

REPORT TO INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES COMMITTEE – 11 MARCH 2021

BUS PARTNERSHIP FUND

1 Reason for Report/Summary

- 1.1 To seek Committee approval for the submission of a North East of Scotland Bus Alliance partnership bid to the Scottish Government's Bus Partnership Fund of up to £200 million.

2 Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 2.1 **Approve Aberdeenshire Council's participation in a Bus Partnership Fund bid, in line with Appendix 1, to be submitted by Aberdeen City Council on behalf of the North East of Scotland Bus Alliance, of which Aberdeenshire Council is a partner;**
- 2.2 **Note, that if successful, the funding will enable a step change in public transport across Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire, which will help support delivery of the Council's Priorities including Climate Change objectives;**
- 2.3 **Note that, if successful, Aberdeen City Council will be the lead and Accountable Officer for the North East of Scotland Bus Alliance bid; and**
- 2.4 **Instruct officers to report back to a future meeting of the Committee on the success or otherwise of this bid, on any additional resource requirements to deliver a successful bid and with recommendations for appropriate governance arrangements.**

3 Purpose and Decision Making Route

- 3.1 At its meeting on 18 June 2020 (Item 6), the Committee reviewed and agreed the Council's continued participation in the North East of Scotland Bus Alliance. The Committee having originally agreed at its meeting on 10 May 2018 (Item 6) to participate in the partnership whose principal aim is to stabilise, arrest and, in turn, reverse the decline in bus patronage across the north east of Scotland.
- 3.2 In reviewing the partnership, the Committee noted the Bus Alliance's focus on progressing appraisals of the key commuter corridors into Aberdeen with a view to identifying bus service improvements that could form the basis of statutory Bus Service Improvement Partnerships for each corridor and, in turn, funding bids to the Scottish Government's Bus Partnership Fund.

- 3.3 At its meeting on 21 January 2021 (Item 15), the Committee agreed a revised approach to bus service delivery arising out of a 'Clean Sheet Review' of the Council's supported bus network. This revised approach included the following action:

"The Council should also work in partnership with operators, principally Stagecoach Bluebird, to maintain and strengthen the commercial viability of the mainline corridors and commercial town services, through the development of statutory Bus Service Improvement Partnerships (BSIPs) and associated bids for supporting bus priority and infrastructure through the Scottish Government's Bus Partnership Fund (BPF), where applicable. This should be progressed wherever possible under the auspices of the North East of Scotland Bus Alliance".

- 3.4 On 9 November 2020, the Scottish Government announced the launch of a £500 million programme of investment in ambitious bus priority infrastructure. The aim being to support local authorities, in partnership with bus operators, in tackling the negative impact of congestion on bus services so that journeys are quicker and more reliable, thus encouraging more people to travel by bus. This fund, called the Bus Partnership Fund, which forms part of the Scottish Government's response to the climate emergency, is also expected to leverage other bus service improvements to tackle the climate emergency and reduce private car use as well as increase bus patronage.
- 3.5 Aberdeen City Council's Growth and Resources Committee, at its meeting on 3 February 2021 (Item 11.5), agreed submission of a bid to the Bus Partnership Fund of up to £200 million on behalf of the North East of Scotland Bus Alliance, whilst instructing officers: to seek to accelerate the City Centre elements of the bid; and, to explore options to improve access and integration of the Aberdeen bus station as part of the bid, in order to help improve the customer experience. The Nestrans Board, at its meeting of 10 February 2021 (Item 5.1), supported the approach being taken by partners with regard to the Bus Partnership Fund bid.
- 3.6 This report provides details of the proposed Bus Partnership Fund bid to be submitted by Aberdeen City Council and seeks approval for the Council's participation in the bid process.

4 Discussion

- 4.1 Whilst there is currently a suppressed demand for public transport due to the ongoing Covid-19 Public Health Emergency, the medium to long term need to enable and encourage people to travel sustainably remains a key Local Transport Strategy and Climate Change objective. The provision of bus services also supports access to employment, education, retail, health and other facilities, in particular for those who do not have access to a private car.

