

# The Highland Council

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Report No</b>	<b>ECI/06/24</b>

**Committee:** Economy and Infrastructure

**Date:** 15 February 2024

**Report Title:** Bus Partnership Fund Update and Changes to Active Travel Funding

**Report By:** Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy

## 1 Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update of Bus Partnership Fund Projects and to update on the development of a Bus Service Improvement Partnership. It is intended that this report will provide members with a view of the funding landscape for the Bus Partnership Fund beyond the 23/24 financial year. In addition, changes to Active Travel funding were announced by Transport Scotland while this report was being written and a brief interim update on this element is provided.

## 2 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:-

- i. **Note** the confirmed pause on the Bus Partnership Fund by Transport Scotland for the 24/25 financial year;
- ii. **Note** the progress of the Bus Partnership Fund within the Highland Council to date and outstanding work on the project beyond the 23/24 financial year; and
- iii. **Note** the changes announced by Transport Scotland to Active Travel Funding from 24/25 and that officers will bring a further paper to committee once more information has been received from Transport Scotland.

## 3 Implications

3.1 **Resource** – There is dedicated resource in place for the development of the Bus Partnership Fund (BPF) projects until the end of the 2023/24 financial year. This resource is externally funded by Transport Scotland so there is no direct resource implication on The Highland Council. This funding stream employs a Project Manager (Acting Up) and a Project Officer on secondment from an external organisation.

There has been no dedicated funding stream for the development of a Bus Service Improvement Partnership (BSIP). Much of this work has been done utilising the existing resource in place for the BPF with the work carried out on top of the existing BPF workload.

At the time of writing, funding for the Bus Partnership Fund projects have been placed on pause beyond the end of the 2023/24 financial year. There will be some resource implications as a result of this decision. Officers are working with Transport Scotland to determine the extent of this implication.

In respect of the announcement by Transport Scotland to the changes of Active Travel Funding the resource implications are unknown at this stage until further clarification is provided to officers.

- 3.2 **Legal** – Sections 35-37 (Bus Service Improvement Partnerships) and Section 38 (Local Services Franchising) of the Transport Scotland Act (2019) came into force on 4 December 2023. Further substantive regulations are required to give these powers full effect. It is Transport Scotland's intentions to introduce secondary legislation throughout 2024.

Until such a time that these powers come into full effect, there is a view of putting a voluntary Bus Service Improvement Partnership (BSIP) in place until the secondary legislation is published, and THC, alongside the BSIP Steering Group, can move through the statutory process of forming a formal BSIP.

The BPF Project Team, with input from the BSIP Steering Group, have drafted a BSIP Plan and sit in an external monthly meeting with other Local Authorities across Scotland to discuss guidance released from Transport Scotland and to establish the most productive way to move forward with a BSIP.

No implications in respect to the changes announced to Active Travel Funding.

- 3.3 **Community (Equality, Poverty, Rural and Island)** – The BPF aims to improve bus infrastructure, reliability, and services with the potential of providing communities with increased access to key provisions and services. One of the main outcomes of and criteria for the BPF grant is to provide high-quality bus services which contribute to the four priorities of the NTS2 vision – to reduce inequality, take climate action, help deliver inclusive growth and improved health and wellbeing.

Active Travel Funding aims to improve options for people to walk, wheel & cycle, which are typically low or zero cost travel options and therefore accessible to all socioeconomic groups. Active travel Project implementation will include Equalities, Poverty and human rights impact assessments. The Active Travel team are already working with the team delivering the Council's new Integrated Impact Assessment process.

- 3.4 **Climate Change / Carbon Clever** – The BPF grant criteria supports the Council's aims around climate change. One of the main aims of the BPF Grant is to reduce congestion through an improved bus service and to encourage a modal shift from cars to more sustainable transport, reducing emissions.

The paper sets out tangible ways to decarbonise transport in Highland, and therefore offers positive implications for the Climate and Ecological Emergency. Officers will continue to work with the Climate & Energy teams and with 'Highland Adapts' to maximise co-benefits.

- 3.5 **Risk** – With the BPF Fund being placed on pause for the 2024/25 financial year, there are risks to the completion of each of the projects. Implications of the pause and the risk it poses to each project are considered throughout this report, however it should be noted at the time of writing this report there are still many unknowns in respect of some of the implications. The BPF Team will continue to work with Transport Scotland to seek alternative funding solutions to some of the projects throughout the 2024/25 financial year where possible.

In respect of the announcement by Transport Scotland to the changes to Active Travel Funding it should be highlighted that there could be potential risks( i.e. the ability to secure match funding) to the projects that require external funding/resources for their development and delivery. Specific risks are unknown at this stage and officers will be seeking further clarification.

- 3.6 **Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)** – There are no direct health and safety risks arising from the BPF. All BPF projects follow Health and Safety regulations managed by project teams.

There are no direct health & safety risks associated with the changes in Active Travel Funding.

- 3.7 **Gaelic** – There are no direct Gaelic implications from the BPF or Active Travel Funding changes.

