transform scotland

FIGHT OR FLIGHT

Is the Scottish public sector fighting climate emissions by flying less?

Full report

May 2024

CONTENTS

1. Introduction

This report **examines whether the Scottish public sector is taking meaningful action to cut climate emissions by flying less**. Our purpose is to determine whether the Scottish Government's declaration of a climate emergency and its subsequent actions have translated into real changes in travel attitudes and behaviour.

1.1. Scotland's public bodies

Public bodies are organisations within Scotland's public sector. They include local authorities, NHS trusts, colleges and universities, police and fire services, and a wide range of other organisations working in the environment, science, the arts, social care and other sectors. Over 20 per cent of all people working in Scotland are employed in the public sector, amounting to nearly 600,000 people at the end of 2021/22.[1]

1.2. Climate change, transport and the public sector

Since 2009, Scotland's public bodies have had a legal responsibility to reduce climate emissions under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. As transport is the single largest source of emissions in Scotland, and given that air travel is the most carbon-intensive form of transport, cutting excessive levels of flying is essential if Scotland is to meet its climate emission targets.

Furthermore, many organisations are finding that having made significant progress in cutting carbon via energy efficiency and renewables, travel is now making up an increasingly significant part of their carbon footprint. Offsetting is ineffective and neither is it feasible to wait for new technologies or aviation fuels that will cut climate emissions from flying: these won't be available at scale until the mid-2030s at the earliest, which is far too late to tackle the climate emergency.

1.3. Travel Smart

Cutting back on flying is not just better for the environment, it's also a smarter way to travel, as it provides the potential to save money, improve employee well-being and promote efficient working in the public sector. By reducing frequent flying, while making the most of rail journeys and virtual collaboration, organisations can see benefits for themselves and the planet.

Transform Scotland is part of 'Travel Smart', a global campaign led by European transport NGO Transport & Environment (T&E) with partners across Europe, North America and Asia which aims to reduce corporate air travel emissions and promote the business benefits of flying less. At the centre of the campaign is the Travel Smart ranking which compares how 322 businesses across the world are performing on commitments to reduce and report corporate air travel emissions. The current project was an opportunity to adopt some of the Travel Smart methodology to analyse the performance of the Scottish public sector.

1.4. Progress over the past decade

In 2013, Transform Scotland analysed how Scottish public bodies were performing on transport. We published the results in our 'Doing Their Duty?' report.[2]

In that report, we found that while there were strong policy commitments to sustainable transport and emissions reduction at local, regional and national levels of government, there was little evidence of concerted action to turn sustainable transport policies into practice. At least 60% of Scottish public bodies had no plans for reducing their travel by means of implementing a Travel Plan, and public bodies were overwhelmingly choosing air (74% of journeys) over rail (26%) for long-distance travel between Edinburgh/Glasgow and London.

We made a series of recommendations to put impetus into public sector efforts to deliver on sustainable transport and meet the legal requirements of public bodies under the 2009 climate act, including:

- Public bodies should measure and monitor emissions from work-related travel;
- The Scottish Government should develop and publish a standard methodology for measuring emissions from commuter and business travel;

[1] Audit Scotland(2023). The Scottish Government's workforce challenges. https://audit.scot/uploads/docs/report/2023/briefing_231026_scotlands_public_sector_workforce.pdf

[2] Transform Scotland (2013). Doing Their Duty? https://archive2022.transform.scot/site/what-we-do/research/doing-their-duty/index.html

- Public bodies should put in place robust travel policies that rule out air travel, except in exceptional circumstances, for travel between the Scottish Central Belt and London.

A decade on, we wanted to determine what progress had been made and whether the recommendations from 2013 had been acted on, specifically focussing on air travel.

2. Aims and objectives

The aim of this research was to assess whether the Scottish public sector is taking meaningful action to tackle climate change by flying less, that is:

1. To analyse the level of climate emissions from flying by Scottish public bodies;
2. To assess the strength of public bodies' policies and targets for cutting climate emissions from air travel;
3. To establish how much progress has been made over the past decade;
4. To identify examples of good and bad practice;
5. To make recommendations for how the Scottish public sector can effectively reduce climate emissions from flying.

