

Cross-Party Group on Sustainable Transport

28 November 2023, 18:00, Mary Fairfax Somerville Room, Scottish Parliament

Topic: Fossil-Free Future - Public transport decarbonisation

Minutes

Present

MSPs

Graham Simpson MSP (Convener, chairing)

Mark Ruskell MSP (Deputy Convener)

John Mason MSP (Deputy Convener)

Sarah Boyack MSP (Deputy Convener)

Invited guests

Transport Minister Fiona Hyslop MSP

Guest speaker: David Clarke (Technical Director at Railway Industry Association)

Guest speaker: Jamie Wilson (Head of Concepts and Advanced Engineering at Alexander Dennis)

Guest speaker: Kevin Hobbs (Chief Executive Officer at CMAL)

Non-MSP

Michael Adamson (Alexander Dennis)

Paul Baines (Siemens Mobility)

James Barclay (Levenmouth Railway Campaign)

Douglas Bryce (Disability Equality Scotland)

Ian Budd (Friends of the Far North Line)

David Burke (Harland & Wolff)

Stephen Caldicott (Light Rail UK Group)

Leah Callan (Transform Scotland)

Marie Connell (Alexander Dennis)

Mike Connelly (Rail & Bus Communications)
Heather Cowan (Transport Scotland)
Valerie Davidson (SPT)
Chris Day (Transform Scotland)
Jim Densham (Cycling UK)
Bob Docherty (Railway Industry Association)
Julia Eglin (Transform Scotland)
Rhuaraidh Fleming (Network Rail)
Abigail Fletcher (Graham Simpson MSP office)
David Frenz (Stagecoach East Scotland)
Brian Fulton (CMAL)
David Giles (SAPT)
Andrea Green (Alstom Group)
Ellie Harrison (Get Glasgow Moving)
Colin Hattersley (Transform Creative)
Lara Henderson (Community Transport Association)
Alex Hornby (McGills)
Colin Howden (Transform Scotland)
Laura Hyde-White (Transform Scotland)
Andrew Jarvis (First Bus)
David Kelly (Community Transport Association)
Becky Kenton-Lake (Stop Climate Chaos Scotland)
Craig Laws (Enterprise Holdings)
Siobhan Lennie (Alstom Group)
Graeme Macfarlan (First Bus)
Mairi Mackellaig (Transport Scotland)
Vic MacKinlay (LRTA)

Lawrence Marshall (Capital Rail Action Group)

Craig McGarrie (Intelligent Health)

Aaron McHale (individual)

Alastair McInroy (Technology Scotland)

Patrick Miner (individual)

Blair Moglia (CMAL)

William Morley (ScotRail)

Craig Morrison (Hitachi Rail)

Rachael Murphy (SEStran)

David Murray-Smith (SAPT)

Mike Mustard (Findlay Irvine Ltd)

Heather Noller (Network Rail)

Peter Ovenstone (Heritage Railway Association)

Lee Pounder (SPL Powerlines)

Ruth Rice (CMAL)

Ralph Roberts (McGills)

Alexander Ross (Network Rail)

Edward Rowlandson (LNER)

Devin Scobie (Railway Industry Association)

Alex Stewart (Siemens Mobility)

Ian Wallace (Alexander Dennis)

Paul White (CPT UK)

David Winpenny (Heritage Railway Association)

Apologies

Helen Todd (Ramblers)

David Prescott (Allan Rail)

Paul Tetlaw (Transform Scotland)

Iain MacDonald (Light Rail UK)

Deborah Paton (GCC)

Ian McCall (Paths for All)

Stuart Hay (Living Streets)

Amelia Morgan (Scottish Canals)

Allison Cosgrove (Railfuture Scotland)

Keith Fiskin (SEStran)

Gus Russel (Tweed Valley Railway Campaign)

Ali Russel (Tweed Valley Railway Campaign)

Adrian Davis (Edinburgh Napier University)

Scott Prentice (ScotRail)

Welcome & introductions

Graham Simpson MSP, Convener of the CPG, opened the meeting at 18:25. He outlined the work of the Group and the report 'Fossil-Free Future', the subject of the meeting, which detailed the findings of the Group's inquiry into public transport decarbonisation. He thanked the report's contributors and outlined its five recommendations on: decarbonising buses; decarbonising the railways; decarbonising ferries; financing the transformation; and, boosting Scotland's zero-carbon economy.

Presentations

Graham Simpson then introduced the Minister for Transport, Fiona Hyslop MSP.

Fiona Hyslop thanked the report's contributors. She noted that transport is challenging to decarbonise, and that it remains the sector which makes the single

largest contribution to carbon emissions. All transport modes play a role in reducing them. She noted that this included introducing charging networks, zero-emission buses and rail, and cutting emissions from ferries. She added that technology is part of the answer, but to meet the Scottish government's targets, 60% of emission savings must come from behaviour change. One example of how to encourage people to use more climate-friendly modes is the extension of free bus fares to under-22s.