#### **4 Bus Partnership Fund & Bus Service Improvement Partnership Overview and Funding Landscape**

- 4.1 Overview: The Bus Service Improvement Partnerships (BSIPs) are one of the provisions introduced by the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019. They are intended to support improvements in bus services by partnership working between local authorities and bus operators. Highland Council, HITRANS and Bus Operators are currently working on the formation of a formal BSIP for Inner Moray Firth and Lochaber. A steering group meets every two weeks to discuss projects and related BSIP matters.
- 4.2 The intention of the BSIP is that Councils will invest in facilities (i.e. infrastructure such as bus lanes or traffic light priorities) and measures (i.e. initiatives, other than infrastructure, designed to promote bus use) and operators will develop their services, for example by higher frequencies or new, better buses.
- 4.3 To enable Councils to invest in facilities, the Scottish Government introduced a Bus Partnership Fund (BPF), delivered by Transport Scotland of £500m over 5 years.
- 4.4 The Highland Council secured Phase 1 funding of £2.9m for 7 projects in the Inner Moray Firth & 3 projects in Lochaber. There is potential that a further £47m could be secured for further phases of specific projects subject to a gateway review by Transport Scotland.

- 4.5 The BPF projects have varying degrees of scale and complexity. Some require further investigative work through the use of Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) before proceeding to Transport Scotland Gateway Review and on to design and construction. There are four STAG Appraisal projects within the BPF, with the remainder classed as short-term projects.
- 4.6 Project Funding: On 16 January 2024, the BPF Project Team received a letter from Transport Scotland (**Appendix 1**) indicating that BPF would be paused for the 2024/25 financial year due to budgetary constraints. The letter goes on to confirm that fund spend for the remainder of 2023/24 financial year will proceed as planned for the delivery of bus infrastructure projects underway and to conclude business case work planned that could inform future investment.
- 4.7 Whilst it is the aim of the Project Team to deliver as many of the projects as possible before the end of the 2023/24 financial year, it is recognised that there is outstanding work on several of the projects, particularly the STAG appraisals. Risks of the funding pause on each project are detailed throughout this report as part of the Project Updates.

## **5 Project Updates – Inner Moray Firth Raigmore Bus Gate**

- 5.1 Overview: A new bus gate from Raigmore Hospital to Raigmore Housing estate has been agreed as part of the BPF to assist in the improvement of the public transport network and mitigate transport impacts of new development in the area. The bus gate is a direct link between Raigmore Estate and Raigmore Hospital for buses and emergency vehicles. It will remove a substantial portion of bus traffic, from the already congested entrance of Raigmore Hospital onto the B9006 and Inshes Corridor. This improvement has been an aspiration of all stakeholders for many years.
- 5.2 Project Update: The Raigmore Bus Gate is now nearing completion with most of the construction complete. Installation for an ANPR Barrier allowing access to the bus gate by buses and emergency services is due to begin on 29 January. A handover period with NHSH is expected to allow their adoption of the bus gate and a trial period by bus operators is to be arranged. The project team aspire to have the bus gate open by the end of March 2024.

Phase 3 of the project is still to be completed. This is the installation of a replacement grounds building for the one demolished in Phase 1 of the project. Tenders received for the replacement building came back significantly over budget and so a no award was given. The Project Team are working with NHSH to reach an agreement on a reduced scope for the building in a bid to reduce costs. Given the 31 March deadline, the Project Team are working with NHSH to reach agreement and commence works as soon as possible to ensure delivery on the final part of this project however, there is a significant timescale risk to the delivery of Phase 3 and the ultimate completion of this project.

## **6 City Centre Traffic Light Prioritisation**

- 6.1 Overview: To assist in the delivery of more reliable and punctual bus services throughout the centre of Inverness, upgrades are being carried out on twenty traffic light junctions at key locations as well as upgrades to the on-bus ticket machines aboard Stagecoach buses. These upgrades will enable these traffic lights to react to real-time information sent from the on-board ticket machines on the buses. This real-time information provided will determine if the vehicle requires priority at the junction and then the Traffic Lights will react accordingly.
- 6.2 Project Update: The original twenty sites were successfully upgraded and activated on the 28 February 2023. An additional six further traffic light sites have been identified by the Highland Council and further funding sought to enable the upgrades of these sites. Work on the additional six sites is nearing completion and the sites should be operational by the end of February 2024. The Project Team are working to establish a monitoring and evaluation plan for this project. Given the completion date within the 23/24 financial year, there are no implications of the funding pause on this project.

## **7 Rose Street Enforcement Camera**

- 7.1 Overview: Bus services departing from Farraline Bus Station have historically had to access Margaret Street, followed by either a left or right tight turn on to Academy Street. Margaret Street was also accessed by Private Cars and Taxis, causing a bottle neck and delays for departing Bus services. By utilising the available funding from the Bus Route Rapid Development Fund, a new dedicated bus link (referred to as Foundry Way Bus Link) was created linking Farraline Bus Station directly to Rose Street.
- 7.2 Project Update: An Enforcement Camera, funded by the Bus Partnership Fund, has been installed along the Foundry Way Bus Link to deter unauthorised traffic from using this Bus Link. This camera was recently removed during construction works near to the site; however arrangements are being made for its reinstallation. As this project has reached completion, there are no implications arising from the decision to pause the BPF.

## **8 Torvean Mobility Hub**

- 8.1 Overview: The Highland Council have secured match funding from the BPF to build a mobility hub at a site by Torvean, this will be the first of its kind in the Highland Council area. The Hub is expected to have bicycle, car, motorcycle parking alongside EV Charging and Real Time Information Displays at the bus shelter. The Project Team are working alongside bus operators to agree an operating model for the hub once opened and to determine service frequency to the Hub.
- 8.2 Project Update: With funding only in place for the Mobility Hub until the end of the financial year, works are expected to begin at Torvean Mobility Hub on 22 January 2024. The project completion date is estimated for mid-March with services beginning shortly after. Given the described budgetary constraints, the Project must proceed on course with the established programme in order to see completion by 31 March 2024.

