

JUST TRANSITION COMMISSION

Submission from Transform Scotland
Wednesday, 29 May 2019

1. Transport Sector

Transport sector is the most problematic sector in Scotland - and where emissions have barely shifted since 1990. This is a sector that represents a lot of jobs too, and could represent a lot more.

There are great opportunities for global leadership and multiple benefits to jobs, economy, health and well being from a whole system approach to active and sustainable transport as part of a just transition.

2. Current focus

The Scottish Government Climate Change Plan, UK Climate Change Committee and other advice largely focus on Electric Vehicles as the solution to tackle emissions from transport.

EVs must have a role to play, but as the primary focus of our transition effort this would overlook the important contribution of active travel and public transport. The current problem in transport is that capital expenditure priorities are focused on new road building, generating more traffic, exacerbating health inequalities, congestion and inefficiencies.

73% of our emissions are from road traffic. Yet, at this moment Scottish Government projected capital spend (pipeline) is to increase in high carbon projects, according to a Scottish Parliament Information Centre analysis. <https://spice-spotlight.scot/2018/10/16/capital-spend-locking-in-high-or-low-carbon-futures/> This would lock us into further high carbon infrastructure, rather than gain from all the possible wins.

3. Opportunities for health, equalities, jobs, economy:

The opportunities for our jobs, economy, health and to address inequalities for a smart and just transition in transport are huge. Scotland should be directing investment into active and public transport, to be safe, accessible and affordable for all. This would be a fair and inclusive vision for transport in Scotland. It would generate multiple benefits, for everyone.

4. Buses

13 cities globally have committed to transition to only buy zero emission buses from 2025, this translates into 60,000 buses. Scotland manufactures buses and therefore this growing market presents an opportunity for our jobs and economy.

Instead of being behind that curve with weak later commitment to transition to electric buses in Scotland, there is a strong case for leadership in Scotland. Our cities could commit to an early transition to electric buses and a commitment from Scottish Government to decarbonise the whole Scottish fleet at the earliest opportunity.

This will require investment, but the impacts would improve air quality, reduce emissions and give people and business access to smooth, good quality services. This could improve air quality, health, well being and quality of every day lives right across our country. This investment presents opportunities for global leadership.

5. Trains

We should be aiming to decarbonise our entire railway network by 2030. Scotland's track record on rail electrification is good, and a rolling programme needs to get moving in order to ensure that we can transition rolling stock too. Without progress soon, we will be locked into rolling stock decisions which retain fossil fuels on the network. There will be a role for battery and hydrogen in this programme of decarbonisation. Transform Scotland is working with industry experts and partners on a route map to 2030, and beyond.

Compared to roads, the investment required in rail is modest - but the multiple benefits are significant. Polling on the Hitachi 385s from Edinburgh to Glasgow demonstrates that passengers find the trains attractive. Where there is a good quality, reliable, comfortable, affordable alternative - research shows that people will make a choice to shift from car to public transport. Research also shows that those using public transport, rather than the car, are more active, healthy and less at risk from major diseases.

6. Ferries

We have already positive moves on low carbon ferries.

CalMac Ferries are operating diesel-electric hybrids, and supporting ship building on the Clyde in doing so. There is a need for investment in ferry fleet - Scottish Government should ensure that all new ferries are working towards net-zero vision.

7. Investing in active travel and public transport delivers two wins:

- Decarbonise public transport system to provide passengers and freight with a clean, green alternative way to travel.
- Achieve higher levels of modal shift that reduces road traffic, pollution, and the space being taken up by single occupant vehicles.

8. Conclusion

As a nation we should also be addressing the ways we work, where we work and considering how we move around. This means achieving integration with strategic infrastructure and investment decisions. As in waste we are encouraged to reduce, reuse, recycle - in transport we should be seeking to 'avoid, shift, improve' our means of travelling around.

As the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee in the Scottish Parliament have observed - the challenge from climate change is overwhelming and daunting. With our every day transport choices, every one of us can make a difference - if safe, affordable, accessible choices are available. In terms of our public health, enabling people and businesses to be a part of the solution is important to improving quality of life and well being.