



Community Bus Fund 2023-24
Expression of Interest and additional information -
Resource Funding

Expression of Interest

Aug 2023

Content:

The Expression of Interest form below is intended to be light touch to explain the reasoning, context and funding available in the current financial year (2023-24) in respect of the Community Bus Fund.

We appreciate that after reading through this, you may not be in a position to apply for funding this year, and we have therefore attached a further Annex with a supporting questionnaire covering a number of topics such as Local Transport Data and Planning & Strategy. This will allow us to understand the current position of local transport authorities, and any intent regarding to the forthcoming Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 (“the 2019 Act”) bus powers, providing evidence of the need for potential future funding.

We would therefore appreciate if every local authority could complete the Annex, even if not bidding this year for the Community Bus Fund with as much information as you can.

Completed forms and any supporting documents should be emailed to the CBF mailbox at the following address – cbf@transport.gov.scot

Background and context

The Bute House Agreement and Programme for Government 2022-23 included a commitment to establish a ‘Community Bus Fund (CBF) to support local transport authorities to improve local public transport in their areas. This fund will support local authorities to explore the full range of options set out in the 2019 Act, including local transport authority run bus services.’

The CBF has been allocated £5 million capital funding and £0.75 million in resource funding for 2023-24. The £0.75 million resource is available to local authorities as a pathfinder style project aimed at supporting local authorities to complete initial feasibility and preparatory work required for the 2019 Act. As such, **spend is restricted to the five reviews and assessments outlined below that are required for the Transport Act 2019 powers to be considered and explored.** Further information on the 2019 Act is set out in Annex B.

Purpose

This expression of interest is for the £0.75 million resource funding to be used within the current financial year (2023-24). However, we appreciate that whilst a local authority may not be in a position to bid for funding within this financial year, completing the Annex will allow us to collate and secure adequate funding for future years.

Pathfinder style projects will provide valuable evidence of level of interest and identify need for support to complete preparatory work to allow local authorities to begin exploration of the 2019 Act powers.

The project must include at least one of the following:

- Review and update of existing local bus /public transport strategies.
- Review the local bus network to determine what further work is required based on information already held.
- Assess what data or evidence is required to develop a business case, and how information will be stored and managed.

- Assess subsidised services to allow a comparison with options in the 2019 Act once available.
- Review ticketing options

The project should also deliver against the NTS2 vision and Scottish Government priorities:

- Equality: Tackling poverty and protecting people from harm
- Opportunity: A fair, green and growing economy
- Community: Prioritising our public services.

Who can apply

Whilst we expect most applications from LTAs, the CBF is also open to RTPs. This can also include joint applications from bidders working together. If this is the case, a lead must be nominated to receive all funding, but all parties must be set out below.

Fund Distribution

Funding will be allocated on a first come first served basis until funds are exhausted, based on assurance that funds can be spent by the end of the financial year. Grant Letters will be issued and payments will be made in arrears following receipt of claims forms and evidence provided.

Assurance of spend

Funding will be issued based on evidence of the project being undertaken, or on completion.

We need assurance that you are confident that the level of funding sought from this bid will be spent within this financial year, by way of an interim update in April, with agreement for the final project report being completed no later than July 2024, and will be paid out no later than mid-March 2024. Funding cannot be carried into the following year.

Please note funds can only be released on receipt of appropriate evidence. E.g. invoice for consulted services/report, and will have a time limit from receipt of grant award of three months to evidence that the project is being carried forward. Given that this is a first come based grant offer, and can only be paid out within the current financial year, we must have assurance that all funding will be used. If you are not able to acquire appropriate evidence within the timeframe, your bid may be rejected and funds allocated to another bidder.

Sign off from the Head of Finance within your Local Authority will be required. (Electronic Signature is accepted) Please provide a breakdown of your project in the form of a Gantt style chart, with timeline from inception to completion.

Other sources of Funding

The amount of funding awarded through CBF represents the maximum level of Scottish Government or other public funding aid allowable for individual bids/projects. This will be laid out in the terms and conditions within the grant award letter of a successful bid.

No other forms of Scottish Government or public aid can be used towards the same eligible costs beyond these limits.

Expression of Interest

Bid Manager Contact Details

Name	Click or tap here to enter text.
Position	Click or tap here to enter text.
Local Authority/RTP	Click or tap here to enter text.
Email	Click or tap here to enter text.
Phone Number	Click or tap here to enter text.
RTP Area	Click or tap here to enter text.

If a joint application, please list below the details of all involved.

Other participants if grant is from a joint bid.	Click or tap here to enter text.
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Alternative contact details	Click or tap here to enter text.
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Level of Funding sought 2023-24	Click or tap here to enter text.
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Note: All spend has to be claimed this financial year (2023-24). We do not have the ability to roll over funding into the next financial year.