## **9 Barn Church Road Bus Priority Measures**

- 9.1 Overview: Budget was originally allocated from the BPF to consider bus priority measures on Barn Church Road. After consultation with elected Members from this Ward, it was decided that this project would not be taken forward at that time due to the proximity with ongoing plans for the A96 duelling and the potential of a Mobility Hub at Stratton as part of the development there. Options for bus priority at this location would be best considered at a later date when these projects have progressed to more detailed stage to ensure effective alignment. Funding for this project was reallocated to carry out upgrades on the additional six traffic light priority sites in the Inverness area.

## **10 B9006 Bus Priority (STAG Appraisal)**

- 10.1 Overview: AECOM have been commissioned to conduct a study based on Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) for the B9006 transport corridor from Birchwood Road to Raigmore Hospital in Inverness. The B9006 Corridor is a route heavily congested by car-based commuters, particularly at the Inshes roundabout (B9006/A8082 intersection). The importance of the B9006 is highlighted by the fact there are several major employment destinations at Inshes. The study will build upon the existing body of work contained within the initial funding application submitted to the BPF and other work undertaken in the area.
- 10.2 Project Update: Due to the tie in of this project with Inshes Junction, at the request of Transport Scotland, this project was placed on pause until a planning decision was reached on the progression of the Inshes Junction Project. A decision is expected Spring 2024.

The STAG report is still outstanding on this project. Discussions are ongoing with Consultants to determine if this report can be finalised before the end of the financial year so a preferred option can then be taken forward for consideration by Committee, however, with the planning decision on Inshes Junction still outstanding, there is a risk that this work will not be complete before the end of the 2023/24 financial year.

## **11 Millburn Road Corridor – STAG Appraisal**

- 11.1 Overview: Stantec were commissioned to undertake a multi-modal transport study following the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance to appraise and develop active travel (walking, wheeling and cycling) and sustainable transport options for the Millburn Road Corridor in Inverness.
- 11.2 Project Update: A STAG Report appraising and developing active travel and sustainable transport options on the Millburn Road Corridor was submitted to BPF Team for review. Since then, following the advice of Transport Scotland, an additional piece of design work followed by microsimulation modelling is to be carried out on the corridor to determine the impacts the proposed options will have on traffic in and around the area. This piece of work should enable an evidence based preferred option to be brought to Committee for approval and for further public consultation to be carried out.

It is unlikely that this piece of work will be complete by the end of the 2023/24 financial year. The BPF Project Team are working with Transport Scotland to identify potential alternative funding streams to take this project forward.

## **12 Connecting Inverness – STAG Appraisal**

- 12.1 Overview: In June 2022, WSP was commissioned by THC to take forward an appraisal of bus focused options within Inverness and the immediate surrounds following the STAG process. Following Initial Appraisal, retained options were developed into five packages which were then subject to Preliminary Appraisal.
- 12.2 Project Update: Of the five packages developed, two are being taken forward by WSP, at the request of Transport Scotland, to produce an evidence based preferred option for a Mobility Hub at either Tore or North Kessock. After this work has been concluded, the preferred option will be taken to Committee for approval before proceeding to Transport Scotland's Gateway Review Panel. It is expected that this additional piece of work will be complete by the end of the financial year. Discussions will need to be held on how to progress with this project should the BPF be resumed beyond the 2024/25 financial year.

## **13 Project Updates - Lochaber Blar Mhor Bus Link**

- 13.1 Overview: On the North-east of the A830, there is a large new residential development, medical centre, Lochaber High School and the site for the new Hospital. At present these sites have two separate access off the A830. The proposal for this project is to provide a new bus only link between the new Blar Mhor housing development (and proposed hospital site) and the medical centre. As a result of the time savings from this measure, the local bus operator would be able to serve both destinations and maintain the current timetable frequency without the need incur the costs of an additional bus working.
- 13.2 Project Update: Discussions are ongoing with landowners to agree the lease of the land and the designs drafted by THC's Principal Design Team. Once agreement is reached, the procurement exercise for the build will begin. It is estimated that the construction phase of the project will take between eight and twelve weeks. The estimated programme for procurement and construction works for the Blar Mhor Bus Link exceeds the 31 March deadline. Negotiations will need to be held with landowners to re-establish agreement to proceed with this project should the BPF be resumed beyond the 2024/25 financial year.

## **14 Upper Achintore Bus Link**

- 14.1 Overview: The current road pattern does not enable a bus route to serve the new residential development at Upper Achintore (Heathercroft Drive) and the older housing around Lochaber Road where there is a well-established bus route. Introducing a new bus only link between the new residential development and Lochaber Road would enable both developments to be served by the same service thus removing the need for an additional bus working as well as the added benefit of improve connectivity between the two residential areas and Fort William town centre.

14.2 Project Update: This project was placed on pause until a decision was reached by the Scottish Government on the second phase of the new housing development at the site. Two options to progress this project have been presented to Transport Scotland for consideration, one if the development goes ahead and the second, without confirmation of the development's progression. This project will not be completed by the end of the financial year. Discussions will need to be held on how to progress with this project should the BPF be resumed beyond the 2024/25 financial year.

