

To: Leadership Board

On: 26 April 2023

Report by: Director of Environment, Housing & Infrastructure

Heading: Bus Partnership Funding – Paisley Town Centre

1. Summary

- 1.1 The National Transport Strategy published in 2020, set out the delivery of an accessible, modern transport system which will protect our climate and improve the lives of the people of Scotland over the course of the next 20 years. The vision is underpinned by four interconnected priorities: Reducing Inequalities, Taking Climate Action, Helping Deliver Inclusive Economic Growth and Improving our Health and Wellbeing
- 1.2 In support of this strategy, the Scottish Government committed to providing a long-term investment of over £500m to deliver targeted bus priority measures on local and trunk roads. This is intended to reduce the negative impacts of congestion on bus services, address the decline in bus patronage and reduce car usage. The investment takes the form of the Bus Partnership Fund, together with the roll-out of infrastructure for the trunk road network.
- 1.3 Renfrewshire Council, as previously reported to board were successful in being awarded £2million from Transport Scotland's Bus Partnership Fund for improvements to public transport infrastructure in Paisley Town Centre in 2023/2024. These improvements support the Council's ambition to work towards net zero carbon emissions by 2030.
- 1.4 The purpose of this report is to set out the consultation and engagement process that is proposed over the coming months with elected members, partners, communities and businesses and to approve the financial arrangements associated funding awarded to the Council.
- 1.5 This funding has been provided to identify bus prioritisation measures, as well as how to improve traffic flows and safety at and around four Paisley town centre junctions including Mill Street, Inle Street and Glasgow Road; Cotton Street, Gauze Street and Lawn Street; Canal Street and Causeyside Street; and Lonend, Cotton Street and Gordon Street.

- 1.6 Over the last 18 months, design proposals have been developed which are ambitious, substantive and seek long term upgrades, proposing a significant change to the road infrastructure arrangements at four key road junctions and associated streets of Paisley Town Centre.
 - 1.7 The design proposals have been developed in partnership with SPT and with bus operators and are now at the stage that a detailed engagement process can start to be undertaken.
 - 1.8 Aspects of the Canal Street and Causeyside Street Junction were included in the Causeyside Street Regeneration proposals. Following extensive consultation and engagement undertaken with businesses and communities on Causeyside Street, the regeneration proposal is not in a position to move to the construction phase and, as a result, the Council will not be able to draw down some of the European funding it has been awarded as it is time barred. It is therefore proposed that further engagement on Causeyside Street is taken forward through bus partnership engagement process and the unused funding is returned.
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2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Leadership Board:

- 2.1 Notes the stage reached in development of the bus priority proposals for Paisley Town Centre.
 - 2.2 Notes the consultation and engagement planned with Elected Members, partners, businesses and local community and approves updates to be provided for discussion at the relevant policy boards.
 - 2.3 Notes the infrastructure proposals are ambitious to support the continued evolution of Renfrewshire's infrastructure to support climate goals, safety and support for public transport across Renfrewshire.
 - 2.4 Approves the remediation of the Low Carbon Travel and Transport Challenge funding as set out in section 5 of this report.
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3. Bus Partnership Fund

- 3.1 In June 2019, Renfrewshire Council declared a climate emergency, committing to working towards net zero carbon emissions by 2030, for both Council estate and area-wide emissions.
- 3.2 The National Transport Strategy published in 2020 is clear that future transport investment decisions will continue to prioritise the sustainable travel hierarchy. This approach to investment is crucial in ensuring that transport plays its part in ensuring that we deliver on our ambitious climate change target, of Scotland becoming a net zero society by 2045.

- 3.3 Further action to support this was set out in the Scottish Government's Climate Change Plan Update with an ambitious commitment to achieve a 20 per cent reduction in car kilometres by 2030. Local Authorities will require to take forward a range of actions and develop bus service improvement partnerships as set out in the Transport Scotland Act (2019).
- 3.4 The Bus Partnership Fund requires the Council to work in partnership with bus operators, to develop and deliver ambitious schemes that incorporate bus priority measures. The Fund will focus on improving bus services by addressing congestion, but the partnership approach is also expected to leverage other bus service improvements to help tackle the climate emergency, reduce private car use and increase bus patronage with a range of bus priority measures.
- 3.5 The key aims of the Bus Partnership Fund are to reduce journey times, improve journey time reliability, increased proportion of people travelling by bus, improve customer satisfaction, improved safety of the junctions for all users including pedestrians and cyclists, and reduce emissions, contributing to improved local air quality and reduced carbon emissions.
- 3.6 Bus priority measures can be broken down into four broad types of interventions:
- Signalling – bus communicates with traffic light, so it stays green for longer to let the bus through quicker. Some technology also senses when a bus is running late, to give it additional priority.
 - Bus advance area - A facility which enables buses to get to the head of a traffic queue at a signalised junction; often located at the exit of a bus lane.
 - Bus lanes and gates - Bus lanes are lanes normally reserved for buses only but may also allow access to taxis and cycles. They may be operational all the time or just during peak hours and compliance can be enforced using cameras and penalties. A bus gate is a short piece of road which can only be accessed by bus and may be used in conjunction with bus lanes.
 - Bus corridors - An extended stretch of road, on which several measures are brought together to facilitate bus travel. Typically, this will include bus lanes and bus priority measures, as well as an enhanced service provision and improvements to bus passenger infrastructure, such as shelters and information.
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4. Consultation

