

## **Report to Partnership Meeting 8 November 2013**

### **RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY**

#### **BUS INVESTMENT FUND**

#### **Purpose of Report**

To update Members on the progress of applications to the Scottish Government's Bus Investment Fund 2013 which HITRANS are either a lead or supporting partner.

#### **Background**

The Scottish Government announced details of the Bus Investment Fund on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2013.

The Fund aims to enable the development of projects which have the potential to deliver improvements in bus services and infrastructure through partnership working between local transport authorities, bus operators and others. The fund is expected to run for several years, providing up to £3m/year in the first instance.

Project applications should be limited to £1m in any one year and should not exceed three years to deliver. Applications have been welcomed from transport authorities, bus operators working with transport authorities and community transport organisations. The fund aims to encourage partnership working and should have the support of local transport authorities.

#### **Applications**

Of the four original applications which HITRANS were either a lead or supporting project partner, detailed applications were submitted for the following two projects in August 2013;

- Tagasa Uibhist Community Services (Lead Partner)
- East Inverness Bus Improvement Corridor (Supporting Partner)

Transport Scotland confirmed on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2013 that the application for East Inverness was among those projects scoring sufficient marks to secure funding from the Bus Investment Fund.

The decision on whether the Tagasa Uibhist project proposal was successful was still pending at the time of writing this report.

An outline of the two project proposals are provided on the next page.

## **1. Tagsa Uibhist Community Services**

Tagsa Uibhist are a voluntary organisation in Uist providing a care support service to people in the local community along with community transport for people with mobility and/or disabilities who are unable to access public transport. The services cover from Berneray, North Uist, Benbecula, South Uist and Eriskay. Six islands extending for 60 miles.

The project proposal seeks funding to purchase two vehicles and revenue to support the administration and employment of a driver for the Dial a Bus Service. The total project value is £113,437 with HITRANS and CES each offering match funding of £17,100 over the three years of project. The total fund requested from Transport Scotland is therefore £79,237.

## **2. East Inverness Bus Improvement Corridor**

The project proposal is to develop a Quality Partnership to improve local bus services in East Inverness. It will improve access to key destinations including the new UHI Campus, Inverness Retail and Business Park, Raigmore Hospital and Inverness City Centre. It will also improve services in areas such as Hilton, Merkinch, South Kessock and Raigmore Estate which suffer from high levels of deprivation.

The project will deliver the following improvements;

- Deployment of 12 branded new coaches by Stagecoach on its flagship service
- Improved bus journey times and journey reliability with intelligent bus priority measures at key junctions.
- Bus lane on Millburn Road on the busiest bus corridor in the city.
- Increase patronage through improving infrastructure and innovative marketing.

The total project value over the three years is £2.7 Million with £1.7million from Stagecoach on new vehicles on its flagship City service, £200,000 from The Highland Council and £100,000 from HITRANS as well as resource in the form of managing the bid. The total funding sought from the Scottish Government is £700,000.

### **Next Steps**

At the time of writing this report, HITRANS officials have arranged to meet with Transport Scotland to discuss project management and detailed project milestones for the East Inverness project.

It is anticipated that further applications to the Bus Investment Fund will be sought in future years and Members are invited to consider suitable schemes that may be submitted.

### **Recommendation**

1. Members are invited to note this update. Further project progress reports will be provided at future Partnership meetings.
2. Members are asked to consider opportunities for potential projects that could be submitted should further applications to the Bus Investment Fund be sought in the future.

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>RTS delivery</b>	√	<b>This work supports several strategic objectives of the RTS.</b>
<b>Policy</b>	√	<b>This work supports the development of Policies H29, H30 and H33 as set out in the RTS Delivery Plan</b>
<b>Financial</b>	-	<b>Funding is identified in the 2013/14 Business Plan. The resource of a Partnership Manager for one day per week for the duration of the project has been identified.</b>
<b>Equality</b>	-	<b>Improvement of public transport services helps reduce social exclusion by improving access to employment and services for those living in our most remote areas.</b>

**Report by:** Neil MacRae  
**Designation:** Partnership Manager  
**Date:** 29<sup>th</sup> October 2013