## 15 Lochaber STAG Appraisal

15.1 Overview: As part of the BPF, Jacobs have been commissioned to undertake a Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG)-based appraisal of bus-based options in and around Fort William.

15.2 Project Update: The STAG Report outlines several bus-based options in and around Fort William. Discussions have been held to try and determine link up with the FW2040 Masterplan. It is expected, similar to the other BPF STAG Appraisals, that Jacobs will be required to conduct an additional piece of work to determine an evidence based preferred option that can be taken to Committee for approval before progressing to Transport Scotland Evaluation Panel. This work will not be concluded before the end of the financial year. Discussions will need to be held on how to progress with this project should the BPF be resumed beyond the 2024/25 financial year.

## 16 Active Travel Funding Changes

16.1 Overview: Please see attached **Appendices 2 and 3**

In summary the previous Active Travel Transformation Fund (ATTF) will be replaced with the Active Travel Infrastructure Fund (ATIF), and this will be delivered on a tiered model basis:-

Tier 1 Block Grant to all 32 LA's which will have two elements one which will include a specific amount which will replace Cycling, Walking and safer Routes to Schools (CWSR) and a further element to spend on activity across the active travel system. Tier 1 block grant will not require match funding. No information on the individual LA amounts has been provided although we are aware that the Scottish Government budget for active travel 2024/25 for Scotland (and assuming it includes all aspects Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3 and Behaviour Change via Regional Transport Partnership RTP) is £220m.

Tier 2 which Highland Council would be deemed eligible to apply for is for construction ready projects. An example of this would be Wick High Street and several projects led by our Road Safety team. Match funding will be required but no detail on intervention rate has been provided.

Tier 3 is similar to Tier 2 but is for ambitious & strategic projects. The guidance states there is also a match contribution required but no detail on likely intervention rate.

Deadline for all applications for Tier 2 and 3 is 2 February 2024 and officers are currently identifying projects which can be delivered in 2024/25.



## 16.2 Next Steps

Officers will seek further guidance from Transport Scotland on the implication of the changes to the Bus Partnership & Active Travel Funding landscape and report back to Members at the next appropriate committee.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy

Date: 30th January 2024

Author: Lucy Burnside, Project Manager – Bus Partnership Fund,  
Neil Young , Active Travel Manager,  
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Julie Cromarty, Sustainable Transport Team Leader

Background Papers: None

Appendices: Appendix 1 - Transport Scotland Letter - BPF Pause  
Appendix 2 – Active Travel Bulletin – Transport Scotland  
Appendix 3 – ATIF – Application FAQs for Delivery Partners

**Bus, Accessibility & Active Travel**  
Bettina Sizeland

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Your ref:

Our ref:  
BPF009, BPF011

Date:  
16 January 2024

Dear Tracey,

## Bus Partnership Fund Update

I am writing to you on behalf of your Bus Partnership Fund (BPF) to provide you with an update on the BPF following the recent budget announcement.

We have provided £26.9 million of funding for bus priority through the BPF through two rounds of funding, the first in June 2021 and subsequent round in February 2022. Through the Partnership working undertaken by yourselves in Local Authorities, in collaboration with Bus Operators and others, this has delivered bus priority improvements on the ground and robust business cases across a number of Partnership areas.

However, I am writing to inform you that given the budgetary constraints faced the BPF will be paused for 2024-25. Please be assured that fund spend will proceed as planned for 2023-24 to complete the delivery of the bus infrastructure underway for the benefit of passengers and operators and conclude business case work planned that could inform future investment.

This pausing presents an opportunity to recast bus priority projects within the wider work to be undertaken to deliver on our vision for the Future of Public Transport. This builds on the Fair Fares Review work that is planned to be published in early 2024.

In this context we will continue to make the case for bus priority projects which could be supported as part of an integrated approach to bus service improvement. This will be assisted by the robust business cases produced through the BPF. As you will be aware this already highlights the opportunities for an integrated place-based approach and in many Partnership areas considers the needs of active travel and bus together to meet shared outcomes.

The multi-modal corridor approach adopted by the Highland Inverness Partnership on Millburn Road may therefore be well placed to draw on other potential 2024-25 funding sources, particularly given the significant active travel elements on some corridors. We are seeking what

opportunities there may be to progress these and will feedback once we have explored these further.

We have welcomed the Partnership working that is on-going to support the bus priority work undertaken through the BPF to date. In many areas these have provided a valuable forum for discussion and work beyond BPF. We trust that these will continue for the benefit of those involved, and ultimately passengers.

As you are aware the Scottish Government encourages all local transport authorities to consider the full range of tools available to them under the 2019 Act, to ensure that everyone has accessible public transport regardless of where they are in Scotland and we look forward to the continued Partnership working demonstrated through the BPF to support you in this.

Finally, I would like to extend my thanks to you, your fellow officers and the wider Partnership for the work and dedication that has gone into the BPF supported projects and business cases. The work undertaken will be valuable in informing future investment decisions.

Yours sincerely,

Bettina Sizeland  
Director, Bus, Accessibility and Active Travel

c.c. Julie Cromarty, Robert Andrew, Neil MacRae, Craig Cameron, Amy Phillips



## Transport Scotland – Active Travel Transformation

January 2024

### **Purpose**

This note provides Local Authorities, Regional Transport Partnerships, National Park Authorities and national delivery partners with an update on a number of changes proposed through Active Travel transformation. It updates on intended delivery models for both infrastructure and behaviour change, and provides practical information on the Active Travel Infrastructure Fund.