3. Approach

Research took place between May and November 2023.

3.1. Analysis of data from public bodies' climate change reporting

Since 2015, major public bodies in Scotland have been required to report annually on their climate change emissions under the 'Climate Change (Duties of Public Bodies; Reporting Requirements) (Scotland) Order 2015'.[3] For the 2021-22 reporting period, reports were received from all 188 public bodies which have a mandatory requirement to report, as well as a handful of other public bodies which voluntarily decided to submit a report. We used this data to analyse the level of reported emissions from flights by the public bodies.

3.2. Freedom of Information requests

To gather further detail on what action the public bodies were taking to tackle emissions from flying, we sent Freedom of Information Scotland Act (FOISA)[4] requests to 164 of the public bodies. We excluded the Integration Joint Boards as their staff are typically hosted by other organisations and report zero or very small levels of carbon emissions.

We asked the public bodies to provide information on (i) their targets and policies to reduce climate emissions from business and air travel and (ii) the number of air and rail journeys made between Edinburgh/Glasgow and London (see letter in Appendix A).

A total of 144 out of 164 public bodies responded to our FOISA request, a response rate of 88%.

4. Results and analysis

4.1. Flying in Scottish public bodies

We used data from the public bodies' climate change reports to calculate the level of emissions from flying for business travel.

In total, around 90% of reported carbon emissions from flying were from short haul, long haul and international flights and around 10% were from domestic flights.

For each public body, we added together their total reported emissions from all types of flight. We had originally intended to use this data to compare the performance of different public bodies. However it soon became clear

[3] Sustainable Scotland Network https://sustainablescotlandnetwork.org/reports

[4] A request under the under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA)

that this would be both unfeasible and unfair as there was a great deal of variation in the scope of reporting between different public bodies. For example, some public bodies included emissions from staff or student commuting within their reporting boundary and thus reported comparatively high emissions, whilst other public bodies collected very limited data and 9% did not report any scope 3 travel emissions at all in 2021/22.[5] [6] It was therefore not possible to get comparative data that would have allowed a ranking of public bodies according to their aviation emissions, nor to draw detailed comparisons between individual public bodies based on their level of emissions.

Instead, we used the data to identify the 50 public bodies which reported the highest levels of carbon emissions from flying. Whilst not definitive, this does provide an indication of which public bodies are flying the most and hence which public bodies should be taking the strongest action to cut emissions from flying.

Table 4.1 The 50 public bodies which reported the highest level of carbon emissions from flying in 2021/22

Public bodies		
Aberdeenshire Council	New College Lanarkshire	The Scottish Ambulance Service
Borders College	NHS Ayrshire and Arran	The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
City of Edinburgh Council	NHS Education for Scotland	The Scottish Government
City of Glasgow College	NHS National Services Scotland	The Scottish Parliament
Creative Scotland	NHS Shetland	The Scottish Qualifications Authority
Edinburgh College	Orkney Islands Council	Transport Scotland
Edinburgh Napier University	Queen Margaret University	University of Aberdeen
Education Scotland	Robert Gordon University	University of Dundee
Food Standards Scotland	Scotland's Rural College	University of Edinburgh
Forth Valley College of Further and Higher Education	Scottish Enterprise	University of Glasgow
Glasgow Caledonian University	Scottish Water	University of St Andrews
Glasgow City Council	Shetland College UHI	University of Stirling
Glasgow School of Art	Skills Development Scotland	University of Strathclyde
Heriot-Watt University	The Care Inspectorate	University of the Highlands and Islands
Highlands & Islands Enterprise	The James Hutton Institute	University of the West of Scotland
Historic Environment Scotland	The Moredun Institute	VisitScotland
Lews Castle College*	The Royal Botanic Garden Scotland	

* In August 2023 Lewes Castle College merged with North Highland College and West Highland College to form UHI North, West and Hebrides.

