

BPRDF – Questions and Answers for Applicants

Q: What is the purpose of the fund?

A: The fund is for temporary bus priority infrastructure, to mitigate against the expected increase in car use and therefore traffic congestion, as lockdown measures are eased. It will therefore only be awarded where there is reasonable evidence that congestion will impact on bus services.

Q: Isn't this unfair to local authorities with predominantly rural populations?

A: This fund is intended to benefit the maximum number of people, by addressing inequalities which are exacerbated by traffic congestion. This may not translate to all local authorities but we are aiming for as great an impact on inequality as possible, in these exceptional times. Whilst many office-based workers will be able to continue to work from home as the economy recovers, manual workers – many of whom are on lower incomes – will not have that option. Some of Scotland's most deprived urban areas have low levels of car ownership and rely heavily on public transport to access employment and this fund is just one of a number of initiatives to keep buses moving and protect jobs.

Q: What is Transport Scotland doing to support rural economies?

A: Whilst the BPRDF is not intended to meet all transport requirements, Transport Scotland has a range of other initiatives which specifically benefit rural economies. For example, support to ferry services has enabled operators to maintain lifeline services and keep island and remote communities safe.

The Scottish Government is providing bus operators with financial assistance, by maintaining concessionary travel reimbursement and the Bus Services Operator Grant (BSOG) at pre Covid levels. On 19 June we announced that additional funding of £46.7 million is being made available to support bus operators to increase service levels as we move through the COVID-19 Route Map. This funding is to cover the anticipated loss of fare-paying passenger revenue that bus operators will experience due to physical distancing and reduced carrying capacity. This arrangement will be kept under review to best support our bus industry and keep all of Scotland moving.

Q: What does 'temporary' mean in this context and is it the same as the definition for the Spaces for People fund for active travel?

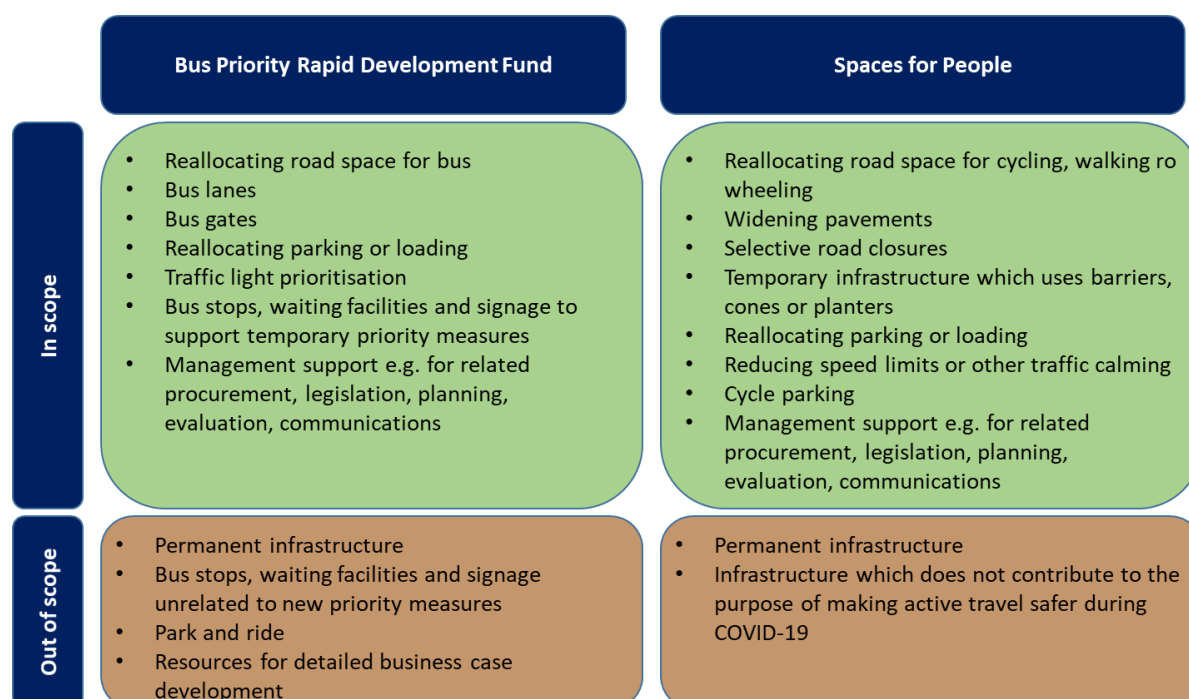
A: Spaces for People was originally established to enable measures to make active travel safer during lockdown when increasing numbers of people were walking and cycling for exercise. It supports an increase in active travel as restrictions are eased, allowing people in greater numbers to physically distance whilst also keeping them safe from potentially increasing traffic. Active travel, in some circumstances, offers an alternative to public transport and crucially the car for trips to work, local services and schools etc. The BPRDF is intended to support the emergence from lockdown and economic restart, following feedback from local authorities and bus operators

that bus priority measures would help them to get through what could be a long recovery period.

Under the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020, the Scottish Government issued guidanceⁱ on the use of Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders and Notices. Local authorities may make temporary traffic regulation orders covering their roads for up to 18 months (with a possible further extension of 6 months) and these may be used for temporary bus priority and active travel measures. Within the bounds of this guidance, it is a matter for individual local authorities to decide how long these measures should remain in place.

Q What specifically will be funded by the BPRDF, versus Spaces for People?

The diagram below shows the different uses of the funds:



Q: What happens if the BPRDF is over-subscribed?

A: Applications will be assessed against the criteria detailed in the guidance notes as and when they are received.

We will keep the fund under review, depending on demand and economic conditions, which are changing rapidly, as we move through this pandemic.

Q: Are Equality Impact Assessments required?

A: There is a duty on public bodies to assess the impact of new policies or practices against the needs of the general equality duty, via Equality Impact Assessments (EQIA). Despite the temporary nature of the projects funded by the BPRDF, local authorities are expected to carry out EQIAs and have due regard to the impact of any changes.

Q: Will the Bus Partnership Fund still go ahead, after COVID-19?

A: As is the case with the rest of the Scottish Government, Transport Scotland resources have been pivoted to respond to COVID-19 and the challenges that it presents. That has resulted in a significant reprioritisation of work within the

organisation that will have an impact on a range of policy areas. In light of this, for now, the focus of Transport Scotland and transport operators is firmly on the challenges that are presented by COVID-19.

At the time of writing, we have no indication that the Bus Partnership Fund will not resume at some point. Whilst we cannot be specific about when this will happen, we will continue to keep stakeholders updated, as soon as we have more information.

Q: Are trunk roads in scope?

Trunk roads are not in scope for this fund.

Q: What is the status is of the ongoing work on Managed Motorways (including bus priority measures)?

A: Transport Scotland up to February this year has been progressing the development of a Strategic Business Case for implementation of proposals on the motorway network around Glasgow. This work has involved investigation of potential measures to improve the movement of buses on parts of the strategic road network. The development of this work has been in conjunction with key stakeholders and while it has had to be paused due to the COVID19 pandemic, this work will be completed this year.

The proposals that finally emerge from this will then require further more detailed design work to be completed prior to implementation. We anticipate that this will come forward in the next financial year.

ⁱ <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/47432/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-temporary-traffic-regulation-orders-and-noticees.pdf>