

A SUPPORT PROGRAMME FOR COMMUNITY TRANSPORT OPERATORS IN SCOTLAND

The Scottish Government Third Sector Enterprise Fund has awarded funding to the Community Transport Association to enable us to provide dedicated support to around 15 Scottish community transport operators who wish to make a step change towards becoming social enterprises. The support on offer will be a maximum of 10 days' assistance with activities which can help community transport operators become more sustainable. The support will be provided by CTA staff and/or people from outside CTA who have expertise in particular support topics.

The programme is aimed at community transport operators who are ready to take their business forward in new ways which do not necessarily rely on grant aid. A good example would be an organisation looking to tender for a transport contract for the first time and who need assistance with the process. The Local Transport Act 2009 has made it easier for community transport groups to engage in contract work through lifting some of the restrictions in the permit regime. The Scottish Government's Third Sector Enterprise Fund is enabling community transport operators to take advantage of these opportunities by backing this support programme. The programme's aim is to help community transport organisations make a step-change towards sustainability. It is not designed to provide training on social enterprise but rather to assist organisations who are already committed to going forward in a new direction. The Scottish Government's objective is to increase the number of third sector organisations who are taking practical steps towards becoming more sustainable and less reliant on grants.

The following are examples of the activities which a support package could contain:

- Assistance with contract tender bids
- Review of fare structure and other income sources to ascertain whether these are realistic for long term sustainability
- Assistance with community transport business improvement plans
- Assistance with applications for Section 22 permits or Operators Licences
- Review of costs to ascertain whether savings can be made
- Developing key organizational plans and strategies.
- Developing Partnership Initiatives – e.g. setting-up or strengthening networks/consortia or implementing organizational mergers.
- Other functions or activities that will contribute to the improved efficiency and effectiveness of the organization or quality of the service.

The programme is open now for applications and will run until March 2011. This is a fairly short timescale and it is not intended to make the programme too bureaucratic. Applications to the programme should be made using the Community Transport Enterprise Support Programme application form and should be completed on line and then sent by email to the CTA. CTA will

make a decision as quickly as possible and certainly within 28 days of receiving an application

Before completing the form, however, please phone John MacDonald at CTA on 01896 668855 or 07920 156490 for a short discussion on what you plan to do so as to be sure that your proposals are eligible and that your time is not wasted on a proposal which is not in line with the outcomes which the Scottish Government wishes to see from this programme.

We expect to be able to provide assistance to around 15 organisations in Scotland. The decisions on who should be supported will be based upon the information contained in applications. If the programme is heavily subscribed then we shall use independent advice from outside CTA to help make decisions on applications. There is no deadline for applications and support will be offered to successful applicants on a first come, first served basis.