

1. What have some of the main impacts of COVID-19 been on the transport sector?

- Public transport services suffered huge impacts during lockdown, with lost patronage, and there is concern (especially due to UK Government messaging) that this could be damaging medium- to long-term. However numbers seem to be increasing, as public transport recovers as a safe form of travel.
- There have also been significant impacts on bus manufacturing in Scotland.
- Public transport services kept communities connected, and ensured that services were in place for essential journeys and key workers.
- Quieter roads, safer to cycle, have led to massive increase in walking and cycling, sales of bikes and repair services as people realise the benefits to health and well being.
- Significant increase in numbers of people working from home remotely, or their local area, in a more flexible pattern avoiding the travelling for the commute or business meetings shifting to virtual.
- Transport inequalities have been exacerbated, for example access to testing hubs has been via car, as restrictions have lifted - over 5 mile journeys have mostly needed a car. The assumptions of a car culture have been more evident.

2. Are there any positive emerging trends/behaviour changes resulting from the pandemic that can be built on during the recovery?

- Public transport kept us connected. Those who provide services more visible, should be more valued.
- Without the usual road traffic, there was a massive increase in walking and cycling. When people feel safe to walk and cycle, they will, in great numbers and increased confidence from doing so.
- For those able to walk, cycle and wheel, being active helped improve mental and physical health and wellbeing especially where there was an opportunity to access green space and connections to nature.
- Swift movement of Local Authorities, with support from Scottish Government, to put in infrastructure to enable active travel safely, projects that might normally have taken 3-7 years, taking 3-7 weeks.
- Demonstration that change can happen, and it can happen quickly. This is especially true for active and sustainable transport if the infrastructure is put in place.
- Appreciation of clean air and clear skies. Even greater awareness of how important it is to our health, reductions in air pollution, greater impacts of pollution on lungs.
- Flexible working for many, meant that travel could be avoided where it was not needed. The need for commuter journeys and business travel for meetings was significantly reduced.

- Evidence emerging that participation in work, meetings and other opportunities may be more accessible virtually for those in rural, remote areas, for those with disabilities, working around caring responsibilities or even those just at a distance from central belt and mainland.

3. What do you think should be priorities for Government in delivering a green recovery for Scotland?

Priority action: To deliver a bold and positive vision of a zero emission transport system that is fair and works for everyone in Scotland by 2030.

This will require a complete **transformation of our budget, priorities, policies and structures on transport** and how we are connected, based on recovery to good health and the principles of avoid, shift, improve.

This transformation must be based on the scientific reality that as we recover from a health emergency, we are in the midst of a climate and ecological emergency. An emergency requires urgent action. There is no doubt about the science, and further delay to that action will have even more devastating consequences.

In order to recover to good health and tackle the climate emergency, Scotland needs to achieve **modal shift** (especially out of the private car) and **decarbonisation** of transport.

The potential to do this while tackling inequalities, improving health, creating jobs and strengthening the economy is huge.

4. Why should this be the priority?

Successive governments have failed to make any meaningful progress in reducing emissions from transport in three decades. This time, it is absolutely critical we do. This could be a pivotal moment.

- **It is now about choices.** There is a choice about the pathway.
- Scottish Government has can continue to spend £6-8 billion making the problem worse building new roads, or **switch** to a system that is fair for all, powered by clean renewable electricity - to transition to a completely different vision with positive outcomes for the economy, society, our health and planet.
- The choices Scottish Government makes are clear from the budget, the direction, the structures, culture and action such as priority projects on transport. Currently those choices are impacting upon health, the NHS, exacerbating inequalities and failing to tackle pollution and emissions.

We could miss the opportunity and exacerbate the problems.

On 25th June, Transport Scotland updated that it is getting back to work on major projects. Five projects focused on cars - not public transport for everyone, or to improve health or reduce emissions.

The Programme for Government focused on Climate Emergency and commitments to deliver transport priorities to reduce emissions through bus and rail have seen no progress.

Emissions are set to increase from greater public spend on high carbon infrastructure, not zero emission infrastructure. This is a choice we have right now.

Or seize the opportunity and realise the benefits. Scotland manufactures zero emission buses, has expertise in electrification of rail, production of renewable electricity, provision of public transport services. Opportunities to mobilise money out of stranded assets and into solutions for the future.

5. Four steps towards a zero emission vision could happen right now.

1. Maximise the opportunities for active travel as an urgent priority, with more investment in infrastructure to enable everyone to walk, cycle and wheel safely as a first choice. This must happen in rural areas, villages and towns as well as right across our cities. It needs to happen urgently to safely benefit from the change to behaviour from lock down. Set a challenge for towns and cities to role model.

Priority for action: At this moment, not every child has a safe route to school for August, especially one that allows for physical distancing. There is no funding specifically directed at this need and no requirement upon local government to audit or deliver it. For example in Perth & Kinross this responsibility has been directed to Parent Councils (volunteers). This should be a right for every child.

