

Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity
Ministear an Àiteachais agus Ceangal
Jim Fairlie MSP
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Edward Mountain MSP
Convener
Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee
The Scottish Parliament
EDINBURGH
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28 May 2024

Dear Convener,

Thank you for the opportunity to give evidence on The Transport Partnerships (Transfer of Functions) (Scotland) Order 2024 draft SSI during the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee. I undertook to provide information on awards made to date under the Community Bus Fund following a question from Mark Ruskell, MSP.

The Community Bus Fund (CBF) was allocated £5 million capital funding and £0.75 million in resource funding for 2023-24. The £0.75 million resource funding was available to local transport authorities to support pathfinder style projects aimed at enabling completion of initial feasibility and preparatory work required for future implementation of the bus options in the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019. As such, spend was targeted at reviews and assessments required for the Transport Act 2019 powers to be considered and explored. From the bids received, 10 projects were taken forward in 2023-24. These included projects to review local bus networks to develop local transport/bus strategies, and projects to complete options appraisals with a view to developing business cases. The majority of local authorities are still in the early stages of exploring the options within the Transport Act 2019, with most projects aimed at commencing work to determine which option, if any, is most appropriate for their areas. The capital funding in 2023-24 was distributed through the General Capital Grant to all local authorities on a per capita basis based on levels of transport poverty to support the fund objective of improving local public transport in areas of rural deprivation. Further information on the projects supported with resource funding and the distribution on capital funding for 2023-24 can be found on the Transport Scotland website: [Community Bus Fund | Transport Scotland](#).

Mr Ruskell's original question to me during the Committee Session was "whether there is an expectation that the community bus fund will be enhanced and further developed in order to create new delivery models?" I can advise that the Community Bus Fund has been allocated £1 million resource and £5 million capital funding in the 2024-25 Scottish Budget.

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Decisions on the Government's spending plans for future years are subject to the outcome of the Scottish Budget process and associated approval by the Scottish Parliament.

Yours sincerely,



JIM FAIRLIE

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