4.2 As outlined in paragraph 3.2, the Bus Alliance has been progressing appraisals of bus infrastructure and active travel improvements on the main commuter corridors, with the outcome of the Westhill to Aberdeen corridor study (which has identified low and medium/high delivery packages), forming a bulletin report to the Garioch Area Committee on 2 February 2021. Further studies have also been commissioned by Aberdeen City Council on behalf of the Bus Alliance, in the case of the Ellon to Garthdee via Aberdeen City Centre and Inverurie to Aberdeen City Centre corridors.

4.3 A key criteria for bids to the Bus Partnership Fund is that the application must be on behalf of a partnership. The North East of Scotland Bus Alliance, which oversees the 'Quality Partnership for Public Transport', is a well-established voluntary bus partnership, and therefore is an appropriate 'partnership' through which a Bus Partnership Fund bid can be submitted.

4.4 The eligibility criteria for the Bus Partnership Fund is as follows:

- Applications must be from partnerships working towards Bus Service Improvement Partnership (BSIP) status, as defined by the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019. The North East of Scotland Bus Alliance forms the basis on which to create a BSIP.
- There must be a lead local authority, as Accountable Officer for the funding. This will be Aberdeen City Council, as the likelihood is that the majority of the bus priority measures will be on roads within Aberdeen City.
- The infrastructure projects will be owned by local roads authorities, in recognition of their statutory role in maintaining the local road infrastructure. Transport Scotland will therefore not mandate design requirements but will expect local authorities to follow good practice guidance, such as the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges and the National Roads Development Guide.
- In accordance with the Place Principle, which was adopted by the Scottish Government in 2019, bidding partnerships are asked to take a collaborative, place-based approach to the proposed developments. Place Principles are applied by Aberdeenshire Council and partners.
- All partners will require to sign the application to indicate their commitment; both to the partnership and the proposed developments. The proposal must be signed by the Leader and Chief Executive of Aberdeen City Council as the lead authority. Partners, including Aberdeenshire Council, can indicate their support to the proposal through appended letters of intent or additional signatures on the application form.
- In applying, partnerships accept that initial funding awards and any future tranches of funding awarded will be subject to evaluation by Transport Scotland.

4.5 Further details on the call for proposals can be found at <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/48591/bpf-call-for-proposals.pdf>

- 4.6 Details of the proposed Bus Alliance Bus Partnership Fund bid are provided in **Appendix 1**. This document is intended to be appended to the bid along with other supporting documentation, as necessary.
- 4.7 A summary of the proposed bid content is as follows:
- Development of a vision for ‘Aberdeen Rapid Transit’ and thereafter strategic, outline and full business cases; delivery framework options; and, a prioritised pipeline of projects.
 - Continuation of strategic, outline and full business cases then delivery of approved measures along the Bus Alliance priority corridors:
 - Westhill to Aberdeen City Centre;
 - Ellon to Garthdee via Aberdeen City Centre;
 - Inverurie to Aberdeen City Centre; and,
 - Stonehaven to Aberdeen City Centre.
 - Phased delivery of the ‘Aberdeen Rapid Transit’ network complementing and building on the four priority corridors mentioned above.
- 4.8 The principle for ‘Aberdeen Rapid Transit’ has been established within the Draft Nestrans Regional Transport Strategy. Although focused on Aberdeen, it would also extend into Aberdeenshire and is perceived as a regional intervention with strategic benefit across the north east of Scotland.
- 4.9 As outlined in paragraph 4.4, the Bus Partnership Fund guidance states that applications must be from partnerships working towards Bus Service Improvement Partnerships and the bid proposal set out in **Appendix 1** articulates the Bus Alliance’s commitment to developing such agreements along with the range of measures that might be included, for example: bus priority; kerbside bus stop infrastructure and information improvements; and, bus operator commitments such as minimum service levels and vehicle standards. This commitment demonstrates the holistic approach being taken by the Bus Alliance on the development of this bid and the desire to seek transformational change across all elements of the journey.
- 4.10 Evidence of continued partnership working throughout the life of the project will also be expected and all 3 public sector partners will be responsible for spending funding on specific elements of the bid. Due to these complexities, it is therefore recommended that governance arrangements, possibly similar to that in place for the City Region Deal, are developed if this bid is successful, complementing current Committee governance arrangements. This will support the external partnership arrangements that will need to be in place to successfully deliver the project as well as complementing Aberdeen City Council’s role as Accountable Officer.