2. Where it is possible to **avoid** travel (for commuting and business) people should be supported to work at home or in a local co-working space, or by choosing to use local services and contributing to the local economy and resilience.

Priority for action: Invest in broadband connections and co-working hubs across Scotland, to enable choices and ensure workers have access to spaces with social connections and resources needed.

3. When it is necessary to travel, the priority should be to invest in the public transport system to enable people wherever possible to choose to **shift** from using a car to active travel, bus or rail. For public transport, this choice should be affordable, reliable, high quality, clean and efficient. This shift could be from air to rail for Anglo-Scottish routes too. It should be mandatory across the public sector, where a switch is possible.

Priority for action: An action framework for buses, run on clean Scottish electricity, should be a priority for a just, green recovery. Scotland should be prioritising bus over car. As a nation that makes low and zero emission buses and exports them globally, there are huge opportunities in manufacturing in a growing global market. Also many small, rural as well as global leaders delivering bus services are based in Scotland. Yet, government commitments to bus have been timid. Iconic electric buses made in Falkirk should be showcased at COP 26 in Glasgow, demonstrating leadership in this industry. Our cities should be at least in line with those committed to zero emission transport by 2025. This requires strategic thinking about our vision, and urgent planning with operators and energy providers now. What do we choose? Plugs along our streets for those who have electric cars or electric hubs for active and sustainable transport with more active, less congested spaces, accessible to everyone. Delivering a clean, just, transition from car to public transport, creating jobs and strengthening the economy should be a priority for a just, green recovery to good health. This should be delivered through a framework for action on bus and on rail by 2030.

We know that if services are affordable, good quality, reliable, clean and safe people will switch mode and reap benefits to their own lives and health, as well as the wider community and planet.

Priority for action: In Ayrshire the #lovemybus project highlighted the opportunities that choosing bus over car can provide to save, relax, for me-time as well as be more active, to contribute to clean air and reduce emissions. Bus champions were only frustrated when sitting in car traffic. This could be easily resolved by prioritising bus on key arterial routes, encouraging modal shift, a commitment in the Climate Emergency Programme for Government but not progressed 9 months later. After a decade of discussion, this demonstrates no urgency where we need it, for a climate and health win.

4. Where we can **improve** the options for everyone to enable equity of choice across society and the country, that should be a priority. A rolling programme of improvements to increase capacity and to decarbonise the entire railway could bring benefits across Scotland, between our cities and on our long rural routes. This could be achieved by 2030, it just needs to be funded and delivered urgently. Devolution of rail could also provide an opportunity to switch to clean Scottish electricity.

Priority for action: Electrification between the central belt and Aberdeen and Inverness. This alone could enable 96% of passengers to travel on zero emission rail and also shift freight from road to rail reducing emissions and improving safety. The rolling programme of electrification has been waiting for action for 12 years, and we are running out of time to complete it within the decade (as it took with Edinburgh to

Glasgow). In 2030, most of our diesel trains will be retired or retiring, and without the infrastructure in place we will not have the choice to buy electric trains for these routes. The commitment was reiterated in the Climate Emergency Programme for Government last year but has stalled.

As we recover from a health emergency, we are also in the midst of a climate and ecological emergency. There has been no meaningful reduction in emissions from transport in 28 years. Three decades of transport policies are exacerbating the climate, and other health emergencies, especially for the most vulnerable. The budget tells the true story. For 30 years it has not prioritised health, the wellbeing of society or the climate but new roads and generated emissions from more cars. The projections of current investment show an increased spend in high carbon infrastructure, locking in more emissions - not less.

Priority for action: Public money should be tested to ensure it cannot make the problem worse. The appraisal for all public spend should be framed around climate and equalities.

6. Does a green recovery present any opportunities to create a transport system that better supports social inclusion?

- A green recovery should also be just and the transition should be focused towards a system that works for everyone and benefits whole of society, allowing everyone access to opportunities and services.
- A switch of investment out of road building and into good quality, affordable, reliable, clean, safe public transport and opportunities for safe, everyday active travel should benefit everyone.
- This switch should especially benefit children and young people, older people, those without access to cars, those in rural or less connected parts of Scotland where patronage and services have declined.
- Investment in active and sustainable transport should also create more and better jobs, apprenticeships, tackle health inequalities, reduce pressure on the NHS by reducing major illness, improve access to opportunities, reduce forced car ownership.
- This is a chance for a new better. The old normal is a system with the main focus on cars excluding 30% of households that have no access to a car; even within households that do have access to a car, some members of those households may have limited access to the car. Prioritising public spend on cars, reinforces inequalities, with the impacts of the congestion, pollution and declining services impacting most on those least able to afford them.

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Scotland's alliance for sustainable transport

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We campaign for walking, cycling and public transport to be the easiest and most affordable options for everyone. Our diverse membership brings together public, private and third sector organisations from across Scotland. We are a registered Scottish charity (SC041516).