This project will see investment in two new vehicles (four seater with wheel chair access and a nine seater minibus), help support the employment of a driver for the Dial a Bus service, promotion of their services and wider staff training.

HITRANS have matched the Comhairle's contribution by allocating a budget of £10,000 over the two years of the BIF project to support the Tagsa Uibhist project proposal.

### **The Highland Council: Badenoch & Strathspey Integrated Transport Service**

The aim of this project is to develop an improved integrated transport service for the Badenoch and Strathspey (B&S) area. This will be delivered through a pilot project which links to the needs of the NHS and would be facilitated by the Badenoch & Strathspey Community Transport Company (BSCTC) which is a registered charity. The project will improve access to services for elderly and vulnerable members of the community who can be at a disadvantage due to a lack of regular, and accessible, public transport.

The two main elements of the project will be to deliver an improved fleet for BSCTC to enable cross-over with NHS requirements, i.e. new disabled compliant car and minibus to allow NHS non-emergency patient travel; and secondly the implementation of routing / scheduling software to enable optimisation of BSCTC fleet, maximising available driver resources and funding.

If successfully piloted there should be an opportunity for community groups across the HITRANS area to benefit from similar routing / scheduling software.

### **Recommendation**

1. Members are asked to note the report.

Risk	Impact	Comment
RTS delivery	√	This work supports several strategic objectives of the RTS.
Policy	√	This work supports the development of Policies H29, H30 and H33 as set out in the RTS Delivery Plan
Financial	-	HITRANS match funding in support of the Moray Council, Argyll & Bute Council and Tagsa Uibhist applications (£35,000) was

		identified in the 2014/15 Research and Development and Delivery budget and approved at the Partnership Meeting on 26 <sup>th</sup> September 2014.
Equality	√	Improvement of public transport services helps reduce social exclusion by improving access to employment and services

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