5 Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

- 5.1 Bus services help deliver the Strategic Priority “Health & Wellbeing” within the Pillar “Our People,” by tackling poverty and inequalities; Strategic Priority “Resilient Communities “ within the Pillar “Our Environment”, through helping to address issues of climate and sustainability; and Strategic Priority “Economy & Enterprise” within the Pillar “Our Economy” by having the right people, in the right place, doing the right thing, at the right time.
- 5.2 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendations are agreed.

Subject	Yes	No	N/A
Financial		X	
Staffing		X	
Equalities		X	
Fairer Scotland Duty		X	
Town Centre First		X	
Sustainability		X	
Children and Young People’s Rights and Wellbeing			X

- 5.3 An equality impact assessment is not required because the recommended actions do not have a differential impact on people with protected characteristics. However, in progressing any corridor-based partnership arrangements arising from a successful Bus Partnership Fund bid, equality impact assessments will require to be carried out.
- 5.4 There are no direct staffing and financial implications arising from this report. Successful Bus Partnership Fund applications will not require match funding and the funding will cover: appraisal; project management; design and delivery; and, monitoring and evaluation. Therefore, if any additional staff resources and/or consultancy support are required to progress delivery of a successful bid, this may be eligible for full funding within the bid.
- 5.5 It is expected that bids will be holistic, including measures which integrate bus with active travel and other forms of transport to provide an end-to-end solution which will reduce private car use. Whilst the Bus Partnership Fund will not cover these non-bus measures, there are other funding opportunities to support the delivery of such measures for example via Nestrans Capital Plan and Sustrans ‘Places for Everyone’ Fund. It is also expected that successful bids will demonstrate the commitment of all partners, with higher scoring awarded to bids reflecting partner investment. Examples could include the proposed pilot ‘enhanced’ DRT service in/around Inverurie and the expansion and upgrading of Ellon Park and Ride.
- 5.6 Whilst the bid will be for the whole project development and delivery over a number of years, the fund will be allocated on an annual basis. The indicative budget across Scotland for 2021/22 is £35 million.

- 5.7 The North East of Scotland Bus Alliance bid is for £150 million to £200 million funding, this being the current best high-level estimate for the total cost of developing and implementing an 'Aberdeen Rapid Transit' system.
- 5.8 As indicated in paragraph 4.4, Aberdeen City Council will be designated the lead authority and Accountable Officer for a successful bid.
- 5.9 No risks have been identified in terms of the Corporate or Directorate Risk Registers.
- 5.10 Town Centre Impact Assessments will be undertaken when progressing any corridor-based partnership arrangements arising from a successful Bus Partnership Fund bid.

6 Scheme of Governance

- 6.1 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report and their comments are incorporated within the report and are satisfied that the report complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation
- 6.2 The Committee is able to consider and take a decision on this item in terms of Section F.1.1 of the List of Committee Powers in Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance as the proposed Bus Partnership Fund bid relates to Transportation policy issues and resource matters (within agreed budgets) relating to those functions which have not been reserved to the Full Council or specifically delegated to any other Committee of the Council.

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24 February 2021

List of Appendices

Appendix 1 – Details of Bus Partnership Fund Bid Submission

APPENDIX 1

North East Bus Alliance Bus Partnership Fund Bid

Background

The Bus Partnership Fund

As part of its response to the climate emergency, 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 and address the decline in bus patronage. The investment takes the form of the Bus Partnership Fund, together with the roll-out of infrastructure for the trunk road network.

The Bus Partnership Fund will complement the powers in the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019, enabling local authorities to better work in partnership with bus operators, to develop and deliver **ambitious schemes that incorporate bus priority measures**. The Fund will focus on the evidence of how bus services will be improved 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.

The following application criteria have been developed to meet the aims of the Fund, while complying with state aid regulations and guidance on financial governance:

- Applications must be from partnerships working towards Bus Service Improvement Partnership (BSIP) status, as defined by the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019.
- There must be a lead local authority, as Accountable Officer for the funding.
- The infrastructure projects will be owned by local roads authorities, in recognition of their statutory role in maintaining the local road infrastructure. Transport Scotland will therefore not mandate design requirements but will expect local authorities to follow good practice guidance, such as the National Roads Development Guide.
- In accordance with the Place Principle, which was adopted by the Scottish Government in 2019, bidding partnerships are asked to take a collaborative, place-based approach to the proposed developments.
- All partners should sign the application to indicate their commitment; both to the partnership and the proposed developments.
- In applying, partnerships accept that initial funding awards and any future tranches of funding awarded will be subject to evaluation by Transport Scotland.

