Glasgow Centre for Population Health

GCPH Response to 20% Reduction in Car Km Route Map consultation

6 April 2022

The Route Map

The route map - 'Reducing car travel by 20% by 2030 for a healthier, fairer and greener Scotland' – is a joint publication by the Scottish Government and COSLA and sets out the actions that the Scottish Government and local authorities in Scotland are taking to make it easier for people to reduce their car kilometres through four key sustainable travel behaviours.

These behaviours are:

> *i. to make use of sustainable online options to reduce your need to travel;*
>
> *ii. to choose local destinations to reduce the distance you travel*
>
> *iii. switch to walk, wheel, cycle or public transport where possible*
>
> *iv. combine a trip or share a journey to reduce the number of individual car trips you make, if car remains the only feasible option.*

1. Do you agree with the overall behaviour change approach, and do you have any comments on the four behaviours outlined above? Please explain.

> *Agree*

> *We agree with the four main behaviour change approaches outlined in the Route Map, but we would also note that additional approaches to reduce car use – often described as Car Demand Management approaches – will be needed. In the last decade the cost of motoring has risen but below cost of living increases, while bus costs have risen far more[1]. As long as car travel remains relatively cheap and more convenient than public transport and active travel alternatives for most journeys, it will be difficult to encourage sufficient numbers of people to switch to more sustainable forms*

of travel.

Without viable and attractive alternatives to car use being in place, people will not choose to use their cars less because of economic reasons and for reasons of convenience.

In addition, planning and economic policies need to align with this aim of reducing car travel, enabling more people to undertake their daily activities (work, shopping, leisure, childcare etc) with less reliance on a car.

2. What are the key opportunities of reducing car kilometres

The key opportunities in reducing car kilometres relate to carbon reduction, health and social outcomes. Reducing car traffic will help Scotland reduce its carbon emissions and will also help reduce air and noise pollution. Less car traffic is likely to reduce community severance and could encourage more people to walk and cycle locally if it feels safe and pleasant to do so. If more journeys are taken by public transport, then there is also the potential that physical activity levels will be boosted as public transport journeys involve walking to and from stations and bus stops.

As cars are involved in the majority of road transport collisions in Scotland, reducing car travel should plausibly reduce such collisions and make streets safer for more vulnerable road users such as walkers and cyclists.

Less cars on the road could help address transport poverty and the inequalities in access built into the current car-dominated transport system, but only if accessible and affordable public transport and active travel alternatives are provided at sufficient scale.

If people travel less for long journeys by car and switch to active travel and public transport for local journeys, then we may see more social interaction, a boost to local economies and more vibrant local communities.

3. What are the key challenges faced in reducing car kilometres?

As mentioned already, a key challenge will be in getting people with cars to use them less, particularly if car use remains relatively cheap and convenient compared to other forms of transport.

Public transport needs to be made cheaper, more attractive and more convenient, particularly in the post-pandemic period when people need to be encouraged back onto buses and trains. The routes and the schedules of public transport need to suit those travelling (including those working shift patterns) and must feel safe particularly for those who might feel vulnerable (e.g. those who are young or old, female and disabled). It is also important

that people with limited mobility or visual impairments can easily and safely use public transport services.

Public transport routes, the design of public transport, its connectivity and cost need to work for people with caring responsibilities too. Parents with young children or carers who have to do multiple trips (e.g. school drop offs, work, etc.) may often find car travel much more convenient.

The hub and spoke model of transport in many cities does not offer the same level of convenience that cars can. Many journeys are complex and, without a car, require several modes of transport. Unless it is easier and more affordable to undertake multi-modal journeys, it will be difficult to convince car users to leave their car at home.

People need to be able to see a benefit in reducing car use and have a viable active or public transport alternative that is available, accessible, convenient, affordable and ideally cheaper than the car.