[5] Scope 3 emissions are indirect emissions arising from the procurement of goods or services (other than energy) from a third party contractor. Emissions from business travel are scope 3, apart from travel in fleet vehicles including lease vehicles and pool cars which is scope 1.

[6] Sustainable Scotland Network. Public Bodies Climate Change Reporting, 2021/22 Analysis Report. https://sustainablescotlandnetwork.org/uploads/store/mediaupload/2141/file/SSN_AnalysisReport_21-22.pdf

Colleges and universities (i.e. 'educational institutions') made up almost 50% of the top 50 fliers. By contrast, local government was under-represented as it accounted for 17% of the public bodies submitting climate change reports but only 8% of the top fliers. There were no Transport Partnerships or Integration Joint Boards in the top 50, reflecting the fact that they have far fewer staff and thus far less travel in comparison to other types of public body.

Table 4.2 Distribution of public bodies by sector

Sector	Percentage of public bodies included in the group of top 50 fliers	Percentage of public bodies submitting climate change reports
Educational institution	46%	24%
Others	36%	29%
Local Government	8%	17%
National Health Service	10%	11%
Transport Partnerships	0%	4%
Integration Joint Boards	0%	16%
TOTAL	100%	100%

4.2. Emission reduction targets

We examined responses to the FOISA request from the 50 public bodies which reported the highest levels of flying. We received responses from 47 out of 50 of these public bodies, a response rate of 94%.

We asked the public bodies whether they had a target to cut emissions from air and/or business travel. As the focus of our research was flying, when analysing the responses we excluded targets that were specifically for non-air travel (e.g. targets to reduce car km or cut emissions from fleet vehicles). We also excluded overarching net zero targets as these do not provide meaningful, disaggregated information on business travel.

Overall, 10 of the 50 public bodies (20%) had some sort of target to cut emissions from business travel that would include air travel for work, whilst a further 11 public bodies (22%) stated that they were currently developing a target. The majority of targets were for business travel rather than for air travel specifically. The strongest targets were for high absolute percentage emissions reductions within a specified time period. For example Glasgow Caledonian University had a target to '*reduce greenhouse gas emissions from travel to below 13,000 tCO2e per year by 2025-2026 (at least 9% lower then emissions reported in 2018-19 and 34% lower than reported in the University's baseline year of 2014-2015)*'.[7] The University of Aberdeen had an interim target of a '*40% reduction in business travel emissions by 2024/25 (based on 18/19 levels)*'.[8]

Table 4.3 Targets to cut emissions from business travel (encompassing air travel) in public bodies

Target	Percentage of public bodies
Has a target	20%
Target under development	22%

[7] Glasgow Caledonian University Sustainable Travel Plan. The scope includes all travel to and from the University's campuses including student travel home, student and staff commuting, business travel, and deliveries and collections by suppliers.

[8] University of Aberdeen 2040 Implementation Plan.

Target	Percentage of public bodies
No target	52%
No response	6%
TOTAL	100%

4.3. Policies to reduce business travel emissions

We wanted to identify whether the public bodies had policies to reduce emissions from business travel. Although the focus of our research was flying, more general information about business travel provides a proxy in cases where specific information about flights is missing as well as an indication of intent.

We therefore examined responses to the FOISA requests to determine whether the top 50 fliers had effective policies to cut emissions from business travel.

Just over half (56%) of the public bodies reported that they had some sort of corporate policy to reduce emissions from business travel, with a further 24% stating that they were currently developing a policy. Therefore, in total 80% of public bodies either had or were in the process of developing a corporate policy to reduce emissions from business travel.

The public bodies referred to a wide range of types of business travel policy. Some had a stand-alone sustainable travel plan, policy or guidance, whilst others referred to provisions with their travel and expenses policy. For some public bodies, measures on sustainable travel were contained within an overarching climate or net zero policy for the organisation.

