

Report to Partnership Meeting 28 November 2014

RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY

Green Bus Fund

Purpose of Report

To advise Members on outcome of the latest round of Green Bus Fund support for projects in the Highlands and Islands.

Background

The Scottish Government introduced the Green Bus Fund to support the roll out of low carbon buses throughout Scotland. The latest round of funding is the fifth and represents the largest allocation to the fund to date with a total budget of £4.75milion.

Funding applications were invited from the following organisations:

- Bus Operators (including Community transport operators)
- Local Authorities
- Regional Transport Partnerships
- Vehicle Leasing Companies (those renting / leasing to the above bodies in Scotland)

The fund offers successful bidders up to 80% of the price differential between a new low carbon bus and its diesel equivalent.

Successful Projects in the Highlands and Islands

Two proposals submitted by organisations and operators in the Highlands and Islands secured funding through the fifth round of the Green Bus Fund. These are detailed below.

Inverness

Stagecoach North Scotland submitted an application to the project for the additional costs involved in deploying five plug in electric Optare Solo buses on their service 7 (City Centre to Lochardil, Ardross Terrace and Culduthel Farm) and service 9 (South Kessock to Raigmore Estate via City Centre) with fast charge points at Stagecoach's Seafield Road bus depot. The total Green Bus Fund budget allocation for the buses and charging infrastructure at the Stagecoach depot in Inverness is £477,865.

In developing this proposal Stagecoach approached HITRANS and Highland Council to ask if we would fund a fast charge point at Inverness Bus Station which would allow top up charging during layover time at the Bus Station optimising the time the buses can spend in service. This proposal was agreed in principle with an allocation of £15,000 identified from the Research and Strategy Delivery Programme under the support of External Funding Applications.

Orkney

Orkney Islands Council secured a grant of £97,650 from the Green Bus Fund towards the purchase of a new Optare Solo SR plug in electric bus and associated charging infrastructure.

The Council also agreed further match funding from the Scottish Government's Future Transport Low Carbon Vehicle funding and has previously secured funding for EV Charging Infrastructure. This last has removed the need for any funding support from HITRANS towards the project.

The bus is planned for service on the Kirkwall town centre to Kirkwall Airport service.

Recommendations

Members are asked to :-

- (i) Note the report.
- (ii) Approve the allocation of £15,000 from the Research and Strategy Delivery programme budget for External Funding Application Support to fund the Inverness Bus Station Fast Charge System.

Risk	Impact	Comment
RTS delivery	√	The project supports HITRANS RTS themes on low carbon passenger transport.
Policy	√	The item supports HITRANS contribution to the Climate Change Delivery Plan.
Financial	√	The project will have a positive financial impact as it will draw down additional funding.
Equality	√	The new buses will be low floor and easy access.

Report by: Ranald Robertson
Designation: Partnership Director
Date: 17th November 2014