The North East Bus Alliance

The North East of Scotland already has an existing Quality Partnership for Buses, the North East Bus Alliance, identified by Transport Scotland as an example of best practice in integrated, partnership-based approaches in Scotland.

The North East Bus Alliance Quality Partnership Agreement, signed by Nestrans, Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council, Stagecoach, First and Bains Coaches sets the following objectives¹:

1. Arrest decline in bus patronage in the North East of Scotland by 2022;
2. Achieve year-on-year growth in bus patronage to 2025.

It also sets a number of sub-objectives:

- a) To increase the mode split proportion of people travelling by bus across the region;
- b) To improve the operational performance of bus services;
- c) To improve customer satisfaction with the overall level of service across the region;
- d) To reduce emissions per bus passenger journey, contributing to improved local air quality and reducing carbon emissions.
- e) To improve access to public transport for all, reducing the equalities gap across the region by reducing barriers including cost and physical access.

The mechanisms by which the above objectives and targets can be achieved will include:

- reducing journey times and their variability;
- improving journey speeds;
- improving service frequencies;
- providing a punctual and reliable service as well as quality infrastructure and information to encourage mode shift and improve accessibility;
- by improving the fuel efficiency and emissions profile of the bus fleet, utilising greener technologies;
- by reducing lost mileage; and
- re-investing the savings made through more reliable bus operation back into enhanced bus services.

In order to deliver on these objectives, the Bus Alliance has agreed a prioritised list of corridors as its focus for delivering improvements to bus service provision, with the potential for each to be supported by a form of statutory agreement e.g. Bus Service Improvement Partnership Agreement, under the overarching Partnership.

These priority corridors are linked to the existing Park & Ride sites in order to maximise the opportunities that these provide. The Alliance has, to date, agreed to undertake corridor studies for the following key corridors:

1. Westhill to Aberdeen along Queens Road and the Lang Stracht;
2. Ellon to Garthdee via King Street and Holburn Street;
3. A96 Inverurie to Aberdeen, linking to the Park & Ride at Craibstone;

¹ The Alliance has recognised that there is a need to review these objectives in a Post-Covid environment and has started discussions on appropriate additional or revised objectives and targets.

4. Stonehaven to Aberdeen, linking to the Newtonhill Park & Choose and a potential future Park & Ride facility at Portlethen.

For each corridor the Alliance partners will develop a prioritised programme of bus priority and associated infrastructure measures to develop a pipeline of bus improvement projects to deliver journey time and reliability benefits for bus passengers in the north east.

These corridor studies will identify the bus priority infrastructure on which a future Aberdeen Rapid Transit network will be based. Studies are already underway for corridors 1 and 2 listed above with corridor 3 awarded in December 2020.

Nestrans 2040 and ambitions for Aberdeen Rapid Transit

The Draft Regional Transport Strategy pillars reflect and are in line with the pillars of the National Transport Strategy and are centred around Equality, Prosperity, Climate and Wellbeing.

Nestrans' Draft Regional Transport Strategy (RTS), published for consultation in August 2020, also sets out 6 key priorities for transport in the region to 2040:

- Improved journey efficiencies to enhance connectivity;
- Reduced carbon emissions to support net-zero;
- Accessibility for all;
- No exceedances of World Health Organisation safe levels of emissions;
- Zero fatalities on the road network; and
- A step change in public transport and active travel enabling a 50:50 mode split between car driver and sustainable modes.

A key element of the Draft RTS designed to help achieve these priorities, is the ambition to develop a high quality, high frequency mass transit network across the City, anchored by Park & Ride facilities on each corridor to achieve the following outcomes:

- RT(a) A public transport option that provides a step change in mass transit provision in the north east.
- RT(b) A public transport solution which can offer journey times that are competitive to the car.
- RT(c) Providing mass transit which can support the economic aspirations, social requirements and environmental improvements necessary for a successful City Region.
- RT(d) A public transport network with options (rail, ART and bus) that meets the needs of travel to work, education, health and leisure and supports the tourism industry.