Safety concerns play a major role in discouraging people from walking or cycling more. 20mph limits can be effective in reducing accidents, casualties and traffic speed[2]. This type of measure may also improve perceptions of safety and therefore may also help to increase levels of walking, cycling and wheeling if it feels safer to be on or near roads.

4. Are there any further actions you would like to see included in future to support behaviour change 1) - reducing the need to travel?

We agree that the Fourth National Planning Framework (NPF4) is an important supportive development. NPF4 requires a town centre first assessment before considering an out-of-town proposal acceptable and encourages the principle of 20 minute neighbourhoods.

However, we would also like to see stronger disincentives against developments that are likely to increase motorised traffic and thus contribute to greater carbon emissions and air pollution. For example, there should a strong presumption in planning decisions against new out-of-town retail developments and drive-thru facilities. We would also suggest that the provision of free parking at existing out of town retail parks needs to be reviewed at a national level.

One of the interventions outlined is to support Delivering the NHS Scotland Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy's actions to reduce the need to travel. Could this approach not be extended more widely across the whole of the public sector? Public sector organisations should consider the benefits of reducing car travel in reviewing the need for staff to work at a central location. In this respect, remote working may be favoured.

Increasing reliance on digital services could lead to digital exclusion for people who lack access to hardware or data, have low levels of IT confidence and skills, or cannot afford a relevant device. Enhanced digital access in libraries and community centres will be needed alongside training and support.

Working from home may lead to additional costs for home broadband, IT and office equipment, and for home heating, partially offset by reduced commuting costs. Employers will need to provide appropriate equipment including IT and office equipment for people expected to work from home.

Social isolation may increase for people who are working at home or accessing services at home and miss out on informal interactions with colleagues[3]. Employment policies should ensure managers continue to provide informal support for staff and are aware of the increased potential for mental health issues, social isolation and domestic abuse.

5. Are there any further actions you would like to see included in future to support behaviour change 2) - choosing local options?

The quality and range of amenities and services available locally is important in enabling local living that improves outcomes If differences in the quality of services and facilities available between communities are not addressed, this would increase inequalities and result in polarisation. People who experience or are at risk of poverty are more likely to experience negative impacts from limited choices in amenities, particularly where local services are not affordable.

Living well locally should focus on making communities liveable in all senses. This includes infrastructure, availability and affordability of services and amenities and having high quality open and green space. Areas that currently have poor quality environments or high levels of deprivation should be prioritised for investment to reduce the risk of increasing inequality.

Public transport services could become less frequent and less viable if people are commuting less and travelling less for services. Public transport should be protected, supported and strengthened, to ensure services remain viable for those who are unable to work from home, particularly those who have no car access and to prevent an increase in car use or forced car ownership caused by reduced availability or frequency of public transport services. Consideration should be given to the provision of community transport where specialist services such as health services are not available locally.

6. Are there any further actions you would like to see included in future to support behaviour change 3) - switching to more sustainable modes of travel?

Many European cities, which started from a low active travel baseline - similar to Scottish cities currently - have developed joined up, safe infrastructure for active, sustainable travel and achieved high levels of walking and cycling[4]. The key ingredients for success in increasing active travel are: strong visionary leadership (from politicians, civil servants and Council officers); sustained investment over several years and sometimes decades; and pedestrian and cycle-friendly zones which give greater priority over motorised transport, particularly private cars[5].

There needs to be priority given to promoting walkability of neighbourhoods, and maintenance of pavements. When planning new street designs and active travel infrastructure, groups that are most at risk of exclusion and access barriers – e.g. older people, disabled people – should be involved in the earliest design stages to ensure accessibility is good for everyone.

Open Space Strategies should ensure access to off road walking and safe cycling that promotes access to greener, more sustainable environments.

Benefits for communities and individuals will be greatest when infrastructure improvements and maintenance are combined with other interventions and behaviour change programmes to support those least likely to be able to benefit from improvements to infrastructure. This needs to be targeted to be socially inclusive and to reduce inequalities in levels of walking, wheeling and cycling[6].

Interventions that improve access to bikes, including adapted and e-bikes, will open cycling up to a wider range of population groups. Without such an approach, improvements in active travel will not lead to a reduction in existing inequalities.

Cycling infrastructure needs to improve if cycling is going to be a realistic option for many people. People need to feel that they, or their family members, can cycle safely to their destination[7]. This requires well maintained and connected infrastructure that gives space for all road users. In addition, cycling skills training should be more widely available in and beyond schools so that everyone who wishes to cycle has the competence and knowledge to do so safely.

For many people, and particularly those who are infirm or unwell, car use will be required on occasion. Consideration should also be given to increasing access to car share schemes/car clubs that provide access to a private car when required, so that people feel more able to choose not to own a car. Giving up a car to join a car share scheme has been associated with reductions of 60-70% in vehicle distances driven[8].

The COP26 Transport Plan included free travel smartcards for delegates, demonstrating the technical ability to deliver a smartcard at scale. Efforts to integrate public transport should focus on creating an affordable card/ticket that can be used across bus, train, ferry, underground, tram and bike share services in order to make multi-modal and trip-chain journeys more convenient and achievable.

Improvements in data collection for walking, wheeling and cycling are required to understand the impact on inequalities and the risks associated with different modes of active travel. This requires more timely and comprehensive data on who cycles, walks and wheels in Scotland, expanding existing surveys and utilising more innovative sources including real-time data from e.g. counters and mobile phones. This should include data at local authority level, on journeys themselves (frequency, distance travelled and type, reflecting local and door-to-door journeys and interconnections between transport modes) as well as on age, gender, ethnic group, disability and socio-economic group.

Digital exclusion is relevant here too, as facilitating this switch cannot be solely reliant on digital options for accessing new forms of travel. For example, cycling projects which have aimed to increase the use of hire bikes from marginalised or under-represented groups have benefited from allowing people to participate without the need for a mobile phone.

What people consider to be 'normal' influences their transport choices and behaviours. High levels of car ownership and the belief that cars provide the most convenient and safe mode of travel contribute to a culture of car dominance and dependency. In a city like Glasgow where car ownership sits at around 50%, there is a risk that such a culture may influence planning decisions, further isolating and disadvantaging vulnerable people and communities with more limited access to cars. A social marketing campaign and community engagement, underpinned by appropriate information, effective communication and education for road users should support the introduction of new initiatives intended to encourage sustainable transport choices and behaviours which rely less on private cars. This will, in time, influence what is considered 'normal' in terms of how we travel.

7. Are there any further actions you would like to see included in future to support behaviour change 4) - combining or sharing journeys?

Provision of car clubs and other shared transport initiatives should be needs led, with priority given to areas of low income with low car ownership. Development of these services should build on existing community initiatives, and include flexible models to suit particular needs, for example in rural areas.

Employers and services, including the NHS, should support these services, for example by supporting car clubs as an alternative to private car use for business mileage, ensuring business mileage rates and other policies which do not incentivise private car use above other modes; instead prioritising information about sustainable transport options.

Please see comments above about the need to make multimodal journeys easy and affordable, and the importance of having integrated ticketing across different transport modes and providers.

8. Do you have any comment to make on any of the specific policies contained within the route map?

Box for comments

Social and Equalities

In creating the route map to reduce car kilometres, the public sector equality duty requires the Scottish Government to pay due regard to the need to the following:

- *Eliminate discrimination, victimisation, harassment or other unlawful conduct that is prohibited under the Equality Act 2010,*
- *Advance equality opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, and*
- *Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic.*

These three requirements apply across the protected characteristics of:

- *age*
- *disability*
- *gender reassignment*
- *marriage and civil partnership*
- *pregnancy and maternity*
- *race*
- *religion and belief*
- *sex and sexual orientation*

The Scottish Government must also include consideration of:

- *children and young people (Child Rights and Wellbeing)*

- *socioeconomic disadvantage, low wealth, and area deprivation (Fairer Scotland Duty)*

Section 8 of the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 (Scottish Parliament, 2018) requires the Scottish Government to prepare an island communities impact assessment in relation to a policy, strategy, or service, which is likely to have an effect on an island community which is significantly different from its effect on other communities.