It is to be noted that we continue to engage with CoSLA on these delivery models.

### **Background**

The Active Travel Transformation Project was established to ensure that our increasing investment in Active Travel results in the kind of transformative change we all want to see. The scale of growth in funding in recent years means we have to look at how we deliver, not just how much we spend. Through the Project we have engaged with our partners to develop an improved system for Active Travel delivery in Scotland – one which delivers infrastructure quickly and efficiently to a high standard and in a planned and cohesive fashion, which enables people to make walking, wheeling and cycling their primary mode of transport for short, everyday journeys.

Transport Scotland undertook a significant programme of engagement through the Project to gather evidence and assess the existing landscape. This has informed a number of recommendations and changes for us to build into a new delivery model.

While elements of improved delivery have already been realised through the Transformation Project, including the Transformation Fund, the implementation of a major change programme for Active Travel delivery will commence from 2024-25. We are now writing to advise you of a number of intended changes to how Transport Scotland will deliver Active Travel in Scotland from 2024-25. Further detail will be provided in due course, with a further update to follow in the coming weeks.

### **Active Travel Transformation – Infrastructure Delivery**

In the context of year on year increases in investment in Active Travel, our primary focus will be on investing in high quality Active Travel infrastructure, to make walking, wheeling and cycling safer and easier for more people in communities right across the country. We will continue to invest in interventions to help people choose Active Travel, particularly where it relates to accessing local infrastructure.

Recognising the need to ensure the delivery model for infrastructure is suitable for navigating both the challenges ahead and the opportunities that a significant increase in Active Travel investment will bring, a collaborative approach was

undertaken with stakeholders to inform design and implementation of a new approach .

In December 2022, a new [Transformation Fund](#) was launched to trial a new approach to delivery. This provides funding for approved projects directly to successful applicants (Local Authorities (LAs), Regional Transport Partnerships (RTPs) and National Park Authorities (NPAs)), and focusses on projects that are construction-ready. More recently, the [Verity House Agreement](#) (June 2023) confirmed the direction of travel towards more direct funding to LAs and for local control over that budget, with a driving principle of 'local by default, national by agreement'.

### **Tiered Delivery**

It is intended that a Tiered Delivery Model will be implemented from 2024-25. The key themes of this model are summarised below:

#### **Tier 1**

- All LAs to receive capital funding through block grant allocation (previously CWSR).
- Distribution methodology to be developed and agreed with CoSLA prior to awarding in April.
- TS to have oversight and advise of key measurables for funding e.g. regarding outcomes data, and ability to track benefits.
- Match-free block grant for spend on activity across the Active Travel system - an integrated programme of infrastructure design and construction projects, with embedded behaviour change interventions to drive walking, wheeling and cycling.

#### **Tier 2**

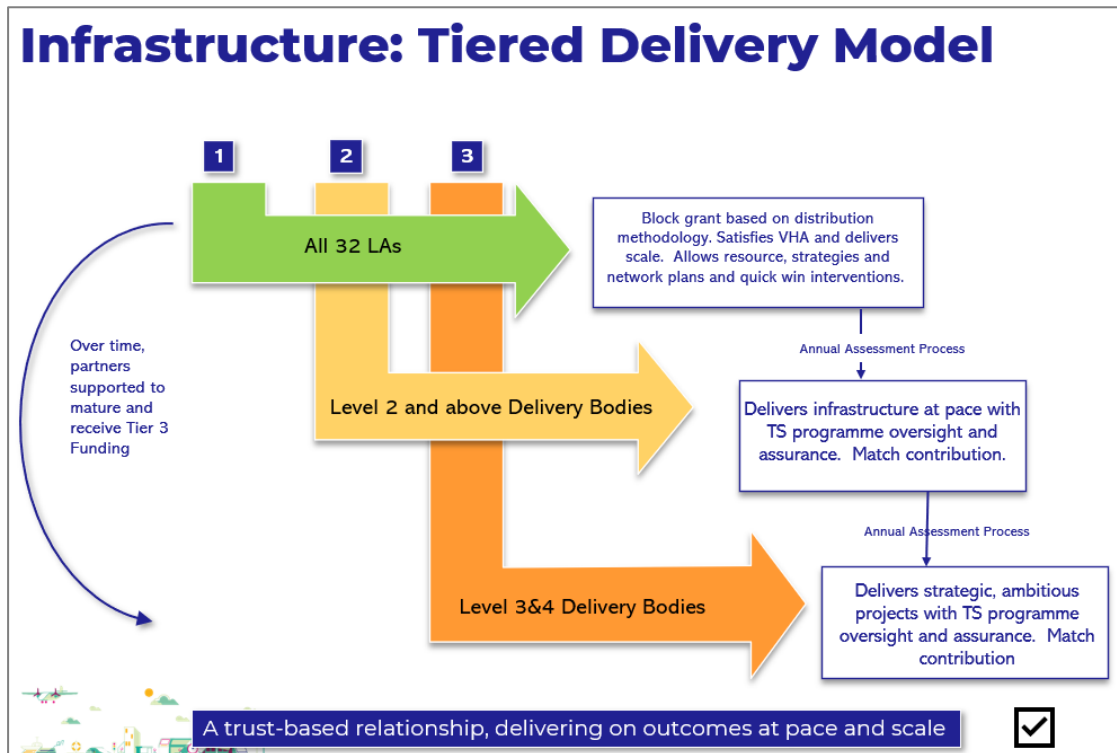
- Programme funding prioritised for those LAs most ready and able to deliver infrastructure quickly, with a project pipeline ready for construction in that financial year.
- This Tier may be expected to *broadly* cover those LAs assessed at Level 2 and above through the 2023-24 Transformation Fund process.
- Match contributions will be expected dependent on the size and nature of projects. In particular, funding contributions are to be provided by recipients for non-core elements such as placemaking, public realm features and benefits accrued by non-Active Travel modes.
- Similar principles as 2023-24 Transformation Fund to be applied, regarding reporting, benefits tracking, and management. LAs to report against progress and manage funds within their programme in discussion with TS (enabling project acceleration/ deceleration through the financial year as required).
- Successful projects to include supporting behaviour change initiatives that will ensure impact of the new infrastructure. It is for LAs/ RTPs/NPAs to identify delivery partners for support on this.

