

Development and submission of bid to the Scottish Government's Bus Partnership Fund on behalf of Glasgow City Region agreed etc.

14 There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive, North Lanarkshire Council, Transport and Connectivity Portfolio Lead, seeking approval to submit a bid on behalf of the Glasgow City Region Bus Partnership (the Partnership) to the Scottish Government's Bus Partnership Fund (BPF) for bus priority interventions across the Glasgow City Region (GCR), advising

- (1) that the bid was currently being developed by the Partnership, which had brought together the 8 GCR local authorities, Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT), bus operators and bus passenger representative groups, to secure funds from the BPF and any successor funds or funding opportunities, and of the Terms of Reference of the Partnership, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report;
- (2) that the Partnership was seeking to improve connectivity, safety and wellbeing in the GCR, restore confidence in bus services following COVID-19, accounting for any subsequent changes in transport needs and to reverse the historic decline in bus use by promoting bus as a prime means of passenger transport and a core component in the delivery of wider transformational strategies, with a target of 25% passenger growth between 2022 and 2027;
- (3) that the BPF had first been announced as part of the 2019 Programme for Government whereby as part of its response to the climate emergency, the Scottish Government had committed to investing £500m over 5 years to deliver targeted bus priority measures on local and trunk roads, and having been formally launched in 2020 as a competitive fund, the BPF had been structured in 2 phases, as detailed in the report;
- (4) that while the funding programme covered 5 years, quick win projects for delivery in 2021/22 were also requested to support early scheme delivery and furthermore Transport Scotland had suggested that bidders might also wish to identify schemes for delivery beyond the initial 5-year period in case future funding commitments by the Scottish Government allowed Transport Scotland to extend the fund;
- (5) that a long list of bus priority proposals had been identified for assessment and inclusion in the bid and throughout the early development of the bid there had been consensus among the Partnership that the focus of work should be on prioritising bus priority on routes that benefited the greatest number of passengers, with options being grouped into 3 key funding themes, as detailed in the report;
- (6) of a proposal to submit a bid amounting to between £200m and £250m for investment in bus priority interventions across the GCR, with costs for the bid being sought solely from the BPF and no additional funding from partner authorities, although City Deal funding alongside other committed funding would be highlighted to strengthen the bid, as detailed in the report; and

- (7) that the final bid document would not be completed until after this meeting and that due to the extremely tight timescales involved in preparing and submitting the bid, which was required to be submitted by 16th April 2021, it was proposed that final sign-off of the bid be delegated to the Chair of the Transport and Connectivity Portfolio Group, as detailed in the report.

After consideration, the Cabinet

- (a) noted the report and the work of the Partnership in bringing together all 8 GCR local authorities, SPT, bus operators and other bus interest groups to agree areas of joint work in developing a bid to the BPF; and
- (b) approved the submission of the bid to the Scottish Government's BPF by Glasgow City Council on behalf of the GCR, and that final sign-off of the bid be delegated to the Chair of the Transport and Connectivity Portfolio Group; and
- (c) noted that an update report would be submitted to the Chief Executives' Group and this Cabinet detailing the progress of the bid and setting out options for resourcing the ongoing project management of the programme.