

Parliamentary cross-party group makes recommendations on reducing car mileage by 2030

The Scottish Government Cross Party Group (CPG) on Sustainable Transport has looked at ways to cut road mileage by 20% by 2030, and recommends that one key way is by cutting fares on public transport.

This would not only address the cost of living crisis but would also provide affordable alternatives to car use. The commitment to reduce car kms by 20% by 2030 was presented in The Climate Change Plan update produced by Transport Scotland in December 2020.

The group's convener, Graham Simpson MSP, said: "Cutting car miles by a fifth within just over seven years is a tall order. When it still costs a couple times more to travel by train than it would in petrol then you have to ask how we are ever going to encourage people onto public transport.

"The purpose of this report is not to question the merits of the policy – though that is a valid standpoint – but to drill down into how the target can be best and most-fairly achieved. The report calls upon The Scottish Government to spell out what it plans to do, having set the target in the first place."

The report draws upon the expert evidence which was presented to the Group, and sets out a set of recommendations that the Scottish Government should consider when progressing its policies to reduce car kilometres by 20% by 2030:

- **1. Provide clarity around policies, expected impacts, and timescales for implementation.** Provide clear information on what the expected impact of proposed policies and interventions is on traffic levels and emissions. The traffic reduction route map describes a large number of policies but it is unclear how many of these will be in place to take effect in time to contribute to reaching the target by 2030. It is also unclear whether or not the policies set out in the traffic reduction route map will lead to the targeted traffic reduction. Before the end of 2022 the Scottish Government should set clear and realistic timeframes for the implementation of traffic reduction policies and begin projecting the expected traffic impact of each policy and report on its progress against the target.
- **2. Pursue policies that target unnecessary car journeys.** Recognise that demand management will be necessary to deliver the traffic reduction target and pursue options that target unnecessary car journeys and help achieve the 20% mileage reduction.
- **3. Consider the equalities impacts of traffic reduction policies.** Consider the equalities impacts of any proposed policies on groups such as disabled people and people facing transport poverty. It must be ensured that groups already facing more limits to their mobility are not disproportionately impacted by traffic reduction policies. In addition, any opportunities to improve transport access through traffic reduction policies for groups who are currently excluded or disadvantaged should be promoted and pursued.
- **4. Ensure greater affordability of public transport services.** Ensure that alternatives to car travel are

available and affordable. Considering the cost of living crisis and the cost increases of public transport over the past decades, the cost of public transport needs to be cut in real terms. The Scottish Government should review the affordability of bus and rail travel and ensure that Scots are able to afford using public transport.

- **5. Include van traffic as part of the traffic reduction target.** Consider the impact of freight on traffic volumes and emissions from road traffic. It must be ensured that reduction in emissions from cars is not cancelled out by an increase of emissions from delivery vans. Van mileage should therefore be included in the 20% reduction target.

Deputy Convener Sarah Boyack MSP (Labour) said: “My priorities would be a focus on ensuring that public transport is affordable and accessible, with a reversal of cuts to bus services, continued investment in active travel and political support for a shift to low carbon transport across all sectors.”

Deputy Convenor John Mason MSP (SNP) said: “This is a fair and balanced report in my opinion. We have highlighted a range of issues which need to be addressed. But I think we all accept that there are no easy answers.”

Deputy Convener Mark Ruskell MSP (Green) said: “What stands out for me is that there appears to be no route to meet climate targets without vehicle mileage reduction. Navigating our way to a better future will need the careful use of a wide range of demand management measures alongside investment in more attractive alternatives. Equalities issues need to be considered at the outset.”

Transform Scotland provides the secretariat for the CPG, and coordinated the preparation of this report: <https://transform.scot/scottish-parliament-cross-party>

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