The draft strategy sets out that, in order to be successful, Aberdeen Rapid Transit (ART) needs to be a high capacity tram-like solution that can achieve the performance and benefits of more expensive modes, whilst being achievable and deliverable. ART vehicles need to be high capacity, low emission and should enable speedy boarding and alighting to ensure an efficient and effective transport option which can be provided on a high frequency with express services to compete with car journey times.

High profile branding and promotion as a stand-alone addition to the public transport offering in the region, but fully integrated in terms of ticketing and complementary routes and timetables will be key

to its success. Off-vehicle ticketing and attractive online and season tickets should ensure dwell times at halts and interchanges are kept to a minimum

Work to inform the development of the Draft RTS has highlighted that:

- the north east of Scotland needs a game-changer public transport offering to alter attitudes about public transport/car dependence;
- Trams and heavy rail development are unlikely to be affordable or meet acceptable Benefit: Cost ratios;
- Decision-makers (and public perception) are not convinced by the need to reallocate roadspace to benefit conventional bus operations.

It is therefore felt, at this stage that a rapid transit system provides the most appropriate solution for the north east, leaving open the potential to convert to light rail options in the future. There is a recognised need to develop this concept further, however work to date has identified that bus rapid transit operations in locations such as Belfast and Cambridge represent examples of good practice and demonstrate what can be achieved as well as lessons that can be learned for the development of ART in the north east.

The Belfast Glider: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=74Xt6pPwsxY>.



The ART proposals are intended to dovetail with aspirations for the City Centre, including implementation of a Low Emission Zone and a pedestrian priority core, which will include public transport priority access to key areas, including Union Street and Broad Street.

Proposed Bid to the Bus Partnership Fund

Overall aim: to deliver significant bus priority on key radial corridors into Aberdeen and develop and deliver a Rapid Transit Scheme that provides a step change improvement in public transport provision, that builds on and complements the bus priority delivered on these corridors.

It is proposed that the bid is split into three key elements:

1. Appraisal and business case development for Aberdeen Rapid Transit, moving from the overarching vision through strategic, outline and full business case to delivery, including developing plans for significant bus priority along key radial corridors.
2. Delivery of significant bus priority and associated measures on each of the Bus Alliance priority radial corridors into Aberdeen, linking to Park and Ride sites and based on the recommendations and findings of the multi-modal corridor studies;
3. Delivery of Aberdeen Rapid Transit (phased approach corridor by corridor) building on and complementing the significant bus priority outlined in 2 above but bringing in improvements to aspects such as vehicles, ticketing, branding and information provision to create a distinct Aberdeen Rapid Transit system.

These three points are discussed in more detail on the following pages.

1. Appraisal and Business Case Development of Aberdeen Rapid Transit (ART)

Although the principle for ART has been established within the Draft RTS, and there has been much support and interest expressed for it during consultation, there is still much work to do in terms of the development of proposals and in obtaining commitment beyond the high level principle to explore it further. Although focused on Aberdeen, it will also extend into Aberdeenshire and is perceived as a regional intervention with strategic benefit across the north east of Scotland.

The Strategic Transport Appraisal, which was funded by the City Region Deal and used to underpin the development of the Regional Transport Strategy has undertaken some initial appraisal of the options for Rapid Transit in the north east. Further information on this can be found [here](#).

The key elements of the bid in the early stages will focus on Appraisal and Business Case development. This is in line with guidance from Transport Scotland who have stated that, due to the aspirational nature of the fund, they anticipate the first years of funding to be allocated to such tasks.

Table 1 Element 1 key actions

	Key actions	Supporting information
i	<p>Development of the ART Vision and concept development.</p> <p>This will include production of a Vision document, setting out in a clear, well presented and informed way, the overall vision for an Aberdeen Rapid Transit network. This should include presentation of good practice examples from elsewhere, setting out how this could fit within a north east context.</p>	<p>Consultancy work to be carried out between December 2020 and April 2021 to support the development of the BPF Bid.</p> <p><i>This element will be funded by Nestrans and used to support the development of the bid to the Bus Partnership Fund.</i></p>
ii	<p>Strategic advice on the process for further development of the Rapid Transit proposals.</p>	<p>Consultancy support to include advice on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery framework options; • Regulatory considerations and other consents; • Financial / commercial aspects; • Route options and associated infrastructure; and • Operational issues. <p><i>This element will be funded by Nestrans and used to support the development of the bid to the Bus Partnership Fund</i></p>
iii	<p>Strategic, Outline (including option appraisal) and Full Business Case development (including detailed design)</p>	
iv	<p>Development of a prioritised pipeline of projects that can be delivered in a phased approach.</p>	

