5 Rose Street
Edinburgh, EH2 2PR
tel: +44 (0)131 243 2690
e: info@transform.scot
w: www.transform.scot

transform scotland

DISCUSSION PAPER
JULY 2021

A JUST RECOVERY FOR TRANSPORT?

PHOTO BY ROSS SNEDDON
ON UNSPLASH

A Just Recovery for Transport?

Transform Scotland discussion paper
July 2021

Executive Summary

Finding 1: There have been different mobility outcomes for private compared to public transport users

The pandemic has resulted in significantly different mobility outcomes for private and public transport users. While car travel has recovered almost entirely to pre-pandemic levels (90%), Scottish bus and rail volumes remain far below (57% & 42% respectively).

To its credit, the Scottish Government has invested significantly in maintaining public transport services during the pandemic, but questions must remain about whether the levels of these services have been adequate to meet the real needs of public transport users during a period when car use has rebounded to more than 90% of its pre-pandemic levels.

The Government has itself has recently published persuasive commissioned research from The Poverty Alliance on how transport limitations have impacted on child poverty and added to the marginalisation of families who are dependent on public transport. The report contains examples of how severely the opportunities of such families and young people have been limited during the pandemic by factors such as service reductions and buses failing to pick up passengers because of capacity limitations.

Finding 2: Scottish public transport recovery has lagged behind the GB average

In the initial six months of the pandemic (March-September 2020), Scottish and GB trajectories were similar, especially for bus and car travel. However, in the period since, the recovery in Scotland's rail and concessionary bus journeys has lagged behind the GB rail and non-London bus passenger indices.

This may be explained in part by the more cautious lockdown policies applied within Scotland. But there is also a clear modal component: the opportunities for permitted travel by public transport have continued to be restricted by the reduced supply of public transport capacity. There has also been unduly negative Scottish Government and ScotRail messaging about rail travel compounded by qualitative changes such as the removal of faster services to principal stations, early evening closedowns and extended service intervals, and an apparent lack of adequate recognition of network effects, including the extended connectional times that are a direct consequence of uncoordinated service reductions.

Finding 3: We have observed better outcomes for public transport users when decisions about service levels are taken locally

At the level of local travel, the evidence suggests that there have been better outcomes for public transport users in Scotland during the pandemic where decisions about service levels were taken locally rather than top-down by national bodies or by rail or bus operators who were dependent on central government funding. The results of SPT's decision to maintain a high train service frequency to allow adequate physical distancing to be achieved both within trains and at stations clearly demonstrate that, when the service level is good, passengers are prepared to use rail transport despite the very evident changes in behaviour required of them by the pandemic. Similarly, rapid growth in use of the Edinburgh Tram network was observed once national travel restrictions were eased.

Finding 4: Negative government messaging about public transport users may have been negatively biased by unrepresentative monitoring of Scottish transport users' attitudes

The evidence reported in our paper suggests a willingness on the part of passengers to return to public transport when an attractive level of service is provided. This evidence is important because it demonstrates that, despite the tone of much Scottish Government messaging to avoid public transport, passengers are willing to return to these services when mandatory travel restrictions are eased and adequate service levels are provided.

Transport Focus' research has found a marked divergence between the safety perceptions and willingness to travel by public transport of those who actually use buses and trains and those who use other modes. A recently-published Transport Focus survey showed that around 90% of those making train or bus journeys in the previous week felt very safe or fairly safe doing so, whereas the positive feelings of non-users about prospective use of train or bus fell to around 50%.

However, Transport Scotland's own work was based on a survey group where 82% had used car or van among their main modes of travel prior to the pandemic. In Scotland as a whole, 30% of households have no car access.

