

TAYSIDE AND CENTRAL SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

12 MARCH 2024

BUS INITIATIVES UPDATE

REPORT BY PROJECT MANAGER

Purpose

This report provides the Partnership with updates on the development of bus and sustainable transport projects, including the work of the Tayside, and Forth Valley Bus Alliances.

Summary

Both the Tayside, and Forth Valley Bus Alliances have completed STAG and SBC stages as required under the Transport Scotland Bus Partnership Fund (BPF). The Tayside Bus Alliance has also submitted all documents to the gateway review. On 16 January 2024 Transport Scotland informed the alliances that the Bus Partnership Fund programme would be 'paused' and would not be supported in the financial year 2024/25. It was confirmed that the Tayside Bus Alliance would continue to receive funding for the delivery of Urban Traffic Management and Control bus priority measures at traffic signals to the end of the financial year 2023/24. In addition to supporting bus prioritisation at signals, Transport Scotland has also indicated to the Tayside Bus Alliance possible funding opportunities for the continued development of bus priority on specific corridors as part of integrated sustainable transport analyses. These are being developed further.

A further funded project, supported by the Community Bus Fund (CBF), is ongoing, and will review the potential of the new bus powers contained in the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 within the Tactran region.

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 That the Partnership:

- (i) notes the ongoing work in relation to bus projects, their direction and deliverables;
- (ii) notes the ongoing delivery of Bus Priority measures at signalised junctions in Perth and Dundee; and
- (iii) notes the continuing development of bus priority measures as part of an integrated sustainable transport approach on three corridors in Perth and Dundee, including an application(s) to further funding sources for their development.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The primary aim of both the Tayside and Forth Valley Bus Alliances has been the development of concerted improvements to bus infrastructure, and associated facilities, that would support and enhance service delivery, and provide operational benefits. These, in combination, create improvements to services that are likely to increase ridership and lead to a virtuous cycle of user, social, and operator benefit.
- 2.2 As reported to the Partnership at its meeting on 13 June 2023 (Report RTP/23/15), the Tayside Bus Alliance completed the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) and Strategic Business Case (SBC) stages of analysis in Spring 2023, making recommendations for 12 routes in total. The completed appraisal reports were submitted to Transport Scotland for gateway review, in April 2023.
- 2.3 The submission of the STAG/SBC reports prompted further activities, including:
- the confirmation of quick wins, approval and additional funding to deliver bus priorities at signalised junctions providing Urban Traffic Management Control (UTMC) upgrades in both Perth and Dundee.
 - the review of routes to identify locations and corridors with significant interaction between bus priority and active travel, with potential for joint and integrated 'sustainable corridor' outcomes.
- 2.4 As with the Tayside Bus Alliance, the Forth Valley Bus Alliance also completed the first stages required under the BPF. The Forth Valley alliance SBC and STAG reports have been submitted to councils for sign-off prior to submission to gateway review.
- 2.5 On the 16 January 2024, Transport Scotland confirmed that due to budgetary constraints the Bus Partnership Fund programme would be 'paused' for financial year 2024/25. This having the effect of suspending the priority work as originally envisioned.
- 2.6 However, provision was made for the Tayside Bus Alliance to complete the UTMC upgrades by the end of the 2023/24 financial year, and a further funding route suggested to allow the continued development of bus priority on specific corridors as part of integrated sustainable transport analyses in 2024/25.
- 2.7 As reported to the Partnership at its meeting on 12 December 2023 funding of up to £75,000 has been allocated to Tactran from the Community Bus Fund (CBF), supporting a review of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 'new powers' for bus supply, to be focused via the bus alliances. The work will be closely linked to activities at Local Transport Authority level in light of the new powers.

3 DISCUSSION

Tayside Bus Alliance

- 3.1 Tayside Bus alliance work has been completed in line with the requirements defined under STAG. The first phase of which, STAG/SBC, has been submitted to Transport Scotland for gateway review. The SBC recommended bus priority measures across 12 corridors in the alliance area. The pausing of the fund for 2024/25 leaves some of these recommendations on pause, though it will be important that these are maintained and updated as necessary to allow the further take up on resumption of the BPF.
- 3.2 In light of the initial appraisal Transport Scotland has made an award for the development of bus priority measures at specific signalised junctions in both Perth and Dundee. These are in the process of delivery and will be in place by March 2024.
- 3.3 Three corridors have also been identified as appropriate for continued analysis on the basis of integration across sustainable transport modes. This integrates both bus priority and active travel measures in support of an optimal sustainable transport outcome. Transport Scotland has indicated a desire to support and fund integrated analysis, allowing for the continued development of bus priority measures, in tandem with other sustainable transport measures during 2024/25. The three corridors being: the Dunkeld Road in Perth, and the Lochee and Arbroath Roads in Dundee. It is anticipated that the alliance will continue to provide input into these measures.

Forth Valley Bus Alliance

- 3.4 The Forth Valley alliance is focused on the development of bus priority corridors including those in the Tactran area serving Stirling. The alliance has completed Strategic Business Case and STAG appraisal. The alliance has submitted to council to seek sign off prior to submission to gateway review.

Community Bus Fund

- 3.5 Following award of funding from Transport Scotland, consultant Derek Halden Consultancy has been appointed to review and report on the opportunity for and benefits arising from the new powers contained within the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019. The project is continuing and expected to report by the end of March 2024. A report on the outcomes of this work will be provided at a future Partnership meeting.

4 CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1 The report has been prepared in consultation with the relevant Local Authority transport officers.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The work defined falls within the BPF grant as awarded to the Alliances. There are no further financial implications.

6 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 This report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Equality Impact Assessment and no major issues have been identified.

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Report prepared by James Cooper. For further information e-mail jamescooper@tactran.gov.uk

The following background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (and not containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing this Report:

Report to Partnership RTP/23/15, Directors Report, 13 June 2023