2. Bus priority and supporting measures on the Bus Alliance Priority Corridors

Corridor 1: Westhill to Aberdeen along the A944 and A9119

A Multi-modal corridor study, undertaken by Stantec and following STAG principles (Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance), was completed in October 2020. The full report as well as the decision of the City Growth and Resources Committee can be found [here](#). It will also be considered by Aberdeenshire Council's Garioch Area Committee in February 2021. The study report is effectively the Strategic Outline Case for this corridor.

The recommendations of this report splits actions into low, medium/ high Delivery and gold delivery packages of bus and active travel measures. The table below presents the bus elements from this corridor study that are proposed and included within the bid. These measures form part of a multi-modal package of measures including improvements to cycling and walking infrastructure along the corridor.

Table 2 Corridor 1 Westhill-Aberdeen

	Measure	Details / Key steps to implementation
Low Delivery Package		
i	A range of measures to be delivered in the short term identified in the Low Delivery package of the corridor study and previous measures identified through discussions on the Bus Priority Rapid Deployment Fund.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline/ full business case development and approval (includes option appraisal and detailed design) Delivery (including updates, procurement and construction)
Medium / High Delivery Package		
ii	Continuous bus priority from Westhill to Aberdeen via the A944	Bus priority to include consideration of bus lanes, bus gates, priority signalling, bus advance areas and, in line with the National Transport Strategy and Draft Regional Transport Strategy, options considered in the following order to maximise use of existing assets, minimise costs and reduce risks: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Measures that can be achieved through re-allocation of existing roadspace; Measures that require widening of the existing carriageway; Measures that require additional land take. Key steps to implementation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline/ full business case development and approval (includes option appraisal and detailed design) Delivery (including updates, procurement and construction)
iii	Continuous bus priority from Westhill to Aberdeen via the A9119	
iv	Reconfigure roundabout junctions to signalised junctions, complete with bus and cycle pre-signals.	
v	Bus stop upgrade programme and stop rationalisation	
vi	Bus prioritisation / pre-signals at all signalised junctions on the corridors	
vii	Re-allocate all lay-by bus stops to on-street bus stops.	
viii	Castle Street to Union terrace, bus, cycle and walk only	
High / Gold Delivery Package – included within the proposals for ART		

Future corridors

As mentioned above, the Bus Alliance has, within its Quality Partnership Agreement, identified four priority corridors for action. We would expect similar outputs from the other corridor studies as they progress through strategic, outline and full business case development and then to feasibility and design. The Ellon to Garthdee and A96 Inverurie to Aberdeen Corridor studies are currently at the Strategic Outline Case stage.

Table 3 Future corridors

Measure	Details
<p>Corridor 2</p> <p>Ellon to Garthdee via King Street and Holburn Street</p>	<p>Strategic Outline Case underway:</p> <p>Multi-modal corridor study currently being undertaken by consultants Aecom.</p>
<p>Corridor 3</p> <p>Inverurie to Aberdeen along the A96 connecting to the Airport and TECA</p>	<p>Strategic Outline Case underway:</p> <p>Multi-modal corridor study awarded in December 2020.</p>
<p>Corridor 4</p> <p>Stonehaven to Aberdeen via Wellington Road and Bridge of Dee and including a new park and ride site at Portlethen.</p>	<p>This corridor is partly covered by the ongoing Wellington Road Study; part of the Ellon to Garthdee corridor study above (which takes in Holburn Street); as well as any work to look at the Bridge of Dee. Will need consideration of the corridor as a whole but the approach may be different from other corridors above to reflect the previous work.</p>

3. Delivery of Aberdeen Rapid Transit

This will likely take the form of a phased and prioritised approach, building on and complementing the bus priority already delivered on the priority corridors above.

The final detail and design of an ART scheme will be dependent on the outcomes of Element 1 ‘appraisal and business case development’ above.