Please give an outline of your Community Bus Fund bid below in no more than 500 words. State which of the five reviews/assessments you intend to complete, and how this will deliver against NTS2 vision, priorities and outcomes of:

- **Equality – tackling poverty and protecting people from harm**
- **Opportunity – a fair, green and growing economy**

- **Community – prioritising our public services**

Please provide links to any supporting documents, with clear reference to the area used within this, and attach the relevant Gantt style chart.

Please also include any work you have done or started in regards to preparatory works

Click or tap here to enter text.

Please list any supporting documents

Click or tap here to enter text.

This supporting questionnaire will provide valuable evidence to help us highlight the need for future rounds of funding.

Supporting Questionnaire

What powers in the 2019 Act (Bus Services Improvement Partnerships, Local Services Franchises or Local Transport Authority run bus services) interest you most?

Please cover what consideration you have currently given to them including potential barriers to using them and how they could deliver improved bus services in your local area.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Planning & Strategy

Please provide information under the below headings for the five reviews/assessments to explain whether these have been completed, and when these were last undertaken. Please also explain if you are intending to complete these reviews in the future, and any barriers to doing so.

Please outline general information covering this plan, when it was created and what the plan covers.

Review and update existing local bus /public transport strategies:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Review the local bus network to determine what further work is required based on information already held:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Assess what information is required to develop a business case, and how information will be stored and managed:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Assess subsidised services to allow a comparison with options in the Transport Act once available:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Review ticketing options:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Local Transport Data

Question	Answer
What percentage of your bus network is currently considered as supported services?	Click or tap here to enter text.
How many registered operators are actively operating in your area?	Click or tap here to enter text.
How many Local Authority personnel actively work on the development and upkeep of the bus network? Please provide a high level breakdown per area.	Click or tap here to enter text.

How much do you spend annually on supported services in your area?

Click or tap here to enter text.

Local Key Issues

What do you see as the local key issues which impact the bus network in your area?

Click or tap here to enter text.

Background

The Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 (“the 2019 Act”) provides local transport authorities with a range of flexible powers to improve the operation of local bus services in their areas.

The 2019 Act allows local transport authorities to run their own bus services; franchise bus services in their areas; or enter into a Bus Services Improvement Partnerships (BSIPs) with bus operators within their areas. The Act also introduces new regulations covering the way in which bus operators must provide information to local authorities when they plan to reduce or withdraw the services they provide.

Local authority run services

Section 34 of the 2019 Act essentially gives local transport authorities the power to run local bus services that they were previously prohibited from doing under the Transport Act 1985. This means that authorities are now able to operate local bus services using a PSV licence providing they are satisfied that the provision of such services will contribute to the implementation of their relevant general policies. Section 34 came into force on 24 June 2022.

Franchising

Franchising is a model where a transport authority awards exclusive rights to run a bus route or routes for a set period to the most competitive bidder. Section 38 of the 2019 Act allows a local transport authority to make a franchising framework covering the whole or any part of their area. This model replaces the under used Quality Contact Scheme model that was introduced via the Transport (Scotland) Act 2001. The Scottish Government plans to bring forward the first substantive regulations for the new franchising powers by the end of 2023.

Bus Service Improvement Partnerships (BSIPs)

Section 35 of the 2019 Act allows local transport authorities to form a Bus Services Improvement Partnership (BSIP) with bus operators within their area. BSIPs provide an updated and revised model of how local transport authorities can work with operators to improve the quality and efficiency of local services. The Scottish Government plans to bring forward BSIPs regulations by the end of 2023.

Provision of service information when varying or cancelling registration

Section 39 of the 2019 Act, introduced a new information sharing process related to the local service registration process. On 1 April, the Public Service Vehicles (Registration of Local Services)(Provision of Service Information) (Scotland) Regulations 2022 came into force. These regulations enable an affected authority to obtain specific service information from an operator who proposes to vary or cancel the registration of a local service. The new provisions also enable, in limited circumstances, the affected authority to share the information with other affected authorities, and with people who may wish to bid to provide a service to supplement or replace the one being varied or withdrawn.

Relevant General Policies.

Local Transport Authorities should consider how the powers in the 2019 Act will contribute to the implementation of their relevant general policies and how they will help address their objectives and the wider ambitions for the regional and national strategies for bus.

The reviews and assessments that the CBF can be used to fund are intended to contribute to the development of the relevant general policies, enabling local authorities to consider and explore the options within the 2019 Act.

The relevant general policies generally relate to improvements of the transport network. Section 48 of the 2001 Act defines “relevant general policies” as the LTA’s local transport strategy alongside policies formulated by them from time to time under section 63(2)(b) of the 1985 Act (“the 1985 Act”) (or section 9A(1) of the Transport Act 1968 (“the 1968 Act”) in the case of SPT).

Policies under the 1985 and 1968 Acts are policies for securing the provision of such public passenger transport services as the council considers appropriate to meet any public transport requirements within their area, as well as defining the descriptions of services they propose to secure under this provision. Relevant general policies are further considered to be any policies formulated by the LTA in accordance with a local transport strategy, including any provisions set out for partnership working or franchising.