

20% REDUCTION IN CAR KM ROUTE MAP

Response to Scottish Government consultation

6 April 2022

Do you agree with the overall behaviour change approach, and do you have any comments on the four behaviours outlined above? Please explain.

The behaviours encouraged through this policy will be key to achieving positive change in the Scottish transport sector. The outlined behaviour change approach follows the Avoid-Shift-Improve framework, particularly focusing on the avoid and shift aspects by reducing the need to travel and by encouraging modal shift from private car use to less damaging forms of transport. This is very welcome but while the route map makes reference to the need of improving alternatives to car use, historically we have seen a lot of emphasis on providing information on sustainable transport while interventions that make these forms of transport more attractive have often been stalled, delayed or limited in scale.

To achieve this ambitious target we need policies that go beyond positive messaging and make walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport the most convenient and affordable options. As long as private car use remains the most convenient choice for most trips, we are unlikely to see significant change in behaviour. It is therefore imperative that the policies supporting these choices are effective and implemented at speed.

What are the key opportunities of reducing car kilometres?

Reducing car kilometres on Scottish roads will have a wide range of positive benefits to the transport system:

1. **Preventing climate chaos** - While the UK Government has committed to ending the sale of combustion engine cars by 2030, the emissions caused by the existing fleet of petrol, diesel and hybrid cars will make it impossible to reduce emissions sufficiently to meet climate targets if the use of these vehicles is not restricted. Transport remains the largest emitting sector in Scotland and cars are the transport mode responsible for the largest quantity of emissions, so reducing car travel by 20% would have a significant impact on reducing Scotland's carbon emissions.
2. **Improving air quality** - All Scottish cities and some towns have problems with poor air quality. This is primarily caused by particles emitted by combustion engines and wear of brakes and tyres and can have severe health implications particularly for children. Reducing car traffic on urban roads could significantly improve this situation.
3. **Making streets safer and pleasanter** - Reducing car kilometres by 20% would take Scotland back to levels of car use last recorded in 1994. The growth in car travel in the past decades has made roads increasingly hostile for anyone walking, wheeling or cycling but has also caused higher levels of congestion for car drivers. Reducing car traffic would make streets pleasanter and safer, particularly for vulnerable road users.
4. **Improving bus services** - Increases in traffic over the past decades have also increased travel times for buses and decreased reliability due to congestion. Traffic reduction would therefore benefit public transport users through faster journey times and more reliable services and would make bus travel more attractive to a wider range of people.

5. **Positive effects through alternative travel behaviours** - Reducing car kilometres will mean a significant shift in people's travel behaviours which will have positive effects beyond the direct environmental effects that are the primary reason for this target. Shifting travel to more sustainable modes, particularly to active travel, could have major health benefits and even a shift to public transport usually means a walk to the bus stop or train station and leads to a more active population. Furthermore, reducing the need to travel by providing services locally could contribute to revitalising local communities and strengthening local and regional economies.

What are the key challenges faced in reducing car kilometres?

The key challenge to achieving the target of reducing car kilometres will be that it requires reversing a decades-long trend of increasing car ownership and distances driven by car. In 2018, Transport Scotland was still forecasting an increase in car travel of 12% by 2030 and 27% by 2045. Meanwhile, due to the popularity of SUVs, the average emissions per km from newly registered cars has been rising since 2016, despite the increased uptake of electric vehicles in the last years. Furthermore, the investment priorities of the Scottish Government have not yet substantially shifted towards more sustainable travel. Transport Scotland has projects to expand road capacity in the pipeline worth over £7 billion, which is a significantly larger programme than the £4 billion spent on road capacity expansion in the past ten years. Reversing the current trend towards ever more car kilometres and reducing car kms by 20% by 2030 will require political commitment to implementing radical set of policies at a swift pace, itself a radical change from the procrastination and prevarication which has characterised the past couple of decades.

Do you have any comment to make on any of the specific policies contained within the route map?

The policies outlined in the document are broadly positive policies and Transform Scotland has commented on the detail of many of these policies elsewhere. However, for the most part the route map consists of existing policy commitments and for most of these there is no clear plan on when and how they will be delivered or any modelling on what their impact on reducing car kms would be. We would have expected to find this information in the route map document and are disappointed to see that it provides no more clarity on how we will reach the target.