Around a quarter (28%) of the public bodies used the sustainable travel hierarchy[9] as the basis of their policy. For example the Scottish Government's '*Business Travel guidance for staff*' starts by asking employees whether they need to travel at all ('*The best way to reduce overall business travel is to use technology to interact with colleagues, instead of having a face-to-face meeting.*'). If travel is required then staff are asked to '*Apply the following sustainable travel hierarchy for your most efficient and eco-friendly travel:*

- *walking and wheeling are most preferable*
- *cycling*
- *public transport*
- *taxis and shared transport*
- *private car is least preferable*'

The guidance concludes that '*air travel has high carbon emissions per journey and should be avoided for travel within the UK, unless travelling to the islands and only when ferry travel is not cost effective.*'

A further quarter (28%) of the public bodies had particularly strong policies containing specific actions and/or targets. These included:

- City of Edinburgh Council: The Council measures annual emissions from business travel broken down by mode of transport. The Council-wide 'Emissions Reduction Plan' contains a detailed breakdown of business travel emissions and estimates the impact on carbon emissions of different interventions. There are a series of business travel key performance indicators which are reported on every year, including total business travel emissions to be net zero by 2030, alongside 13 detailed actions to reduce emissions associated with business travel, including a commitment to phase out air travel for business. The Council's business travel guidance states that air travel is not allowed when a direct rail connection is available; this covers Elected Members as well as staff.

[9] The Sustainable Travel Hierarchy promotes walking, cycling, public transport and bike, car and ride sharing in preference to single occupancy car use.

- Glasgow Caledonian University: The University provides a comprehensive annual report on travel emissions. As well as emissions from staff business travel, they also report emissions from student commuting and travel by students to and from home at the start and end of term. Their comprehensive Climate Conscious Travel & Expenses Policy and Sustainable Travel Plan contain detailed targets and specific actions to reduce emissions from travel, including specific interventions to encourage less flying for business trips. They have a target to *'reduce greenhouse gas emissions from travel to below 13,000 tCO2e per year by 2025-2026 (at least 9% lower then emissions reported in 2018-19 and 34% lower than reported in the University's baseline year of 2014-2015)'*.

In all cases, management sign-off and enforcement is crucial in determining whether the policy has an impact or not.

Table 4.4 Policies to reduce business travel emissions in public bodies

Policy	Percentage of public bodies
Policy with specific actions and/or targets	28%
Policy promoting the sustainable travel hierarchy	28%
Policy under development	24%
No policy	14%
No response	6%
TOTAL	100%

4.4. Policies to reduce the use of air travel

We examined responses to the FOISA request to determine whether the top 50 fliers had effective policies to specifically reduce their use of air travel.

Around a quarter (26%) of these public bodies had a corporate policy which specifically singled out the need to reduce air travel for business travel purposes. These included eight public bodies (16%) which had a policy that specifically mandated against air travel for domestic trips in the UK.

Table 4.5: Public bodies with stronger policies to reduce domestic air travel

Public body	Policy on domestic air travel
The City of Edinburgh Council	Air travel is not allowed when a direct rail connection is available. Domestic air travel is only allowed in exceptional circumstances. Rail is encouraged for international travel.
Historic Environment Scotland	All UK mainland journeys should be undertaken by ground public transport where possible and there are fast and efficient inter-city rail services available. Domestic flights should only be authorised in exceptional circumstances (e.g. travel to islands, health-related reasons).
The Scottish Government/ Transport Scotland	Air travel should be avoided for travel within the UK, unless travelling to the islands and only when ferry travel is not cost effective.
The University of Aberdeen	Rail travel should be considered the norm for all journeys which would take under 6 hours, unless there are exceptions for clearly defined extenuating circumstances.

Public body	Policy on domestic air travel
The University of Edinburgh	No air travel for trips within mainland Great Britain. Limited exceptions (e.g. for disability, childcare or health-related reasons), for which prior approval is required. The uptake of first class and sleeper rail or coach services is supported where practical.
The University of Glasgow	Staff should avoid domestic flights unless there are specific justifications (e.g. reasonable adjustment for people with disabilities).