- 4.1 The junctions improvement project is being developed to provide better public transport accessibility in Paisley Town Centre, support regeneration and improve public transport connectivity within Renfrewshire and across the Glasgow City Region.
- 4.2 The aim is to improve traffic flow and road safety, while linking the town centre by making it easier to use public transportation, walk or cycle into the heart of the town and creating a better sense of arrival for people visiting Paisley's attractions. This includes the transformation of Paisley Museum, Paisley Arts Centre, Learning and Cultural Hub, and Paisley Town Hall.
- 4.3 Officers have been engaging with SPT and bus operators to create design proposals that will improve performance of bus services and reduce journey times for all vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists in Paisley Town Centre.

- 4.4 The outline designs identify improvements to four Paisley Town Centre junctions:
- Mill Street, Incle Street and Glasgow Road
 - Cotton Street, Gauze Street and Lawn Street
 - Canal Street and Causeyside Street
 - Lonend, Cotton Street and Gordon Street.
- 4.5 The proposals will improve connectivity across Paisley town centre by providing easier access to bus services, while enhancing the existing road and footway network through better traffic flow and resurfacing works.
- 4.6 The designs will be brought forward in phases to ward members for Paisley town centre and cross-party engagement will take place prior to the consultation process to assess the proposals and ensure they are in an appropriate position for public engagement.
- 4.7 Thereafter, design proposals will be taken through a public consultation process which will allow elected members, local businesses, community groups, community councils, local partnerships, partners and residents to put forward their views.
- 4.8 The feedback received will allow designs and proposals to be reviewed, with further engagement taking place with ward members, cross party sounding board and the ILE policy board.
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5. Funding

- 5.1 The Council was awarded £900,000 through Transport Scotland via the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Low Carbon Travel and Transport Challenge Fund. This was to fund the regeneration project on Causeyside Street, including the segregated cycle lane as well as the electric charging infrastructure installed in Stow Brae Car park.
- 5.2 The funding was due to be spent by the end of September 2023 and a further period of business engagement would make compliance with this deadline impossible to achieve as the funder made clear this previous extension would be the last granted, as it is a European fund.
- 5.3 To date, the Council has claimed £144,000 from the ERDF with a final claim of around £20,000 to £30,000 to be made. The Council, therefore, proposes to not draw down the remaining amount of around £725,000 due to the time constraints and the Causeyside Street proposals will not move forward in their current form with a segregated cycle route.
- 5.4 Further engagement will take place on Causeyside Street as part of the Paisley Town Centre junctions engagement process.
- 5.5 Renfrewshire Council, as previously reported were successful in being awarded £2million from Transport Scotland's Bus Partnership Fund for improvements to public transport infrastructure in Paisley Town Centre in 2023/2024.

- 5.6 The ERDF fund and Bus Partnership Fund required some match funding to be delivered by the Council towards low carbon transport. The Council has allocated a sum of £400,000 for this purpose, which has not been spent and is unaffected, and is available to support the Paisley Town Centre junctions project.
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Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – Renfrewshire Council were awarded £900,000 from the Low Carbon Travel and Transport Challenge Funding and proposes to not draw down the remaining amount of around £725,000 from Low Carbon Travel and Transport Challenge funding as set out in the report.

1. **HR & Organisational Development** – None

2. **Community & Council Planning**

Our Renfrewshire is thriving / Reshaping our place, our economy and our future - the service is actively involved in planning further enhancements to infrastructure to support and facilitate economic growth.

Creating a sustainable Renfrewshire for all to enjoy - working in partnership with SPT, Bus Operators and the community to deliver a cleaner Renfrewshire by reducing carbon emissions.

3. **Legal** – None

4. **Property/Assets** – The Council's infrastructure is maintained and enhanced.

5. **Information Technology** – None

6. **Equality & Human Rights** - The recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website

7. **Health & Safety** – None

8. **Procurement** – Procurement of infrastructure contracts through existing Scotland Excel Procurement frameworks.

9. **Risk** – None.

10. **Privacy Impact** – None

11. **CoSLA Policy Position** – None

- 12. Climate Risk** – The Council continues to explore opportunities to secure external funding to deliver sustainable, green infrastructure projects.

List of Background Papers: None

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