

## **Report to Partnership Meeting 15 November 2019**

### **RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY**

#### **Programme for Government: Bus Priority**

#### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To update Members on the Scottish Government's commitment to invest over £500 million in improved bus priority infrastructure to tackle the impacts of congestion on bus services and raise bus usage as announced within the 2019/2020 Programme for Government.

#### **Background**

A report summarising the key commitments in the Programme for Government which related to Transport was taken to the HITRANS Partnership meeting in September. Among these commitments was a "Mission Zero for Transport" as part of Scotland's journey towards net zero emissions.

To help deliver on what it describes as an emerging Green Deal the Government pledges to invest over £500 million in improved bus priority infrastructure to tackle the impacts of congestion on bus services and raise bus usage

#### ***A 'Mission Zero' for transport***

*Transport is Scotland's largest greenhouse gas emitting sector and this Programme for Government contains actions across all modes of transport. We will publish a new National Transport Strategy later this year which will redefine investment priorities to put sustainable transport at the heart of decision-making and ensure that transport plays a key role in delivering net zero emissions by 2045.*

*We will bring forward a step change in investment to make bus services greener and more punctual and reliable, so that more people make the choice to take the bus. Our actions include:*

- *investing over £500 million in improved bus priority infrastructure to tackle the impacts of congestion on bus services and raise bus usage*
- *beginning plans to reallocate road space on parts of the motorway network around Glasgow to high-occupancy vehicles such as buses*
- *working with the Scottish National Investment Bank, the bus sector and potential investors to explore the potential for new forms of patient and innovative financing to radically accelerate the deployment of zero emission buses across Scotland*

#### **Opportunities and Challenges**

Since the announcement, HITRANS officers have met with Transport Scotland's team which will be overseeing the implementation of the Bus Priority funding commitment. Early indications are that they envisage the fund to run until around 2025 with funding weighted towards the latter years to help provide adequate time for ambitious schemes to be developed. While an

element of the funding will be deployed on reallocating road space on the motorway network around Glasgow it is anticipated that the significant majority will be available for local authorities and regional transport partnerships to apply for through some form of Challenge fund with a focus or likely requirement for any project to be supported by both match funding and a Bus Service Improvement Partnership as promoted through the new Transport Bill. To help develop a baseline they have asked RTP's to collate a list of existing Bus Priority schemes in each area.

The criteria against which potential projects will be assessed is still to be developed so there is an opportunity for us to also provide evidence on how the scheme can best support the dual objectives of tackling congestion and increasing bus usage in the HITRANS area. At the recent Confederation for Passenger Transport (CPT) conference the Cabinet Secretary reiterated his desire for the fund to be allocated towards ambitious stepchange bus priority projects.

There are real opportunities to develop ambitious bus priority initiatives within Inverness and perhaps a couple of other locations in the HITRANS area. However, it should also be highlighted that funding for operating bus services and basic supporting infrastructure (park and ride, high quality information and waiting shelters) rather than schemes specifically tackling congestion is key to increasing patronage in much of the HITRANS area.

### **Recommendation:**

Members are invited to:

1. Note the Report
2. Consider opportunities for Local Authorities and HITRANS under this Programme for Government commitment
3. Invite Transport Scotland officials and local bus operators to an event with local authorities, HITRANS and other key local stakeholders

RTS Delivery

Impact - Positive

Comment – Local bus services support a number of RTS priorities relating to Public Transport and access to employment.

Policy

Impact - Positive

Comment –

Financial

Impact – Neutral

Comment - There is no direct impact on HITRANS but it is anticipated that match funding will be a required within any applications seeking a funding award towards from this Programme for Government commitment.

Equality

Impact – Positive

Comment – Local Bus services help improve access to many of the most vulnerable groups within the area and also provide what can be described as a lifeline service to those communities where the local bus service is the only form of public transport available.

**Report by:**

**Designation:**

**Date:**

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Partnership Manager

5<sup>th</sup> November 2019