Eight public bodies (16%) had a policy which, while not going into detail on flights, did make general reference to implementation of the sustainable travel hierarchy. Eleven public bodies (22%) stated that their policy was currently under development.

Table 4.6 Policies to reduce air travel in public bodies

Policy	Percentage of public bodies
Policy with mandate against domestic flights	16%
Specific policy on air travel reduction	10%
Policy which relies on the sustainable travel hierarchy	16%
Policy under development	22%
No policy	30%
No response	6%
TOTAL	100%

4.5. Ranking of the public bodies

A scoring system was developed to calculate how well each of the top 50 fliers was performing on targets and policies for tackling emissions from air travel.

Table 4.7 Criteria used to score the quality of public bodies' targets and policies for tackling emissions from air travel

Criteria	Scoring system
Does the public body have a **target to cut emissions from business travel** that would include emissions from flying?	No target = 0 Target under development = 1 Has a target = 2
Does the public body have a corporate **policy to reduce emissions from business travel**?	No policy = 0 Policy under development = 1 Policy with commitment to implementing the sustainable travel hierarchy = 2 Policy with specific actions and/or targets = 3

Criteria	Scoring system
Does the public body have a corporate **policy to reduce the use of air travel** for business travel purposes?	No policy = 0 Policy under development = 1 Broad commitment to implement the sustainable travel hierarchy = 2 Detailed policy to reduce the use of air travel = 3 Mandate against domestic flights = 4

Each public body was given a total score and a grade of A, B, C or D, based on the strength of their policies and targets to tackle emissions from flying. The results are shown in the following table.

Table 4.8 Ranking of public bodies based on the strength of their policies and targets to tackle emissions from flying

Grade	Public body	Total score
A	The City of Edinburgh Council	9
A	Glasgow Caledonian University	9
A	The Royal Botanic Garden Scotland	9
A	The University of Aberdeen	9
A	The University of Edinburgh	9
A	The Moredun Institute	8
A	Forth Valley College of Further and Higher Education	7
A	Historic Environment Scotland	7
A	The Scottish Government	7
A	Transport Scotland	7
A	The University of Glasgow	7
B	Highlands & Islands Enterprise	6
B	The University of Strathclyde	6
B	Heriot-Watt University	5
B	Robert Gordon University	5
B	Scottish Water	5
B	The Care Inspectorate	5
B	The Scottish Qualifications Authority	5
B	University of Stirling	5
B	University of the Highlands and Islands	5
B	VisitScotland	5
B	Aberdeenshire Council	4
B	Borders College	4
C	Food Standards Scotland	4
B	Shetland College UHI	4
C	Creative Scotland	3
C	Glasgow City Council	3
C	Glasgow School of Art	3
C	Scottish Enterprise	3
C	The Scottish Ambulance Service	3
C	Edinburgh College	2

Grade	Public body	Total score
C	Edinburgh Napier University	2
C	NHS Ayrshire and Arran	2
C	NHS National Services Scotland	2
C	Skills Development Scotland	2
C	The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service	2
C	The Scottish Parliament	2
C	University of St Andrews	2
C	Queen Margaret University	1
C	University of Dundee	1
C	University of the West of Scotland	1
D	City of Glasgow College	0
D	Education Scotland	0
D	New College Lanarkshire	0
D	NHS Shetland	0
D	Orkney Islands Council	0
D	Scotland's Rural College	0
	NHS Education for Scotland	No response provided
	The James Hutton Institute	No response provided
	Lews Castle College	No response provided

4.6. Travel to London

The FOISA request asked the public bodies to provide information on the number of flights that their staff had taken from Edinburgh and Glasgow Airports to London Airports for business purposes, and the corresponding number of rail journeys that they had taken. This was a repeat of the question asked in the 2013 FOISA request, thus allowing a direct comparison of change over the past ten years.

In analysing travel to London we examined data from all 144 public bodies who responded to the FOISA request.

