

Bus, Accessibility & Active Travel

Bettina Sizeland

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Derek Oliver
Chief Officer Place
Midlothian Council
By e-mail Derek.Oliver@midlothian.gov.uk

Your ref:

Our ref:
BPF013

Date:
16 January 2024

Dear Derek,

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.

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. Anna Herriman, Keith Fiskin, Craig Cameron, Amy Phillips