#### **Tier 3**

- Similar to Tier 2, the most ambitious and strategic projects (may include public transport integration) may be provided with funding.

- This Tier may be expected to *broadly* cover those LAs assessed as Level 3 and Level 4 through the Transformation Fund process.

The image below illustrates the Tiered Delivery Model



This approach will create a pathway for a greater number of LAs to qualify for a greater degree of funding through the direct funding model.

It is intended that the new tiered model will be introduced from April 2024. As part of the transition towards this new model, we will commence a wind-down of Sustrans' Places for Everyone Programme which will be completed by December 2025.

It is proposed that Sustrans will continue to manage existing construction projects and see them through where finishing prior to December 2025, and for **2024-25, Sustrans will continue to fund and manage concept to design stages of projects (0-4)**. Organisations other than LAs/RTPs/NPAs delivering projects that were previously funded by Sustrans will continue to be supported through the transition period to the end of December 2025.

## **Active Travel Infrastructure Fund – Applications for 2024-25**

The 2024-25 Active Travel Infrastructure Fund builds on the 2023-24 Active Travel Transformation Fund, and is available to the following partners to support delivery of eligible **construction-ready** Active Travel schemes in 2024-25:

- Local Authorities;
- Regional Transport Partnerships; and
- National Park Authorities.

Delivery partners are invited to complete their application on the [Citizen Space](#) portal for eligible 'construction-ready' Active Travel projects for delivery in 2024-25 and do not need to undertake a self-assessment (as had been a requirement for the 2023-24 Transformation Fund). Guidance and information on how to complete the 'construction-ready' application has been provided and this will be updated throughout the application period. The timescale for Fund applications is as follows:

- Applications open for submission - 5 January 2024;
- Applications due - 2 February 2024;
- Assessment of applications and follow up with a view to complete the assessment – end February to mid-March;
- Provide grant offer letter - early April 2024; and
- Construction funding from April 2024 to March 2025 (annual budget).

## **Behaviour Change Delivery Model**

With the introduction of the Verity House Agreement, and the move to increased funding and control toward LAs, it is important we take steps to increase the capacity and capability in LAs to ensure conditions are right for the benefits of future Active Travel investment to be realised. The long-term success of Active Travel depends on a closer relationship between infrastructure delivery and behaviour change activities.

Behaviour change programmes remain absolutely central to how we deliver on our vision as set out in the [Active Travel Framework](#), and the more recently published [Cycling Framework for Active Travel](#), and our delivery partners are critical to the success of this. However, *how* we deliver these interventions needs to change to give greater coherence and result in more people choosing walking, cycling and wheeling for everyday journeys.

Engagement has been on-going with delivery partners, LA representatives and RTPs since August to identify a suitable delivery model. Transport Scotland can advise that for 2024-25, it is intended that RTPs will receive funding directly to coordinate delivery (supported by delivery partners) of a People and Place Programme, comprised of interventions identified as priorities with their respective LAs across the following key themes:

- Schools and Young People
- Workplaces
- Accessibility and Inclusion
- Capacity and Capability Building

This means that with the exception of a small number of programmes (e.g. accredited training programmes with a strong emphasis on safety), there will be no programmes directly funded by Transport Scotland. Delivery partners will continue to have a vitally important role to play in the delivery of behaviour change and access to bikes interventions, and are already engaged with RTPs to support delivery of the 24-25 programme. RTPs are also engaging with LAs to ensure priorities for 2024-25 are identified and agreed, then communicated to delivery partners who can develop solutions and offers of support to address local challenges.

As part of our transition to the new model, alongside the direct funding to RTPs, we are considering two funding streams, intended to provide continuity for those projects and roles that play a critical role in delivery of active travel outcomes:

- A Community Projects Transition Fund, managed by Paths for All, will be available for community-led projects that align with the key themes of the People and Place Programme.
- With the closure of the SCSP Programme, we appreciate there will be a number of roles that had previously been supported by the LA Fund that would be at risk, and indeed proposed roles that would not be possible in the absence of available funding. We are considering direct resource funding to local authorities for the purpose of maintaining support for existing roles and projects or creating support for those deemed essential to the delivery of active travel outcomes (primarily effecting a modal shift toward active travel for everyday journeys). We therefore encourage LAs to continue to work on proposals they may have had in development in anticipation of the LA Fund. Transport Scotland will advise shortly on how this funding will be provided and reported on.