Graham Simpson then introduced Transform Scotland director Colin Howden who set out in more detail the findings of the CPG's inquiry. He explained that in response to the challenges facing decarbonisation (such as: costs or uncertainties around demand, business models and fuels), four key themes arose from the evidence presented:

1. The need for clear and consistent policy signals and financial incentives.
2. The role of decarbonisation in assisting with modal shift objectives
3. The role of public transport decarbonisation as a key component in Scotland's low-carbon industrial strategy
4. The need to enhance knowledge-sharing in delivering decarbonisation.

He then summarised the recommendations set out by the report for the Scottish Government. These were:

1. **Decarbonising buses:** Incentivise the purchase of zero-emission buses by introducing an enhanced Network Support Grant (NSG) rate for their use.
2. **Decarbonising rail:** Put in place a rolling programme of rail electrification as part of a refresh of Transport Scotland's Rail Services Decarbonisation Action Plan.
3. **Decarbonising ferries:** Make the presumption that, where possible, all new ferries procured should be plug-in electric.
4. **Financing the transformation:** Use the Scottish Government's planned bond issue to finance investment in zero-carbon public transport infrastructure.
5. **Boosting Scotland's zero-carbon economy:** Ensure the Scottish Government's forthcoming 'Green Industrial Strategy' facilitates the development of local renewable energy sources which can be used to power Scotland's future vehicle and vessel fleets.

Discussion

Graham Simpson introduced the panel: David Clarke from the Railway Industry Association, Kevin Hobbs from CMAL, and Jamie Wilson from Alexander Dennis.

Noting disquiet in the industry regarding allocations under the ScotZEB funding, the Convener invited Jamie Wilson (Alexander Dennis) to open the discussion.

Jamie Wilson indicated that Alexander Dennis (ADL) was of course disappointed that its own ScotZEB bid, which he felt was strong, had not been successful. He felt that ADL's bid, and what was being proposed, would have helped bring about overall market transformation and provide the basis upon which Scotland could meet its net zero transport ambitions; and that it would have helped to support the significant investment that ADL is already making at its Larbert site to promote the manufacturing of ZEBs here in Scotland. Jamie said that ADL had of course not seen the detail of the other bids, but hope ultimately the bid that is successful helps to achieve some of the goals ADL set out in its own bid; that ADL will work where possible to work with the wider industry to drive forward with the roll-out of ZEBs; that it will continue to engage with the Scottish Government & Transport Scotland; and that ADL hopes that the Scottish Government will continue to look at ways it can support the wider sector moving forward.

The Convener then steered discussion to the report itself.

Kevin Hobbs welcomed the report. He noted that energy grid supplies remain problematic for ferries. He said that there is no leading solution, especially for larger vessels, whereas small ferries could be plugged into the grid.

David Clarke stated that the Scottish Government has a good strategy for rail, but that the issue is affordability. He added that a smooth delivery programme without peaks and troughs is vital.

Andrea Green (Alstom) noted that batteries will improve, but asked how best to plan, given the unpredictability of progress.

David Clarke noted that rail freight is a significant consideration; it cannot be powered by batteries. He suggested prioritisation based on carbon reduction rather than simple kilometres wired.

Kevin Hobbs added the substantial advances in battery output over the last 10 years.

Jamie Wilson reported that depending on duty cycles, a new bus could run up to 200 miles on one charge.

Mark Ruskell MSP asked how the costs of electrification can be reduced, and innovative funding be found.

John Mason MSP asked about the prospects for hydrogen.

David Clarke restated that a consistent rolling programme of electrification best reduces costs. He added that hydrogen infrastructure is very expensive.

Jamie Wilson added that the industry does not expect a major reduction in vehicle costs. However, taking account of lifetime costs and robustness, the overall cost of electrification balances out. He noted the carbon footprint of long-distance supply chains.

Kevin Hobbs noted that a hydrogen-powered vessel is twice the price of electric, which, in turn, costs a third more than diesel. The infrastructure cost is significant again. He added that it would be beneficial to bundle power infrastructure upgrades together. He cited an example from Norway in which fuel for one Norwegian hydrogen powered vessel costs 5 times that of diesel.

Sarah Boyack MSP asked how to achieve economies of scale.

Kevin Hobbs noted that with no single clear best option at present, and that this is difficult. In time, however, better solutions will emerge.

David Clarke recalled that the purpose of electrification in the Edinburgh Glasgow Improvement Programme (EGIP) had not fundamentally been decarbonisation; it was service quality. The technology for rail is now proven; the financial benefit is from life-cycle costs.

Graham Simpson closed the meeting at 19:20. He thanked the panellists and the Minister for their contributions, and the attendees for coming.