1. Introduction

When Transform Scotland's first commentary on the transport equalities consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic was published in June 2020,[1] the Scottish Government's plans for the country's emergence from lockdown had recently been published, and during the early summer of 2020 previous restrictions on travel began to be relaxed. Few commentators at that stage envisaged the scale of the resurgences in infection that would follow, and that re-imposed restrictions on travel would be in force well into 2021. Consequently, Transform Scotland's then recommendations were prepared in the expectation of a continuing trajectory of recovery from a national crisis which the Government itself accepted had exacerbated existing inequalities in transport access and mobility. These inequalities formed part of a wider disparity in the incidence and impact of the pandemic across different communities within Scotland, reflecting Covid-19's now widely-acknowledged correlation with social and economic disadvantage.

The four main recommendations in the original commentary can be summarised as follows:

1. SERVICE FREQUENCIES: Pre-lockdown public transport frequencies should be restored as quickly as possible, in order to enhance overall capacity to maintain social distancing and to minimise any extension of overall journey time.

2. FARES: There should be no increase in existing fares, since these would place an additional burden on users who have been badly impacted by lockdown. Consideration should be given to extending free or discounted travel to categories such as young workers or trainees.

3. FACE COVERINGS: The Scottish Government should make its procurement resources available to the public transport sector so that adequate supplies of face coverings can be made available to passengers, free of charge or at nominal cost.

4. TICKET PURCHASE: If pre-booking is made a requirement for rail services within Scotland, this should be made as friction-free as possible, with easy online processes and accessible alternatives for those unable to book online or make last-minute bookings.

2. Where are we now?

Some of these recommendations have been partly or wholly overtaken by events. Most obviously, the renewed imposition of travel restrictions since the autumn of 2020 has resulted in further and significant curtailment of public transport services. So far as face coverings are concerned, the extension of the statutory requirement to wear them to include the retail sector and other indoor activities quickly improved the supply of affordable face masks. The annual increase in regulated rail fares in Scotland was deferred until March this year, and was at a lower level than in England, and there is now a political commitment to a young persons' free bus travel scheme.[2] Against that, though, it appears that the availability of discount fares for cross-Border rail journeys has been reduced by the curtailment of some services that are sponsored by the Department for Transport. There has been no blanket requirement for pre-booking of rail travel on ScotRail services, but advance reservations are now demanded by the main cross-border operators serving Scotland, and ease of access to booking differs significantly between them.

Because of the re-imposition of lengthy lockdown periods, whether local or national, the transport inequalities identified during the first phase of the pandemic have continued, and in many respects deepened and widened. The Scottish Government recognised our concerns at the equity implications of its initial proposals that more stringent travel regulations might apply to public transport users than to motorists, and subsequent restrictions have been applied on a universal mileage or boundary basis rather than to different modes of travel.

But regardless of any issues about the effectiveness of the observance of these restrictions, the pandemic has resulted in significantly different mobility outcomes for private and public transport users. When we commented in the late spring of 2020, national travel restrictions still applied, but trunk road car travel in

Scotland had already recovered to around 40% of its pre-pandemic volume, whereas concessionary bus journeys were at 16% of previous levels and ScotRail passengers were only 6%. For the seven days ending 20 June 2021, car travel had recovered to 90%, but concessionary bus and ScotRail journeys were respectively at only 57% and 42% of their pre-pandemic volumes.[3] Numerically the differences were even starker: the pre-pandemic base levels quoted by Transport Scotland were 10.6 million daily trunk road car journeys, compared with 404 thousand concessionary bus and 250 thousand ScotRail journeys daily. The absolute numbers of this recovery in public transport journeys would have been lost in the statistical noise of the rebound in car travel.

3. The GB context

The limitations of the available Scottish travel datasets were discussed in our 2020 commentary. Since then, Transport Scotland has added new indices which express daily and weekly levels of travel as a proportion of the volumes on the equivalent pre-pandemic dates, rather than being based on the week immediately before lockdown. These additional series automatically reflect seasonal factors, and allow better comparison with the parallel Department for Transport data for the whole of Great Britain, which is constructed on a similar basis.[4] In January 2021, Transport Scotland also produced a commentary and datasets dealing with the first six months of the pandemic.[5] This included information on Glasgow Subway and Edinburgh Tram patronage, and on non-concessionary bus passengers, service levels, and bus loadings covering most of Scotland,[6] together with fuller data on ScotRail usage and on road traffic levels.[7] Unfortunately these very useful additional series have not been continued in a published format, and even where the content overlaps with series in the main Transport Scotland Covid-19 bulletins it is difficult to reconcile figures exactly without access to the underlying data.[8] Transport Scotland has also issued some sub-national summary tables, but these are mostly too coarse-grained for detailed analysis.[9]

Direct comparison with the DfT series continues to be hampered by Transport Scotland's restriction of the main published roads traffic data to trunk roads. However, the more detailed bus information presented in Transport Scotland's 'first sixth months' review makes it possible to reach fuller conclusions about Scotland's relative experience during the initial wave of the pandemic and the partial recovery in the period up to Sunday 6 September 2020. The table below summarises the key indicators for the 7-day period concluding on that date, expressed as a proportion of the journeys made by car,[10] bus, and heavy rail in the equivalent period in 2019.

Comparison of GB and Scottish travel indices, average for 7 days ending 6 Sep 2020

	GB	Scotland	Basis of Scottish index
Car	92	87	*Trunk road car journeys - see also endnote 10*
Bus	51*	51	*Concessionary bus journeys*
		55	*Bus passenger index - see endnote 5*
Rail	37	31	*ScotRail journeys*

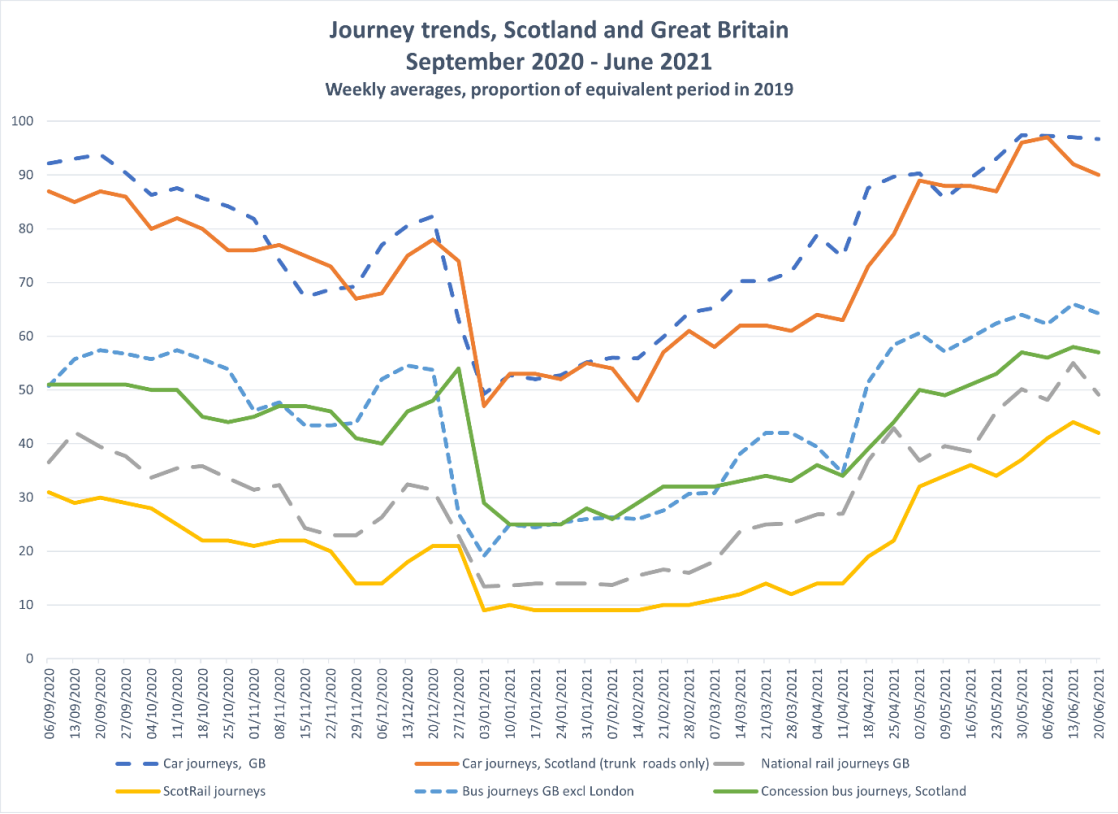
** all GB bus journeys excluding London.*

GB figures are drawn from the DfT series of transport use during the Covid-19 pandemic, see footnote 3.

Read-across between Scotland and the rest of Great Britain is of course complicated by the difference in the intensity and timing of restrictions both between the three nations and also internally within England and Scotland. It also needs to be emphasised that Scottish data is included within most of DfT's series for Great Britain, so trends in Scotland will themselves be reflected within those figures. But the statistics suggest that, in the initial six months of the pandemic, the Scottish and GB trajectories were similar, especially for bus and car travel. There was a short period at the start of the emergency when slightly higher Scottish trip rates reflected the lagged impact of the pandemic north of the Border, but with one exception the Scottish and GB travel series all reached their lowest points in the second or third weeks in April 2020. The exception was the GB rail journeys index, which was at its nadir during the week ending 3 May. From those low points, the trajectory for all the series was largely upwards, though with some fluctuations.

As already noted, the rate of recovery for car travel was substantially higher than for public transport, and the Scottish index of car journeys rebounded from a much deeper low than the GB average to slightly exceed it in the last week in August and the first week in September. It is also noteworthy that by the end of July 2020 the indices of Scottish bus travel were exceeding the GB average for bus services outside London, substantially so if the Scottish bus passenger index used in the Transport Scotland 'first six months' report is preferred to the concessionary journey figures. This appears to confirm that, as we suggested in our 2020 commentary, concessionary travel figures are not an adequate proxy for trends in overall Scottish bus patronage. ScotRail journeys, however, were lagging behind the GB average from the end of May 2020 onwards, significantly so by the end of August.[11]

Since last September Scotland's relative position has changed significantly. During a period which has seen a return to national lockdowns on both sides of the Scotland/England border as well as differing levels of local restrictions, all the travel indices declined in the last quarter of 2020, with a particularly pronounced fall over the Christmas and New Year period when the lockdown regulations across Great Britain returned to levels of severity similar to those seen in the spring of last year. While the fall in car journeys was not as substantial, public transport ridership again experienced a profound reduction, with ScotRail journeys flatlining at 9% of pre-pandemic levels for the first two months of this year and bus concessionary travel journeys achieving only a very slow recovery from a low point of around a quarter of the equivalent 2020 levels in January and much of February.



These trends can be seen in the graph above, which also shows that the recovery in Scotland's rail and concessionary bus journeys lagged behind the GB rail and non-London bus passenger indices. In the case of ScotRail, this was an intensification of the trend that was already apparent by September 2020; the picture for concessionary bus travel in Scotland is more mixed. Although the general shape of the graph line is not dissimilar to that for ScotRail, the relative picture has varied because of significant fluctuations in the DfT GB bus index. However, apart from a blip in the GB figures on either side of Easter, concessionary bus travel in Scotland has clearly fallen behind the GB index of non-London bus journeys: in the week ending 20 June 2021, the Scottish figure was 7 percentage points below the GB average, whereas for the week ending 6 September 2020 the two indicators stood at a similar level.[12]

4. Why has Scotland's public transport recovery lagged behind the GB average?

Reference has already been made to the complications resulting from the differences in the intensity and timing of lockdown in different parts of Great Britain. However, across the three modes mainly covered within this paper — car, rail, and bus — it can be clearly seen from the official statistics that, after the first six or so months of the pandemic, personal mobility by public transport in Scotland has recovered less than in Great Britain as a whole, and significantly less than car travel on Scottish trunk roads, which itself has mostly lagged behind the GB roads average. The inclusion of Scotland within the DfT's GB totals of course masks the extent of the actual differential with England & Wales.

Some of the differences are undoubtedly a result of the more cautious lockdown policies applied within Scotland. This is suggested by the faster recent rate of recovery in Scotland after the "stay local" requirement was lifted. But there is also a clear modal component: the opportunities for permitted travel by public transport have continued to be restricted by the reduced supply of public transport capacity. Transport Scotland's review of the first six months of the pandemic gives an indication of the restrictions applied to bus and train services and their partial relaxation in June and August 2020;[13] it is clear, however, that the August restoration of services followed rather than led increased passenger demand and was necessary to ease compliance with physical distancing standards. The report goes so far as to state: "social distancing on busier [train] services was becoming increasingly difficult as passenger numbers rose from 10 per cent of comparable 2019 levels in the week ending 28 June to 30 per cent in the week ending 9 August."[14] Services were then substantially reduced again during the subsequent lockdowns.

The particular effect on ScotRail can be seen in its passenger journey figures, which are the only long-run Transport Scotland published dataset which is directly comparable with the DfT series. At most stages since the initial lockdown in March 2020 the Scottish trunk road car traffic and concessionary bus travel indices have differed from the nearest DfT equivalents in single figures. However, over the same period ScotRail has frequently lagged behind the DfT "All GB" rail index by ten or more percentage points. Though the gap narrowed during periods when England returned to national lockdown, by the second week of March this year the difference was back into double figures.[15] It was only after ScotRail services were increased this year, somewhat later than the lifting of the legal restrictions on travel across local authority boundaries, that the gap appears to have been reduced, though it then increased again in May as a consequence of a significant uplift in the DfT GB figures. By late June the gap had narrowed again, to 7 percentage points.

Despite these recent fluctuations in the gap between the ScotRail and GB rail passenger indices, since 30 March 2021 ScotRail journeys have grown proportionately more quickly than journeys by car or by concessionary bus passengers in Scotland, to which exactly the same travel distance and journey-purpose regulations had applied during lockdown. This appears to confirm the view that demand for rail travel in Scotland has been suppressed by restricted supply. However, there has also been unduly negative Scottish Government and ScotRail messaging about rail travel. The latter continued even after statutory restrictions had been lifted: on-board announcements on Edinburgh-Glasgow trains in the last week in May were still admonishing passengers that they should only be making "absolutely necessary" journeys, while at the same time LNER services from Edinburgh were welcoming and encouraging returning passengers.

This discouragement of rail travel in Scotland was not simply a result of messaging and the overall reduction in the number of trains services on individual routes; it has been compounded by qualitative changes such as the removal of faster services to principal stations, early evening closedowns and extended service intervals, and an apparent lack of adequate recognition of network effects, including the extended connectional times that are a direct consequence of uncoordinated service reductions. These effects are likely to be increased in a complex network such as that centred upon Glasgow, which is used for intra-urban as well as regional journeys, and this appears to be borne out by evidence in the sub-national trends data from Transport Scotland. This shows that April 2021 footfall at Glasgow Central station, which pre-pandemic was Scotland's busiest railway station by a significant margin, was only 30% of typical volumes, and was below that at Edinburgh.[16]

A further notable adverse impact on Glasgow's connectivity has resulted from the disproportionate reduction in direct cross-Border rail services to and from the west of Scotland. Because of the frequent revision of timetables in current circumstances it is necessary to rely on electronic information, but by 13 May 2021 Edinburgh's direct services with Manchester and to Birmingham and beyond had been largely restored to their

pre-pandemic regular frequencies, together with a full London service. In contrast, on the same day Glasgow had only its one daily King's Cross train in each direction and the hourly Euston service, running to a slower schedule than before the pandemic and with some cancellations on the day. Beyond that there was only a handful of widely-spaced trains to or from Birmingham and Lancashire. For example, there were 16 through services between Edinburgh and Birmingham that day, whereas Glasgow had only three northbound through services from Birmingham, two of them by the much longer route via York, and only one southbound, again by the slower York route. There was a similar imbalance in the Scotland-Lancashire services.

While there is an operational argument that Glasgow passengers to Manchester or Birmingham have the option of reaching these destinations by connections from London trains, there is no guarantee that such connections will be maintained, even when these are an industry- or funder-imposed replacement for previous direct services. There is a far stronger equivalent argument that, if it is necessary to reduce train-miles for financial or other resource reasons, Edinburgh passengers can more easily reach Birmingham and the west of England by changing from the much more intensive Edinburgh-London service at Newcastle or York.

Although the sponsorship of these cross-Border services rests with DfT, which therefore ultimately determines the level of service provided, decisions taken on behalf of the Scottish Ministers about the quantity, quality and frequency of ScotRail services also adversely affect those west of Scotland passengers who are forced by cross-Border service reductions to rely on connections via Edinburgh. On the evening of 13 May only one Glasgow express from Edinburgh was shown as operating after 2015, at 2215. All the other half-hourly ScotRail express services were shown as cancelled, together with all but one of the slower local services to either Queen Street and Central and trains to most other central Scotland destinations. This is despite the fact that travel to and from England was unrestricted on that date and eight cross-Border services were scheduled to arrive at Edinburgh after 2015.[17]

At the level of local travel, the evidence suggests that there have been better outcomes for public transport users in Scotland during the pandemic where decisions about service levels were taken locally rather than top-down by national bodies or by rail or bus operators who were dependent on central government funding. Transport Scotland's sub-national monitoring report indicates that the Glasgow Subway, which is operated by Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT), achieved 40% of its pre-pandemic base level of passengers in the last week of April 2021,[18] substantially greater than ScotRail's 22%. What makes this even more remarkable is that in the same week the equivalent DfT figures for both the whole of the GB rail network and for London Underground were slightly below 40% of their equivalent baselines. This was despite the fact that those networks operate in much less challenging environments than the Glasgow Subway, with its very small and totally enclosed stations and with trains which are restricted in both length and interior dimensions by the system's unique configuration. The results of SPT's decision to maintain a high train service frequency to allow adequate physical distancing to be achieved both within trains and at stations clearly demonstrate that, when the service level is good, passengers are prepared to use rail transport despite the very evident changes in behaviour required of them by the pandemic. The same Transport Scotland report also refers to the rapid growth in use of the Edinburgh Tram network once national travel restrictions had been eased, again suggesting a willingness on the part of passengers to return to public transport when an attractive level of service is provided.

Other corroboration of the recovery of Glasgow Subway patronage is provided by SPT's quarterly monitoring reports. These show that in the four weeks ending 12 September 2020, before the autumn restrictions, journeys averaged 36.2% of baseline, again comparable with the London Underground and the GB rail figures at that time. It is also interesting that the subsidised bus services operated on behalf of SPT across the whole of the Strathclyde area show patronage levels which between the start of 2021 and the four weeks ending on 13 April trended above both the DfT's index of GB bus patronage outside London and Transport Scotland's index of national concessionary bus passenger journeys.[19] The two most recent reports have also commented upon the relative increase in importance of the subsidised bus network in the SPT area because of the reductions in service levels on some "commercial" routes. These are being funded directly by the Scottish Government during the pandemic.

5. The fear factor?

This evidence is important because it demonstrates that, despite the tone of much Scottish Government messaging to avoid public transport, passengers are willing to return to these services when mandatory travel restrictions are eased and adequate service levels are provided. This messaging might have been influenced by Transport Scotland's monitoring of transport users' attitudes during the pandemic, which has regularly headlined concerns about returning to pre-pandemic levels of public transport use.[20] But the survey undertaken in late March 2021 shows that 86% of the respondent households had access to a car or van; that 82% of the survey group had used car or van among their main modes of travel prior to the pandemic, but only 28% public transport; and that public transport users were even less well represented in the survey of journeys taken within the previous seven days.[21] Earlier waves of the Transport Scotland survey had similarly-structured groups of respondents, which must cast serious doubt upon the representativeness of these results as a valid expression of the actual views and attitudes of public transport users.

These doubts appear to be confirmed by Transport Focus's regular monitoring at a GB level of attitudes to public transport use during the pandemic. This data confirms that there is a marked divergence between the safety perceptions and willingness to travel by public transport of those who actually use buses and trains and those who use other modes. A recently-published Transport Focus survey showed that around 90% of those making train or bus journeys in the previous week felt very safe or fairly safe doing so, whereas the positive feelings of non-users about prospective use of train or bus fell to around 50%. Respondents in Scotland comprised 9.4% of Transport Focus's sample survey group, a reasonably representative quota.[22]

6. Where does Scotland go from here?

As noted on page 1 above, the Scottish Government clearly acknowledged in its initial 2020 assessments of the pandemic's impact and of routes to recovery that inequalities in Scotland had worsened because of Covid-19. Transport inequality is a significant element in that deterioration, and is reflective of the wider association between deprivation and the incidence of Covid-19. To its credit, the Scottish Government has invested significantly in maintaining public transport services during the pandemic, but questions must remain about whether the levels of these services have been adequate to meet the real needs of public transport users during a period when car use has rebounded to more than 90% of its pre-pandemic levels. Transport Scotland itself has recently published persuasive commissioned research from the Poverty Alliance on how transport limitations have impacted on child poverty and added to the marginalisation of families who are dependent on public transport. The report contains examples of how severely the opportunities of such families and young people have been limited during the pandemic by factors such as service reductions and buses failing to pick up passengers because of capacity limitations. It concludes: "Transport provides a critical infrastructure for households when living on a low income and must work effectively for household circumstances to help alleviate poverty." [23]

The support from Scottish public finances that has been required for the maintenance of public transport services during the pandemic, while substantial, is no different in principle from the heavy support to other essential sectors such as health and education. The transition back to normality is likely to be extended for rail, bus, and ferry operations, not only because of the strong evidence that recovery of ridership levels after extended disruption is not a quick process and because of possible long-term changes in working patterns, but also because any capacity limitations that remain in place for public health reasons will continue to inflate the cost base of public transport while constraining its revenue growth. Finance-led pressures to reduce the Scottish Government's support to public transport by increasing fares or by continuing to suppress service frequencies are likely to be counterproductive in terms of the sector's immediate and medium-term recovery.

Beyond that, such a policy would inevitably perpetuate unacceptable injustice and transport poverty for a significant proportion of the Scottish population and be fundamentally at odds with both the Scottish Government's equalities objectives and the urgency of its climate change objectives. These overarching imperatives cannot be met if the route to recovery for those reliant on public transport remains inferior to that available to car users.

Endnotes

[1] Transform Scotland (2020) *Just Recovery: reversing the lockdown inequalities*. Available at https://transform.scot/blog/2020/06/04/just-recovery-reversing-the-lockdown-inequalities/

[2] Providing free bus travel for young people aged under 19 (transport.gov.scot)

[3] These figures are taken from the index series produced by Transport Scotland, see https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/covid-19-transport-trend-data-14-20-june-2021/. This data is discussed further in the next paragraph and its endnotes below.

[4] The DfT series can be accessed at https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/transport-use-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic It was necessary to derive weekly averages from the DfT daily data for comparison with Transport Scotland series presented on a weekly basis, and this will have resulted in slight discrepancies if weekly indices based on the numerical totals for all the separate days in the week were compared with weekly averages of the index number for each day.

[5] See https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/49017/covid-19-scotlands-transport-and-travel-trends-during-the-first-six-months-of-the-pandemic.pdf and https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/48970/covid-19-scotland-s-transport-and-travel-trends-during-the-first-six-months-of-the-pandemic-data-sheet.xlsx In common with other Transport Scotland series on this subject, the data is provided only on an index-number basis, as a proportion of the base of 100. For convenience these figures are sometimes referred to in the text as percentages, which is the format DfT uses in presenting its parallel series.

[6] *Scotland's transport and travel trends during the first six months of the pandemic* (pdf), p 40. Stagecoach and Lothian Bus services are not included in this data.

[7] The road traffic series in the Transport Scotland 'First six months' datasheet is drawn from automatic traffic count data and appears to be more representative than the trunk road series which is included in the regular Transport Scotland Covid 19 transport trend data bulletins. It also appears to be similar to the methodology used in the DfT road traffic series. Prior to 5 July 2020 it gives a lower index number for car traffic than the main Transport Scotland Covid-19 bulletin; from 12 July the figure is higher. As this series is not continued after September 2020 the main Transport Scotland trunk road series has been used throughout as the principal indicator, but see note 10 below for the 6 September 2020 figure.

[8] This may be a consequence of the averaging issue discussed in note 4 above.

[9] At the time of writing, the most recent available edition was that covering May 2021, available at COVID-19 Sub-National Transport Trends - May 2021

[10] See note 7 above. The car traffic index number shown for w/e 6 September 2020, 87, is that for trunk roads, taken from the main Transport Scotland Covid-19 bulletin. For comparison, however, the figure in the Transport Scotland 'First six months' datasheet is 92, the average for the 7 days ending on 6 September.

[11] *Scotland's transport and travel trends during the first six months of the pandemic* (pdf), p 17, refers specifically to the Carmont accident and the flooding of the E&G line on 12 August 2020, and there is a clear subsequent dip in the ScotRail figures. However, this does not appear to have been prolonged.

[12] It is unclear whether the result would be significantly different if the more comprehensive Transport Scotland index of total bus journeys had been available for dates after September 2020. Although the two series followed a very similar trajectory between April and September 2020, there were some substantial day to day variations. Over the entire period, the average difference was just under 3% in favour of the more comprehensive index, but there were several occasions when the concessionary journeys index was higher.

[13] *Scotland's transport and travel trends during the first six months of the pandemic* (pdf), pp 14-17.

[14] *Ibid*, p 16.

[15] Precise comparisons in late February or early March 2021 are not always possible, because Transport Scotland reverted to a 2019 index base across all modes at the start of the second week in March, whereas the reset dates in the DfT tables differ between modes but were all prior to the Scottish reset date. Put simply, the base periods used were the equivalent period 12 months earlier up until a date where a 2020 comparator was considered to be impacted by the onset of the pandemic; after that point the comparison was with the same period 24 months earlier. Thus, for example, April data in both the 2020 and 2021 series has been indexed from the same base period in 2019.

[16] Transport Scotland, Sub-national transport trends April 2021, p10.

[17] The discussion in this and the previous paragraphs is all based on train running data downloaded from Realtimetrains.co.uk on 22 May 2021.

[18] Transport Scotland, Sub-national transport trends April 2021, p11.

[19] See SPT operations committee quarterly monitoring reports at:

http://www.spt.co.uk/documents/latest/Ops300421_Agenda4.pdf

http://www.spt.co.uk/documents/latest/Ops290121_Agenda4.pdf

http://www.spt.co.uk/documents/latest/Ops061120_Agenda4.pdf

[20] See COVID-19 Public Attitudes Survey Data: Wave 15 (transport.gov.scot)

[21] https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/49565/public-attitudes-survey-published-data-set-wave-fifteen.xlsx

[22] Travel during Covid-19 Omnibus week 1 (d3cez36w5wymxj.cloudfront.net), pp 9-12; 23. This survey was for the week ending 11 June 2021.

[23] Fiona McHardy and Dr Laura Robertson**,** *Transport and child poverty – beyond the pandemic* (Transport Scotland, May 2021). Accessed via www.transport.gov.scot/media/49932/transport-and-child-poverty-beyond-the-pandemic.pdf

transform scotland

SCOTLAND'S ALLIANCE FOR SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

Transform Scotland
5 Rose Street
Edinburgh, EH2 2PR
tel: +44 (0)131 243 2690
e: <info@transform.scot>
w: <www.transform.scot>