Ten years ago, public bodies were overwhelmingly choosing air travel (74% of journeys) over rail travel (26%) for long-distance travel between Edinburgh/Glasgow and London. By 2023, rail had overtaken flying as the most common mode of travel, with air travel making up 48% of travel compared to 52% for rail travel.

Table 4.9 Split between air and rail for travel to London in 2013 and 2023

Mode	Percentage of trips in 2013	Percentage of trips in 2023
Air	74%	48%
Rail	26%	52%
Total	100%	100%

4.7. Progress against recommendations over the past ten years

In 2013, Transform Scotland made a number of recommendations to put impetus into public sector efforts to deliver on sustainable transport and meet the legal requirements of public bodies under the 2009 climate act. The following table summarises progress made against these recommendations over the past decade.

Table 4.10 Progress against 2013 recommendations

Recommendation	Progress
Public bodies should measure and monitor emissions from work-related travel.	All major public bodies are now required to report annually on their emissions under the Climate Change (Duties of Public Bodies; Reporting Requirements) (Scotland) Order 2015. However it is up to each public body to choose its own reporting boundary (i.e. the list of emission sources the organisation chooses to measure over the reporting period).
The Scottish Government should develop and publish a standard methodology for measuring emissions from commuter and business travel.	The 'Guidance on Public Bodies Climate Change Duties Annual Reporting' goes some way towards meeting this recommendation but there remains wide variation in the scope and quality of data collection.
Public bodies should put in place robust travel policies that rule out air travel, except in exceptional circumstances, for travel between the Scottish Central Belt and London.	Only eight out of the fifty public bodies reporting the highest level of flying had such a policy.

5. Conclusions

The aim of this study was to examine whether the Scottish public sector was taking meaningful action to cut climate emissions by flying less. We wanted to determine whether the Scottish Government's declaration of a climate emergency and commitments to tackling climate change had translated into real changes in travel attitudes and behaviour. As transport is the single largest source of emissions in Scotland, and given that air travel is the most climate-intensive form of transport, tackling flying is essential if Scotland is to make significant progress on climate change.

It is clear that some types of public body travel more than others. Out of the 50 public bodies which reported the highest levels of emissions from flying, almost half (23) were colleges and universities. By comparison, local government was under-represented among the top fliers, making up 17% of the total number of public bodies but only 8% of public bodies in the top 50 for reported emissions.

Compared to ten years ago, the public sector has made significant progress in cutting the number of domestic flights. In 2013, Scottish public bodies were overwhelmingly choosing air for travel between Edinburgh/Glasgow to London, with 74% of journeys made by air compared to 26% for rail. By 2023, rail had overtaken flying to become the most common mode of travel, with air travel making up 48% of travel compared to 52% for rail.

Public bodies which performed particularly strongly on targets and policies to tackle flying included educational institutions (Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Glasgow Caledonian universities and Forth Valley College of Further and Higher Education), local government (City of Edinburgh Council), the Scottish Government, and others (Historic Environment Scotland, the Moredun Institute and the Royal Botanic Garden).

On the other hand, of the fifty public bodies reporting the highest levels of emissions from flying, only one in five (20%) had some sort of business travel emissions reduction target that encompassed air travel. A further 22% were in the process of developing a target but half (52%) had no target at all.

Among this same group of fifty public bodies, only a quarter (26%) had a corporate policy which specifically singled out the need to reduce air travel. These included eight public bodies which had a policy that specifically mandated against air travel for domestic trips in the UK. A further 16% had a broad policy which recommended use of the sustainable travel hierarchy but did not go into detail on flights. Eleven public bodies (22%) stated that their policy was currently under development.

More generally, the majority (80%) of public bodies did at least either have or were in the process of developing some sort of broad corporate policy to reduce emissions from business travel. These included stand-alone

sustainable travel plans, policies or guidance, travel & expenses policies, and organisational climate or net zero policies which encompassed travel.