### **Future updates**

We intend to provide a further update on Active Travel infrastructure and behaviour change delivery for 2024-25 in the coming weeks. All proposed funding is subject to the Scottish Government Budget for 24-25 passing through parliament and Transport Scotland's budget governance process.

Active Travel Team  
Transport Scotland

23 January 2024



## Active Travel Infrastructure Fund (ATIF) – Frequently Asked Questions

### Application Process and Timelines

1. Is it necessary to submit a separate application for each project?
  - Yes, the application form is designed to be completed separately for each project. Area-wide schemes that have a number of components (e.g. modal filters, speed reduction measures, cycle parking, pavement widening) can be submitted as one application, as could a collection of minor works across a larger area (e.g. installation of cycle hangers). If you are unsure, you can contact [ATTFund@transport.gov.scot](mailto:ATTFund@transport.gov.scot) for advice prior to submitting.
2. How many construction-ready projects can we submit?
  - There is no limit to the number of projects a partner can submit. Each project will be assessed individually by an independent technical advisor and funding awarded to those projects meeting the criteria and scoring highest.
  - Partners are encouraged to submit applications only for construction-ready projects. If it is expected that the full project cannot be delivered in 2024/25, partners should provide detailed and estimated costs for those elements of the project which can be delivered in 2025/26. If successful this will be prioritised for funding in future years, subject to future years' budget availability and internal Transport Scotland assurance/approval processes.
3. Can we resubmit projects that were submitted last year but were unsuccessful or were put on the reserve list?
  - Yes. Unsuccessful projects can be submitted again. We would underline the importance of any relevant feedback being taken on board for projects that had not been successful last year.
4. My project was assessed successful to receive funding last year (2023/24), but due to reasons outwith project control (for example, land owner issues, drainage, etc) we could not deliver them. Do we need to resubmit my application for this project?
  - If the project was assessed successful last year (2023/24) and the project costs haven't changed significantly, please contact the ATIF project team to discuss further.
5. When will successful projects be confirmed for funding?
  - We appreciate the need for prompt approval. We aim to complete the assessment of projects by mid-March 2024 and will notify partners of the outcome as soon as possible thereafter.
6. Is there a maximum amount of funding that we can apply for?
  - There is no maximum amount per partner, however Transport Scotland will always seek to realise best value for money and will expect to deliver a geographical distribution of projects. There may therefore be a maximum project value of between £5m and £10m. This will be

established following the number of assessed construction-ready applications submitted by all partners.

7. How many projects will be funded by ATIF / what is the budget for ATIF 2024/25?
  - The final allocation for the ATIF 2024/25 is still to be confirmed, and it is not possible to set a maximum threshold for successful projects. However, the budget for ATIF will be similar to the 2023/24 Active Travel Transformation Fund of £20m or more. It is expected that the fund will support a number of high-quality construction ready projects.
8. Can I attach / send further information about my project or other supporting documents?
  - To ensure fairness and a streamlined application process for delivery partners and Transport Scotland alike, we have designed our application form to include all the information that our independent technical advisors will need to assess the projects. In the event that they wish to seek any clarifications, they will contact you.
9. Is this funding open only once in a year? What happens if we miss the 2 February deadline for applications?
  - The ATIF receives an annual budget from the Scottish Government and so applications are invited within a window in advance of the financial year. As some projects that are awarded funding may experience delays, there is scope for projects further down the prioritisation list to be awarded funding later in the financial year.
  - If all the assessed projects deemed successful are awarded funding and there is still a budget available, further applications will be invited at a later date.
10. What is driving the timescales for the Fund?
  - The [draft Scottish budget](#) was introduced to Parliament on 19 December, when the Active Travel budget for 2024/25 was confirmed as a record £220m.
  - While we appreciate the deadlines are challenging, being able to assess applications and confirm funding will enable awards to be made in time for the start of the financial year and give projects the best possible opportunity to deliver.

### Project Eligibility

11. Will you consider funding a project which does not fall into any of the categories listed on the application portal?
  - Yes, as stated, the list of scheme types is intended to be illustrative rather than exhaustive. If you are unsure, you can contact [ATTFund@transport.gov.scot](mailto:ATTFund@transport.gov.scot) for advice prior to submitting.
  - For awareness, please note that the ATIF cannot be used to fund bike hire/bike share schemes, bus shelters, bus stops etc.

12. What happens to projects that span across multiple years? Will multi-year projects be supported?
- The Scottish Government's budget is determined on an annual basis and, as such, the ATIF 2024/25 can only guarantee funding in financial year 2024/25. However, projects which span multiple years may be prioritised in future years, subject to budget availability, suitable progress being made and internal Transport Scotland assurance/approval processes.
13. We have projects which are not currently construction-ready but will be at some point later in 2024/25. What should we do?
- Only projects that can be credibly completed within 2024/25 are eligible for funding from the ATIF. This provides the best possible chance for funding to be spent in full within the reporting year.
  - However, if all the assessed projects deemed successful are awarded funding and there is still a budget available, further applications will be invited at a later date. These applications could be submitted during that stage.
14. Will you provide funding for monitoring and evaluation?
- Yes, funding for monitoring and evaluation can be provided as part of the grant award. This will be discussed with partners following the grant award and we do not expect partners to submit monitoring and evaluations plans at this stage.
15. Will you provide funding for maintenance?
- No. The ATIF cannot be used to fund the maintenance of infrastructure.

