

TAYSIDE AND CENTRAL SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE****31 OCTOBER 2023****COMMUNITY BUS FUND: GRANT AWARD AND PROCUREMENT****REPORT BY PROJECT MANAGER TAYSIDE BUS ALLIANCE**

This report asks the Executive Committee to note the award of grant from the Community Bus Fund and to delegate authority to the Director and Treasurer to award contract following a competitive tender process.

1 RECOMMENDATIONS**1.1 That the Executive Committee:**

- notes the award of grant from Transport Scotland's Community Bus Fund; and
- delegates authority to the Director and Treasurer to award a contract of up to £75,000 following a competitive tender process.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 On 22 September 2023 Transport Scotland launched the Community Bus Fund to support local transport authorities and regional transport partnerships to explore the options for bus services in the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 and improve public transport in their areas.
- 2.2 The Community Bus fund is in 2 parts. The first provides direct funding of £5m nationally to local authorities on a per capita basis based on levels of transport poverty to support the fund objective of improving local public transport in areas of rural deprivation.
- 2.3 The second part provides £0.75m nationally as a pathfinder style project aimed at supporting local authorities to complete initial feasibility and preparatory work required for the 2019 Act. Expressions of Interest were invited to identify pathfinder style projects which will complete initial feasibility and preparatory work. A short deadline was set for responses, with expressions of interest assessed on a first come first served. This requiring a rapid response from interested authorities and RTPs.

3 DISCUSSION

- 3.1 Tactran submitted an Expression of Interest to the Community Bus Fund for £75,000 to undertake a review of the potential application(s) of 'new powers' for bus service delivery created in the Transport (Scotland) Act

2019, sections 34 et seq. (TSA). The project would identify opportunities for and barriers to the application of the new powers, relevant contexts, and local factors that would impact on delivery; and provide location and context-based review, transferable lessons, and options for transformation at local and regional levels. These would include:

- Opportunities, limitations, and constraints.
- Potential for application, partnership, and funding; avoiding negative consequences.
- Application(s) to bus alliance outcomes
- Identify opportunities to expand services
- Recommend options, support business case development

3.2 The work will integrate regional analyses with parallel developments at an authority level, both contributing to and benefiting from the differing focuses, and allowing for a broader crossover of data, best practice, and barrier reduction than may be achieved at a single authority level alone.

3.3 Project outcomes will be focused on establishing optimal supply outcomes, including via BSIPs, and other new powers, by use and location. Project findings will be applied directly to the work of the Tayside Bus Alliance, as well as the Forth Valley Bus Alliance, and local delivery, where relevant to the differing circumstances of each.

3.4 Tactran has been successful in being awarded £75,000 from Transport Scotland and was given written confirmation on 30 October 2023 with a grant letter to follow. The award includes the requirement that all funding must be utilised by 31 March 2024.

3.5 Specialist consultants will be required to undertake the work and, with the assistance of Perth & Kinross Council procurement officers, a procurement strategy was developed and agreed by the Director. The recommendation is that an open tender is undertaken through Public Contracts Scotland with a quality/price ratio of 80/20.

3.6 Tender documents have been prepared and a (Prior Information Notice) PIN placed on Public Contract Scotland website.

3.7 As the launch of the Community Bus Fund and the award of grant have both taken place after the Tactran Partnership meeting in September 2023 and to meet the 31 March 2024 deadline to complete the work, it is requested that the Executive Committee delegate authority to the Director and Treasurer to award the contract in line with the tender evaluation to be undertaken. Transport Scotland required bidders to provide an assurance that, if successful, grant funding would be spent by end of financial year 2023/24 (31st March 2024).

4 RESOURCE & EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

4.1 All costs of the project will be funded through Transport Scotland's Community Bus Fund Grant of £75,000.

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NOTE

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: