

Additional £8 million of support for light rail operators in Scotland

December 23, 2020



The Scottish Government is to provide a further £8 million of emergency funding for Glasgow Subway and Edinburgh Trams in response to the on-going financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This latest emergency funding brings the total light rail support available up to £21 million and this will now be in place until the end of March 2021.

This funding announcement follows detailed discussions with Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) and Edinburgh Trams regarding available resources due to the unprecedented impact that COVID-19 has had on travel demand.

Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity Michael Matheson said: “We continue to see reduced capacity on public transport with travel restrictions and physical distancing in place however we still need to ensure services continue for those that need to travel for essential purposes.

“The light rail networks in Glasgow and Edinburgh continue to play a part in this ongoing sustainable transport response and will be crucial in the longer term social and economic recovery to provide essential

links within Scotland's two largest cities. The support to date has enabled these light rail networks to carry over 2 million trips since July, further demonstrating the importance of these services.

"Glasgow and Edinburgh are expected to see significant financial constraint over the coming months and as such we are providing further financial assistance until the end of the financial year to enable services to continue.

"I would again like to thank all the people working across the light rail sector who have, and continue to, provide services for key workers and others who needed to travel for essential journeys to do so during very challenging circumstances."

Chief Executive of Transport for Edinburgh, George Lowder said: "The city's tramway is a key component of Edinburgh's transport system. This funding allows us to continue to carry essential and key workers, those who cannot work from home and those who need to travel to school or study through the Spring, as we continue to deal with COVID-19. Providing everyone continues to follow the guidance in place, we are confident trams are a safe mode of transport.

"We hope that, in the near future, we will be able to welcome back all our customers on board. In the meantime, I'd like to thank our customers and our colleagues for their unwavering support."

SPT Chair, Councillor Dr Martin Bartos said: "We welcome this latest emergency funding for Glasgow Subway as we continue to operate in these ever challenging times.

"Despite the many difficulties faced by all public transport operators providing services at this time, the Subway has continued to be a vital link around Glasgow for those travelling on essential journeys since the beginning of the pandemic. While 2021 will undoubtedly be another challenging year, this funding contributes towards covering the financial costs and losses which we face until passengers numbers recover."

Photo credit: Strathclyde Partnership for Transport

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