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# Scotland's Infrastructure Plan – Investing in a Sustainable Future

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## Summary

- WWF Scotland believes the Government's National Infrastructure Plan, announced on 6 December, is a missed opportunity to support delivery of a low carbon Scotland.
- The Government's ambition to bring about a transition to a green economy requires us to make significant cuts in our climate emissions and improve our resource efficiency. It therefore follows that investment in infrastructure must be compatible with these two objectives. High carbon infrastructure can no longer be a credible option for a low carbon future.
- Infrastructure decisions we make now will impact on our climate emissions for decades ahead by locking us into specific development pathways and behaviour. The right kind of infrastructure programmes and projects in Scotland can put us on a path to a low carbon future, create thousands of green job opportunities across Scotland, secure significant health benefits and support a preventative spend agenda.
- With homes and transport responsible for nearly half of our climate emissions, WWF Scotland are disappointed that the Government has not chosen sufficient investment in these sectors to reduce emissions, create green job opportunities and invest in the Scottish economy.

WWF Scotland recognises that investment in infrastructure is essential for supporting the economy and boosting jobs and, we also recognise the clear need for Scotland to cut its emissions and use resources more efficiently. Instead of locking us into high carbon infrastructure, we believe infrastructure spending on improving the energy efficiency of our homes and on active travel and low carbon transport offers some of the best opportunities to deliver economic benefits across Scotland from boosting capital expenditure.

## Spending Win-Wins

Research shows that investing in housing retrofit programmes and active travel can have multiple wins – for the environment, for people, for jobs and for the wider Scottish economy. Here below, WWF Scotland demonstrates the benefits of two examples –

1. A national retrofit programme to improve the energy efficiency of Scotland's homes, and
2. A national active travel programme to boost active travel.

### 1. A national retrofit programme to improve the energy efficiency of Scotland's homes, bringing all of Scotland's homes in energy performance bands E, F & G to band D<sup>1</sup>

The cost: £2.45bn.

<sup>1</sup> See WWF Scotland's Maximising the Minimum, <http://assets.wwf.org.uk/downloads/maxminexecsum.pdf>



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The benefits:

Climate emissions: 25% reduction in residential emissions on 1990 levels (saving 2.1 MtCO<sub>2</sub>).

Jobs: 9,900 direct jobs per year (full time equivalent).

Economy: Add £613m GVA to Scotland's economy.

Fuel bills: Average annual fuel bill reductions of £580 per home (with some types of housing seeing a reduction of £1,300 per home per year).

Health: According to the Fuel Poverty Advisory Group for England, for every £1 spent on fuel poverty, 42p is saved by the NHS. Cutting the incidence of asthma and respiratory problems could reduce the number of children and working adults taking time off for illness by 15 and 25% respectively.

Additional benefits: Expenditure on improving the energy efficiency of our existing housing is spread across the country, helping to ensure all communities benefit from the employment opportunities available. The Fuel Poverty Advisory group for England reported that tackling fuel poverty will improve local economic activity, particularly in deprived areas where money not spent on fuel bills will find its way into the local economy.

## 2. A national active travel programme to boost active travel.

The cost: £115m could provide a safe route to school for every child and construct 1000 miles of National Cycle Network.

The benefits:

Jobs/Economy: On the basis of current returns doubling the National Cycle Network would see £12m investment a year to SMEs in the construction sector and an additional £100m a year in the leisure and tourism sectors. This programme would support delivery of the Government target for 10% of all journeys in Scotland to be taken by bike by 2020.

Research published by the Transform Scotland Trust report that switching 20% of Scottish car commuting journeys to walking or cycling could result in economic savings of between £0.6bn and £2bn per year.

Health: The value of the health benefits from the use of the National Cycle Network in Scotland is estimated at £49.2m for walking and £54.2m for cycling. At these rates doubling the National Cycle Network could see additional health benefits equivalent to over £100m a year in Scotland.

Research published by the Transform Scotland Trust has estimated that if Scotland were to secure cycling levels similar to those in continental Europe the Scottish economy could save £1-2bn each year on health care costs. Sir Liam Donaldson, England's former Chief Medical Officer, has described physical activity as "one of the most undervalued interventions in public health."

Additional benefits: Sustrans note that active travel schemes are often relatively small and support local companies. In evidence to the Infrastructure & Capital Investment Committee Transport Professor Tom Rye noted that "smaller and more local projects in transport investment generate more jobs per pound spent. They also reduce leakage from the local economy" and that "if we are serious about the economy and delivering economic development benefits quickly through transport investment projects, such as they are, large projects appear to be the wrong priority focus."

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