### Associated behaviour change initiatives

16. Should ATIF projects include associated behaviour change initiatives as part of the new infrastructure project?
- Yes. ATIF projects should include demand stimulation initiatives that will maximise impact of the new infrastructure.
  - Partners should capitalise costs when using the ATIF to deliver associated behaviour change interventions. Please note that ATIF is a Capital fund.
17. How will these behaviour change initiatives be funded?
- Transport Scotland will provide funding to successful projects as part of the ATIF, however it is for delivery partners to submit proposals that include demand stimulation initiatives.

### Match Funding

18. What are the match funding requirements?
- All projects will require some element of match and this will depend on project characteristics. The ATIF team will engage during the assessment process to determine the requirements.

- Match Funding will be expected for non-core Active Travel aspects to projects to ensure maximum value for money from the ATIF.
- For example, for projects where placemaking is a major component, applicants would be expected to provide match funding to account for this.
- Similarly, use of expensive materials (such as in World Heritage Sites or similar) will be expected to be covered by match funding.

### 19. Can other funds be used to match ATIF projects?

- Yes, however ATIF funds cannot be used to match other Challenge Funds.

## Design Funding and Places for Everyone

### 20. With Transport Scotland providing funding for construction-ready projects, who is funding design support?

- Transport Scotland will continue to fund Sustrans to support Concept (Stages 0-2) and Design (Stages 3-4) through their Places for Everyone programme in 2024/25. Please see [Sustrans' website](#) for more information on design funding.
- Through the Active Travel Transformation Project, Transport Scotland is moving towards funding Delivery Partners directly. However, this will be part of a managed process to allow Transport Scotland and Delivery Partners to build up capacity.

### 21. When will Places for Everyone transition to the ATIF?

- In 2024/25, new construction projects will be funded through the ATIF (administered directly by Transport Scotland), while concept, design and existing Places for Everyone projects already under construction will continue to be administered through Places for Everyone.
- Transport Scotland aims to complete the transition from Places for Everyone by December 2025. Further details will follow in due course.

### 22. Can I submit construction-ready projects whose designs were funded by Places for Everyone to the ATIF?

- Projects that have finished design (Stage 4) but not yet begun construction (Stage 5) may be submitted to the ATIF for construction funding. Existing construction commitments made by Places for Everyone will continue to be funded through Places for Everyone in 2024/25.

### 23. Can I apply to move existing construction projects from Places for Everyone to the ATIF?

- No. Any projects that have already been awarded construction funding through Places for Everyone will continue to be funded through Places for Everyone in 2024/25.

## Assessment

### 24. How will projects be assessed?

- Similar to the ATTF 2023/24, a multicriteria assessment will be undertaken. Criteria may include whether projects:
  - Enable Active Travel for a wide range of users (e.g. taking into account the needs of women, children, people on adapted bikes, wheelchairs etc);
  - Provide a sufficiently high Level of Service for Active Travel Users;
  - Target Deprived Areas;
  - Address Community Severance;
  - Enable Active Travel to Schools;
  - Contribute to the 20% car km reduction target;
  - Form part of a Network Plan;
  - Have a positive impact on sense of place;
  - Have evidence of being construction-ready; and
  - Offer good value for money.

### 25. How has the assessment methodology evolved from last year?

- Like last year, submissions will be assessed by an independent technical advisor. One of the lessons learned from 2023/24 was that the level of detail provided was insufficient in some cases and led to significant delays from seeking additional clarifications.
- Some partners provided more information than others with relatively open-ended questions. This year, we are asking for specific information from all partners to streamline the decision-making process.

### 26. What consideration has been given to rural projects?

- We understand that rural areas may have distinct requirements and we welcome applications for projects across Scotland.
- Some concerns were raised last year by Delivery Partners that they had previously received pushback from funders on Shared Use; we would like to reassure delivery partners that, as per Cycling By Design, shared use provision can be justified in numerous contexts outwith built-up areas.

## Partner Self-Assessment Scores

### 27. How does 2023/24's Self-Assessment exercise impact on applications for funding in 2024/25?

- The ATIF is open to all delivery partners;
- Those partners who haven't submitted their Self-assessment in 2023/24 would need to complete a self-assessment prior to receiving any funding in 2024/25. If an application is submitted, Transport Scotland will be in touch with those partners in due course.
- It is *expected* that the ATIF will primarily fund Delivery Partners rated Level 2 or higher. However, high quality projects from Level 1 Delivery Partners are of course welcomed.

### 28. Will our capability score be assessed again before the application process / when will our capability score be re-assessed?

- We are not re-assessing partner scores at present. However, a new round of self-assessment will take place later in 2024/25.

### Reporting Requirements

29. What are the reporting arrangements for the ATIF?
- The reporting requirements for the ATIF 2024/25 will be broadly similar to those introduced and underway through the Active Travel Transformation Fund in 2023/24.
  - This will be commensurate to the level of funding awarded and include a monthly progress report, financial information, programme, a risk register etc, again applied to reflect the level of funding awarded as appropriate. Meetings will be arranged with delivery partners on a monthly basis unless agreed otherwise. All reporting will be direct to Transport Scotland or our representatives.