



SUMMARY

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Tackling climate change

IMPROVING THE WAY WE TRAVEL

Transport is responsible for around 25% of Scotland's carbon emissions, with two thirds of the total coming from road transport. Building a truly sustainable transport system for Scotland requires a range of actions by the Scottish Government. Now is the time to make it happen.

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Introduction

Transport is a major challenge for the achievement of our climate change targets. Many of the indicators are going in the wrong direction – emissions from transport were higher in 2010 than in 1990, and we have seen the distances we drive by car increase dramatically over recent decades.

Congestion and the delays caused by poor public transport infrastructure cost the economy millions annually. Many people die on Scotland's roads every year and communities are blighted by noise and local air pollution. Over-reliance on cars is also bad for general population health, contributing to obesity and lack of exercise. Action to build a better transport system is crucial to meeting climate change, obesity and health targets.

The UK Climate Change Committee (CCC) advises that it will be essential for the Scottish Government to ensure 'full roll-out of measures in devolved policy areas' particularly in transport.

In this briefing, we explore the case for the introduction of a range of measures to reduce the demand for road transport, and learn from examples where these have been implemented.

The policy context

The Scottish Government has a commitment to 'almost complete decarbonisation of road transport by 2050 with significant progress by 2030', and a target that by 2020 10% of all journeys in Scotland will be by bicycle. A study commissioned by the Scottish Government in 2009 suggested that measures to reduce car demand (Smart Measures) had the greatest potential to reduce CO2 emissions. It found that measures to limit car use will help to promote the use of existing public transport and create demand for other sustainable means of travel such as car clubs and cycling.

The Government's first climate action plan, the RPP1, acknowledged that there would be benefits in '*locking in reductions in motor traffic on local roads through speed controls and demand management measures*'. However, since then, there has been no action. In fact, the draft second RPP took a step backwards and removed these references altogether.

There are a range of examples where countries are taking action to encourage more sustainable transport behaviour.

Gothenburg, Sweden

Gothenburg recently introduced a congestion charge, inspired by the success of a similar charge in Stockholm. It applies to all Swedish-registered vehicles driven in and out of the city centre from Monday to Friday between 06.00 and 18.29, with the maximum daily charge levied being 60 Swedish Kroner (around £6). The charge is expected to reduce congestion, improve the environment and raise around £66 million per year. These new funds will be used to invest in road and rail tunnels, the replacement of a bridge, new railway stations and bus and cycle improvements.

None of these measures could have been afforded without the charge. In addition it is anticipated that the scheme will see traffic in central Gothenburg reduced by 14% and by 7% across the wider region.

Netherlands

The Dutch Government is progressively introducing a national road pricing system between 2012 and 2018. Existing car purchase and road taxes are being scrapped and replaced by a charge levied per km travelled.

By shifting the burden from the purchase of cars to their use, the tax is expected to have a significant positive effect on the environment.

While car ownership is expected to rise, car use is anticipated to decline by 10-15% and congestion to be reduced by 50% on the main motorways by 2020. Carbon emissions will also decline by around 10% and 6 out of 10 drivers are expected to be better off.

In Gothenburg, the congestion charge has a maximum daily charge of around £6. The charge is expected to reduce congestion, improve the environment and raise around £66 million per year.

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Nottingham

Innovative demand schemes are not just found overseas, but also south of the border. Nottingham is the first city in the UK to introduce a Workplace Parking Levy (WPL), designed to cut congestion, particularly at peak times. The levy only applies to employers with 11 or more parking spaces, so small businesses are exempt.

All funds raised are invested in local transport, supporting the expansion of the existing tram system, the redevelopment of Nottingham Rail Station and the popular LINK bus service.

Scotland's opportunity

These examples show that by adopting a bold approach to demand management, coupled with a switch in investment in cycling, walking and public transport, Scotland's transport system could be transformed.

Road traffic demand measures, including requirements on workplace parking and the charging of roadspace, cut congestion, make trains and buses more attractive, and encourage cycling and walking by making streets safer and less polluted. They would also help level the playing field in terms of costs. Since 1999, the cost of motoring in Scotland has fallen by 7% in real terms while the cost of rail has risen by 14% and of bus by 22%.

Such an approach also has significant economic and social benefits both for the economy as a whole and for individuals. As walking and cycling projects are smaller in scale they are more likely to be delivered by local construction firms offering local employment opportunities. This means that the economic benefit is spread throughout the country and into local economies. Research by Transform Scotland has shown that if we moved to continental levels of cycling use, we could avoid £1-4bn in health costs. Certain demand reduction schemes such as road pricing could also raise money for investment in better transport.

While the Scottish Government is restricted in its current fiscal powers, many of the demand management measures could still be delivered. By taking bold action, the Scottish Government and local authorities could raise significant sums for investment while at the same time cutting the costs of congestion, boosting the economy, enhancing the environment and reducing pollution.

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