

Annual Report 2025



transform
scotland

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR

This is my first foreword as Chair of Transform Scotland, a role that I was delighted to be appointed to last year, following several years as a Member of the Board.

This Annual Report summarises the significant outputs delivered by Transform in the past year. This highlights the breadth of Transform's engagement across a number of modes and topics: including, but not exclusively, bus priority work through 'Life in the Bus Lane', behaviour change with the award winning 'A Wee Walk Works Wonders' media campaign, an excellent event at Holyrood advocating for rail over air for cross-border travel, supporting the Cross Party Group's inequalities work 'Mind the Gap' and presenting ideas to fund sustainable transport.

In my initial discussions with the Cabinet Secretary for Transport and with Transport Scotland officials, it is clear that Transform is valued as a constructive, critical friend. The challenges presented through data led, evidence-based reports and commentary are held in high regard. These inputs may not always lead to the outcomes we would like to see, but cognisance is taken of them, and we have been urged to keep going.

In my discussions with Transform members it is also clear that this role is also much valued by public transport operators and other sustainable transport stakeholders who may not always be able to speak as freely as Transform can and does.

So, my first conclusion after a year as Chair is that the "what" is clear. My second conclusion is that the "how" is more challenging in terms of the political context we face; U-turns on traffic reduction, uncertainty around funding – particularly active travel and changes to the way in which funds are dispersed – and the rise of 'war-on-the-motorist' rhetoric in public and political discourse.

Against this backdrop, we must do all we can to put Transform on a sustainable financial footing. This requires a refreshed strategy and business model, an updating of the business plan and an even broader membership.

Looking ahead, we have the Scottish Parliament elections in May 2026 – and work has already begun to help influence policy, regardless of the complexion of the next Scottish Government. Mindful of the Scottish Spending Review, Infrastructure Investment Pipeline refresh, and 2026-27 Budget we will make the case that policy promises must be aligned with funding to achieve sustainable transport priorities.

Finally, I would like to thank all of our members for their continued support, and the director and his team for their hard work and dedication. I look forward to working with you all in the coming year.

– George Lowder MBE



OUR YEAR

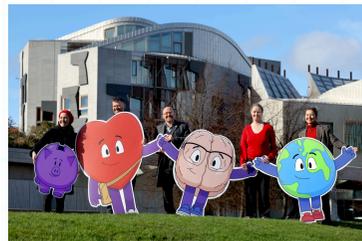
As this Parliament nears its end, we've kept up the pressure to turn bold transport promises into real progress – despite stretched budgets and a shift in public attention away from climate. We've continued to make the case that better transport is key to tackling poverty, improving public health, boosting the economy, and creating fairer communities.

From pushing for more public investment and backing walking and rail over driving and flying, to leading work with the Scottish Parliament's Cross Party Group on Sustainable Transport, we've brought people together to call for a transport system that helps everyone get around Scotland fairly and sustainably.

September
2024

Getting people walking more and driving less

Our autumn media campaign 'A Wee Walk Works Wonders – Whatever the Weather!' built on the success of our pilot spring campaign, where 1 in 3 people walked more and drove less. In Moray and Aberdeenshire, the media campaign encouraged people to swap short car journeys for walking. Independent surveys showed 37,000 people made the switch, saving £1.5m and 2,500 tonnes of CO₂ annually if sustained. The campaign was also shortlisted for three national awards, recognising its powerful impact in changing everyday travel behaviour.



October

November

Celebrating rail over air in Parliament

In February 2025 we held our Think Rail First parliamentary reception with LNER, celebrating rail's essential role in connecting Scotland sustainably and driving economic growth. Marking #Railway200, we highlighted our two-decade long air-to-rail campaign and welcomed strong commitments from the Cabinet Secretary for Transport to decarbonise and invest in the network. With faster, greener links to London coming in December 2025, we continue to champion rail over air, highlighting the benefits for business, communities and the climate.

Raising funds for sustainable transport

Launched in November 2024, our Ideas for Investment report sets out practical, fair ways to raise revenue for sustainable transport, including parking charges, land value capture and climate bonds. These proposals aim to address Scotland's long-standing transport funding gap by raising funds within the sector, following the polluter pays principle and prioritising spreading costs fairly amidst a cost-of-living crisis. We are continuing discussions with the Cabinet Secretary on next steps.



February



Giving bus users priority

Our 'Life in the Bus Lane' project spoke directly to bus users and non-users across Scotland – hosting 14 local events and engaging 1,713 members of the public. Findings showed 76% of non-bus users value bus priority but safety, reliability, and passenger information improvements are urgently needed. Launched in Glasgow in March, the project brought together bus operators, local authorities, and regional transport partnerships to call on the Scottish Government to accelerate bus priority investment.



March

Tackling inequalities in transport

This year, amidst growing concerns over poverty and inequality, we coordinated the Cross Party Group on Sustainable Transport's inquiry on transport inequalities, culminating in the final report 'Mind the Gap'. Presented in the Scottish Parliament to the Cabinet Secretary for Transport and MSPs, the report highlights how Scotland's transport system excludes many people – especially women, disabled people, children and low-income households. It calls for a clear definition and measurement of transport poverty to ensure transport enables everyone to access education, work and everyday life.



June

Preparing for Scottish Parliament 2026 elections

In July, over 50 members and supporters joined our Member Network Briefing in Stirling, exploring party positions on transport ahead of the 2026 elections. With guest speakers from Cycling Scotland and SCVO, the event combined policy insight, engaging discussion, and networking, and captured what Transform does best: bringing the sector together – from local campaigners to national organisations – to push for a fairer, more sustainable transport system.



July

August
2025

LOOKING AHEAD

In the coming months, we'll be focussing on shaping party manifestos in the run-up to the 2026 elections. Alongside this, we'll be continuing our work on tackling car dependency – focussing on how progressive parking policies can transform our streets and reduce the trend towards larger and heavier cars.

We'll also be educating young people on the role of the most-used public transport mode through our new Love My Bus Youth Programme in Tayside.

We'll also continue to coordinate the Cross Party Group on Sustainable Transport as its attention shifts to sustainable freight – and we'll be bringing our members together more often with our regular Member Network Briefings.

OUR SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

This year we celebrated 10 years of our two social enterprises: Transform Consulting and Transform Creative. Both deliver expert, purpose-driven services – with profits reinvested directly into our mission to build a fairer, greener, more sustainable Scotland.

transform consulting

Transform Consulting is Scotland's specialist consultancy for sustainable transport, offering research and communications expertise across walking, cycling, buses, trains, and more. Our clients have included:



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH



transform

Transform Creative is our D&AD award-winning design and communications agency, which brings together creative specialists to deliver imaginative, impactful work that makes a real difference. Our clients have included:



Check out the Q&A we did with the Transform Creative team to mark its 10th anniversary [here](#).



OUR MEMBERS

Our diverse membership brings together individuals and a wide range of organisations – from community campaign groups and environmental NGOs through to transport companies, local authorities and universities.



Member Network Briefing, Stirling, July 2025



We are
transform
Scotland's alliance for sustainable transport