



Michael Matheson MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity
The Scottish Government
St. Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

Tuesday 24 November 2020

Dear Mr Matheson,

Infrastructure Investment Plan

We are writing to express our deep concern regarding the transport spending priorities set out in the draft Infrastructure Investment Plan 2021-22 to 2025-26 published on 24 September 2020.

Surface transport remains one of the largest contributors to climate change in Scotland, responsible for 25% of all emissions. Despite emission reduction goals being in place since 2009, emissions have risen since then. Whilst the declaration of a Climate Emergency has given this issue greater urgency within Government, we have yet to see a shift to the transformational approach that is required.

Historically transport policy in Scotland has had a strong bias towards investing in high-carbon transport infrastructure over more sustainable forms of transport. In light of the Scottish Government's Climate Emergency declaration we would expect the government to shift these priorities towards creating a less carbon-intensive and more sustainable transport system. This would also be in line with the Infrastructure Commission's recommendation to prioritise the Infrastructure Investment Plan against the net zero economy target.

We were therefore extremely troubled to find that the draft Infrastructure Investment Plan has failed to reprioritise transport infrastructure projects in line with emissions targets in any meaningful way. While the plan says it recognises and accepts the Infrastructure Commission's recommendations, it implicitly continues to support Transport Scotland's multi-billion pound road building programme yet contains no new or additional funds for sustainable transport investment.

We do not support the contention that this draft of the Plan will "support and enable an inclusive net zero emissions economy." Instead, we are concerned that it will reinforce existing trends towards road capacity expansion, preventing us from reaching net zero by 2045.

We call on Ministers to reassess the transport spending priorities and individual projects contained in the draft Infrastructure Investment Plan in line with Scotland's climate goals, the Infrastructure Commission's recommendations and the new investment hierarchy contained within the draft Plan. We recognise the uncertainty and disruption caused by the pandemic, but feel that such a review could allow consideration of alternative travel solutions that would bring wider air quality, health and well-being benefits. Without reprioritisation of the investment programme, the investment hierarchy and commitments to sustainable investment will not have the desired impact.

Yours sincerely,

Ian Findlay, Chief Officer, Paths for All
Aedán Smith, Head of Policy and Advocacy, RSPB Scotland
John Lauder, National Director, Sustrans Scotland
Colin Howden, Director, Transform Scotland
Lang Banks, Director, WWF Scotland