Estimated value of the proposals

The Strategic Transport Appraisal estimated the costs of developing and delivering a Bus Rapid Transit scheme on the following key corridors, connecting existing and planned park and ride sites, as being in the order of:

- Craibstone to City Centre: £40 - £45million;
- Portlethen to City Centre: £40 - £45million;
- Westhill to City Centre: £32 - £38million;
- and the Bridge of Don to City Centre: £32 - £38million.

We estimate therefore, at this stage, the cost of delivering the proposals above to be circa £150-£200m.

Other key considerations and complementary workstreams

Development of Bus Service Improvement Partnership agreements (BSIPs) -

The Bus Partnership Fund guidance states that applications must be from partnerships working towards Bus Service Improvement Partnership (BSIP) status. The Quality Partnership Agreement already sets out the Bus Alliance’s intention to develop BSIP agreements for each of the priority corridors setting out the facilities to be provided by the authorities and the standards to be met from operators using these facilities. Although this will not form part of the bid itself, as Transport Scotland have been clear that the funding is for bus priority and associated infrastructure measures, development of a BSIP agreement will be required alongside work on the priority corridors. It is anticipated that a BSIP agreement could include the following:

Table 4 Potential measures for inclusion in a Bus Service Improvement Partnership Agreement

Local Authorities / Nestrans	Bus Operators
Improvements to bus priority measures and additional bus priority (e.g. bus lanes, bus gates, bus only turning restrictions, traffic signal priority and sequencing, urban traffic control), to be identified through corridor studies.	Commitment to run a minimum frequency on corridors (with consideration of exclusions for special services like registered school services). Co-ordinated timetables to ensure optimum provision through the day
Improvements to bus stop infrastructure (e.g. bus shelters, bus boarders, build outs, raised kerbs, dropped kerbs).	Service stability (e.g. a limited number of timetable changes per year)
Improvements to passenger safety and security (e.g. CCTV, bus shelter lighting)	Minimum vehicle standards (e.g. maximum age, accessibility, emissions, noise).
Enhanced monitoring of service performance (e.g. journey times, reliability and punctuality)	Enhanced monitoring of service performance (e.g. journey times, reliability and punctuality)
Enhanced customer engagement (e.g. commitment to monitoring bus passenger satisfaction and Area Bus Forums)	Enhanced customer engagement (e.g. commitment to consult with passengers/communities on service changes and participate in Area Bus Forums).
Enforcement (e.g. additional bus stop clearways, parking, waiting & loading restrictions, and bus priority enforcement).	Potential to link fares rises to parking charges
Improvements to passenger information (e.g., at-stop information, real time disruption information and branding materials)	Customer service and staff training (e.g. disability awareness training)
Continued development of smart and integrated ticket products	Continued development of smart and integrated ticket products
Pursue an increase in personal travel planning with and by employers / households on the corridor.	Enhanced and targeted marketing and promotion

Governance arrangements

The fund guidance states that although it must be a partnership bid and it is being developed in partnership by the North East Bus Alliance, there must be a lead local authority to act as Accountable

Officer for the funding. Going forward, there will need to be specific consideration given to the administration, management and decision-making processes of the project should the bid be successful.

Consultation, engagement and communication

Robust and meaningful consultation and engagement throughout the development and delivery of these schemes will be key. Consultation and engagement is already taking place as an integral part of the multi-modal studies but an extensive and detailed communications plan will be required from the outset if the bid is successful.

Carbon reduction

There is significant opportunity to support the north east's ambition to move to net-zero carbon emissions through adoption of low emission / zero emission vehicles, both for a future Aberdeen Rapid Transit system but also through Bus Service Improvement Partnership agreements which can set minimum vehicle standards for vehicles allowed to use the new infrastructure provided.

Placemaking

The measures contained within this proposed bid complement the overarching aims of the City Centre Masterplan, seeking to remove traffic from the city centre, improve air quality and make it a more attractive place to work, live and visit. The proposals provide an opportunity to enhance the sense of place within the city centre in particular, through complementary streetscaping and public amenity measures.

Active travel improvements

The active travel elements of the multi-modal corridor studies will be delivered through separate funding streams but effective delivery of measures will need to be aligned and co-ordinated to achieve a step-change improvement for public transport and active travel users.