

Vehicle miles target cut deserves 'condemnation'

The news that the Scottish Government is dropping its targets to reduce car usage in the country deserves 'condemnation', according to an Edinburgh councillor.

In 2018, the Scottish Government put forward a target to cut the number of kilometres travelled by car by 20% by 2030.

But, late last month, Scottish Transport Secretary Fiona Hyslop told a parliament committee that the target would be dropped.

Green co-convener councillor Chas Booth has put forward a motion to Thursday's Edinburgh Council meeting criticising the step, and asks the council leader to write to Hyslop expressing displeasure with the change.

The target has been used to support several traffic reduction schemes in the capital, including the low traffic area in Leith.

A report by Audit Scotland in January of this year found that the country had made 'minimal progress' in achieving the target since 2018.

It found that, since 2018, the number of kilometres travelled by car in Edinburgh had decreased only 5%.

Across the country, car kilometres travelled decreased steeply during Covid, but the report shows that levels have returned

to pre-pandemic levels.

However, it did find that Edinburgh still has the third highest number of households without cars, at 37%, beaten by Inverclyde and Glasgow.

And it has the second lowest number of households with more than one car, beaten only by Glasgow.

Cllr Booth's motion asks the council to note that recent Scottish Government changes have made 'investment in sustainable transport extremely challenging'.

It cites uncertainty over funding for bus priority works, and poor funding for both trial and permanent schemes that promote walking and cycling over driving.

He noted the Audit Scotland report in his motion, calling out that it identified transport as the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in the country.

By Joseph Sullivan Local Democracy Reporter