

CALLS FOR EVIDENCE ON ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTION BUSINESS PLANS FOR RIIO-2 - RESPONSE BY COMMUNITY TRANSPORT GLASGOW

1. Introduction

This is Community Transport Glasgow's (CTG) response to the calls for evidence by Ofgem on the Electricity Distribution Business Plan for RIIO-2.

2. Background to Community Transport Glasgow

Community Transport Glasgow (CTG) is a Charity that provides not-for-profit transport solutions to over 75,000 passengers per annum. The organisation was established to provide relief to communities of Glasgow, particularly the East End and West of Glasgow, who are in need due to age, mobility, mental and physical disability, illness and poverty. This is achieved by providing affordable, reliable, accessible transport solutions to the local communities we serve who include older adults, those with mobility issues and disabilities with 70% of the people we transport over the age of 65.

CTG delivers just about every type of transport that community transport operates including, group transport to local voluntary and community groups, a community bus registered timetabled service, a volunteer car scheme enabling people to access health appointments, assisted support for learning school transport and door to door transport solutions - that assists individuals to access local clubs and those over 65 who have had a fall so that they can attend rehabilitation exercise classes as part of the NHS falls prevention programme.

3. Business Plan Section – “Our Proposed Distribution Net Zero Fund”

CTG would like to back the proposal for a Distribution Net Zero Fund as set out in the Business Plan.

3.1. Summary of the Issues Identified

As the UK moves to Net Zero funding such as this from Scottish Power will play an increasingly important part in enabling communities, particularly those operating in the Third Sector, to transition to Net Zero. There is not enough funding to support the Third Sector to transition. However, the SP Energy Network Green Economy Fund of £20 million, which CTG was the recipient of a grant fund, assisted a number of organisations who support communities in Scotland to start to address Net Zero through a number of low carbon projects in relation to transport and new technologies.

3.2. Evidence of CTG's View

In 2018, CTG developed an ambitious strategy over the next 5 years with a focus on climate change at the centre of our vision. This vision was to develop a community-centric transport system which is multi-modal, more accessible, less polluting, better coordinated, flexible and above all shared. With a major part of this to become the first fully low carbon community transport operator in Scotland.

At the time we had 16 ageing diesel minibuses some with 300,000 miles on the clock. With the assistance of the Green Economy Fund we now have 16 fully electric vehicles including 12 minibuses, 2 people carriers, 1 car and a van.

As a Charity the impact of moving to an electric fleet through this funding was transformational. It has enabled us to renew our ageing fossil fuel fleet with a new fully electric fleet. It has reduced our carbon footprint by saving 188 tonnes of CO₂ emissions in the first 18 months of operation.

However, not only did this ensure our services have an environmental impact on our local communities through the reduction to Zero tail-pipe CO₂ emissions, but it has enabled us to build and continue to deliver on our social purpose to provide not-for-profit transport solutions to the local communities we serve. It also enabled CTG to be more sustainable and assist in securing the long-term future of the organisation due to the efficiencies that have been saved from operating an electric fleet.

Without the Green Economy funding CTG would not have been able to move to an electric fleet as this type of funding to purchase vehicles is extremely scarce in our world. If we had to continue with the previous fleet, over the next couple of years CTG would have:

- Struggled to continue to provide the transport solutions to our local communities as these vehicles would become unaffordable to operate or replace.
- At a time when the requirement and demand of Community Transport solutions are increasing, particularly with an ageing population, this would mean that we would have had to reduce the amount of transport services having an impact on the 75,000 passengers who rely on our services.
- The worse-case scenario - not being able to replace the fleet - the organisation might not be here now

- Even if the organisation survived, by later this year our vehicles could not enter the City Centre of Glasgow as they would not meet the Low Emission Zone criteria.

The funding that CTG were able to receive through the Green Economy fund was truly transformational for the organisation and particularly for the passenger who make use of our transport solutions.

That is why it is important that funding like the proposed Net Zero Fund is so important.

Graham Dunn

Manager

Community Transport Glasgow