In all cases the implementation and enforcement of travel policies, for example the procedure for booking and approving travel, is fundamental to determining whether a policy has any impact on flying or not.

So, is the Scottish public sector taking meaningful action to cut climate emissions by flying less? Our research has shown that whilst there are some examples of good practice and advances in modal shift from air to rail for UK trips, too few public bodies have meaningful targets or policies that specifically tackle flying, the most carbon-intensive form of transport.

6. Recommendations

To fight climate emissions by flying less, we make the following recommendations for public bodies:

1. All public bodies should set an absolute emissions reduction target for air travel. Public bodies should cut emissions to 50% of pre-covid levels by 2030 at the latest - the level of reduction required to keep aviation within a 1.5°C-compatible pathway.

2. All public bodies should establish a credible plan or policy to cut down on air travel emissions, containing specific targets, actions, responsibilities and provisions for monitoring and evaluation. Measures could include setting emissions budgets, maximising virtual collaboration and incentivising rail travel. Public bodies should have effective procedures for signing-off travel and enforcing their policies.

3. All public bodies should measure and monitor emissions from business travel, and ensure transparent reporting of their emissions.

4. All public bodies should commit to using the train for UK trips. At a minimum, public bodies should rule out air travel, other than in exceptional circumstances, for travel between the Scottish Central Belt and London. We made this same recommendation a decade ago in 2013. While we are pleased to see that some public bodies have now adopted this policy, most are yet to do so.

5. Public bodies should consider setting additional targets appropriate to their location and frequent trip destinations, following the practice of other leading public bodies. For example, a ban on flying for trips under 5 or 6 hours in duration, or a mandate against all domestic flights in mainland UK.[10]

[10] Public bodies based in Edinburgh or Glasgow, where a fast and frequent rail alternative exists for trips to London, may find a 'ban' on all domestic flights in mainland UK to be the most reasonable approach. Organisations based further north may find a 'ban' to unworkable given the considerably longer journeys times and slower rail network north of the Central Belt. For some public bodies there may be a case for a target based on journey length (e.g. the University of Aberdeen states that '*Rail travel should be considered the norm for all journeys which would take under 6 hours*'), or a modal share approach.

Appendix A: Freedom of Information request

SCOTLAND'S ALLIANCE FOR SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

transform scotland

Transform Scotland
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13 September 2023

Dear FOI Officer

Freedom of Information request - business travel

Please see below a request for information under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and under the Environmental Information Regulations.

I am seeking this information on behalf of Transform Scotland, the national alliance for sustainable transport. We represent a diverse range of member organisations, from community groups, environmental NGOs, walking and cycling charities to transport companies, local authorities and universities.

Our information request is with regards to the delivery of sustainable transport within Scotland's Public Bodies, and particularly in the context of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009.

Firstly, we are interested in Public Bodies' targets for business travel:

1. Do you have a target to cut emissions from air and/or business travel? If so, please share information about any target(s) you have (e.g. description of the target, when the target was adopted, timeline to meeting the target).

Secondly, we are interested in Public Bodies' corporate travel policies and plans:

2. Please provide copies of any corporate policy your organisation has on the reduction of emissions from business travel.

3. Please provide copies of any corporate policy your organisation has on the reduction of the use of air travel for business travel purposes.

Finally, we are specifically interested in Public Bodies' use of rail and air for domestic travel:

4. Please provide details of the number of flights your staff have taken from Edinburgh & Glasgow Airports to London Airports for business purposes in the past 12 months (or your most recent 12 month reporting period) for travel to destinations within south-east England.

5. Please provide details of the number of rail journeys your staff have taken from Edinburgh & Glasgow railway stations to London railway stations for business purposes in the past 12 months (or your most recent 12 month reporting period) for travel to destinations within south-east England.

I would be grateful if you would supply this information by email.

If I can help to clarify this request please contact me by email at policy@transform.scot or 07541423511.

I look forward to hearing from you within 20 working days after you receive this request.

Yours faithfully,

Elspeth Wray
Head of Enterprise, Transform Scotland

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