The only new component in the plan is to produce a car demand management framework by 2025. Not only does the document provide very little information on what will be contained in the framework, it also provides no information on how or when any of the proposals in the framework would be implemented. Given the urgency of addressing climate change and addressing one of the most polluting forms of transport, cars, the framework should be developed and published within the next 12 months. Waiting until 2025 to provide the framework is simply not good enough. We need urgent action on this target, rather than more years of delay and prevarication.

Adding to the lack of clarity around the implementation and impact of the proposed policies is that almost all policies included in the route map are pull-factors or "carrots", with the Workplace Parking Levy and any proposals potentially coming out of the car demand management framework being the only push-factors or "sticks". Primarily relying on pull-factors to deliver car km reduction is likely to fail. Researchers at The University of Aberdeen for instance found that relying exclusively on pull-factors to reduce car use was unlikely to be successful and that a combination of push- and pull-factors would likely be most effective at reducing car use and gaining the necessary public support for the policies.¹

As it stands, the route map leaves it entirely unclear whether the target can be achieved with the existing policies or whether additional measures will be necessary. The IEA's March 2022 '10 point plan to reduce oil use' is an excellent example of how this route map could have been structured to provide the relevant information

¹ <https://spice-spotlight.scot/2020/12/16/back-to-the-future-reducing-car-travel-in-scotland/>

to judge whether the proposed policies will be sufficient or not in achieving the target.²

Do you think that the proposals set out in this plan could have positive or negative impacts on any particular groups of people with reference to the listed protected characteristics?

Whether or not particular positive or negative impacts are felt by particular groups with protected characteristics will depend heavily on how the proposals are implemented. Most of these proposals however are targeted at providing a wider range of transport options, which would benefit a large number of people, though it should be ensured that these should be designed to make sustainable transport more accessible for everyone

Only the Workplace Parking Levy and potentially policies from the car demand management framework are targeted at restricting the use of private cars. When developing these policies it must be ensured that those who rely on cars for their mobility can continue to use them by ensuring that there are exemptions for certain users and that demand management options target unnecessary driving in cities and high volume users. For example blue badge parking spaces could be excluded from the WPL. This would mean blue badge holders are not negatively impacted by the policy, while cities can effectively target commuter traffic that could be shifted to public transport and other modes.

Do you think that the proposals set out in this plan could have a particular impact (positive or negative) on people facing socio-economic disadvantages?

Car drivers and households with access to one or more cars tend to be in richer socio-economic groups than the wider population. Both the number of cars that a household owns and the distance driven are directly correlated with income. People facing socio-economic disadvantages are least likely to own a car and when they do, they tend to have fewer cars and drive them less than middle and upper income groups. Meanwhile the social cost of traffic falls disproportionately on those who are less likely to drive. Deprived areas are more likely to be impacted by high traffic levels and the consequences of air pollution or road danger. For instance, children in the 20% most deprived areas of Scotland are three times as likely to be hit by a car when walking or cycling than those in the 20% least deprived areas. People facing socio-economic disadvantages also tend to be most reliant on public transport, so improvements here would disproportionately benefit them.

However, cost increases in driving would hit households that may have to use a car and are living in poverty or near the poverty level the most. It is therefore important that any pricing measures are appropriately targeted towards those who are unnecessarily using their cars. But improving access to active travel and public transport, as proposed through the route map policies, could also reduce the levels of forced car ownership among people who are socio-economically disadvantaged.

Do you think the actions proposed in the route map are likely to have an impact on the environment? If so, in what way?

The primary aim of the target is to reduce climate emissions from transport. As set out above, we believe that the target and policies to support the target would have overwhelmingly positive environmental impacts by both reducing the need to travel and reducing the resource intensity of travel.

² <https://www.iea.org/reports/a-10-point-plan-to-cut-oil-use>

Do you have views you would like to express relating to parts of this consultation which do not have a specific question?

Transform Scotland would like to express its strong support for the target and commend the Scottish Government for committing to this ambitious target. Reducing car travel by 20% by 2030 would be transformational for the Scottish transport system and reducing our reliance on cars will open many new opportunities to improve public transport and active travel provision as well as contributing to revitalising local economies. It is also essential to reaching our legally binding climate targets and reducing the impact of climate change.

We therefore look forward to working constructively with the Scottish Government on achieving this target and hope that the Scottish Government will move quickly to fill in the gaps in its policy commitments and in implementing the policies to which it has committed.

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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).