The current draft impact assessments have been published alongside the Route Map and are available on the Transport Scotland website.

The Scottish Government will consider the responses from the consultation process in determining any actions needed to meet its statutory obligations. Your comments will be considered in the completion of the impact assessments to determine whether any further work in this area is needed

Impact Assessment

1. Do you think that the proposals set out in this plan could have positive or negative impacts on any particular groups of people with reference to the listed protected characteristics?

Yes, potentially positive
Overall the proposals set out in this plan, if well-designed and well-implemented, should help address the many damaging effects of our car dominated transport system, reduce related transport inequalities and enable healthier and more sustainable travel for everyone.

   a. If you think the proposals will have a particular impact on certain groups due to protected characteristics, what measures would you suggest to maximise positive impacts or mitigate negative impacts?

Some population groups, in particular those without access to a car such as older people, people with a disability, people from areas of high social deprivation and people for whom English is another language (including refugees) have the most to benefit from the implementation of the proposed policies. However, this is dependent on additional support to enable navigation of the system, support for behaviour change, infrastructure delivered to the right communities and an affordable, available, safe and accessible public transport system. It is notable in the Impact Assessment published with this consultation, that safety issues are cited for a number of population groups including older, younger, disabled and female people. Without addressing the measures outlined above implementation could lead to greater inequality.

> *Currently, public transport often remains inaccessible to disabled people and does not offer a realistic alternative to car use. Disabled women are more likely to be reliant on public transport due to taking on a disproportionate amount of caring and household roles[9] that often require a range of different trips. There needs to be meaningful involvement of disabled people, and disabled women in particular, in co-designing policies, plans and actions across a range of interrelated policy areas including transport.*
>
> *There are other recommendations from young disabled people for public transport improvements, which include: increasing accessibility features on buses, including launching audio announcements, and more spaces on buses available for wheelchair users[10].*

2. Do you think that the proposals set out in this plan could have a particular impact (positive or negative) on island communities?
   [More Information - Engagement with island communities was undertaken as part of the development of National Transport Strategy (NTS2). This engagement identified unique transport challenges relevant to island communities, click here for more information.]

   > *No comment*

   a. If you think the proposals will impact on island communities, what measures would you suggest to maximise positive impacts or mitigate negative impacts?

   > *Box for comments*

3. Do you think that the proposals set out in this plan could have a particular impact (positive or negative) on people facing socio-economic disadvantages?

   > *Yes*

   > *As stated above if well designed (including affordable, safe, accessible and convenient) the proposals have the potential to tackle inequalities in access to good local transport options.*

   a. If you think the proposals will have a particular impact based on socio-economic factors what measures would you suggest to maximise positive impacts or mitigate negative impacts?

> *Transport inequalities may reduce if the interventions result in public transport becoming more affordable, accessible, available and frequent with clearer information and improved integration of services.*
>
> *20 mph limits should help improve transport safety particularly for people in deprived areas where pedestrian casualties are higher than average[11].*
>
> *There are socio-economic inequalities in access to and use of cycles, and disabled people face particular barriers. Policies should aim to reduce these inequalities in access through better infrastructure, training and behaviour change, targeting the provision of bike share schemes, e-bikes and adapted bikes. Additionally, bike hire schemes need to extend into the most deprived urban areas, with infrastructure improvements and personal support being delivered alongside this to aid participation from under-represented groups.*

The Environment

The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 ensures those public proposals that are likely to have a significant impact on the environment are assessed and measures to prevent or reduce adverse effects are sought, where possible, prior to implementation.

1. Do you think the actions proposed in the route map are likely to have an impact on the environment? If so, in what way? Please be as specific as possible in your reasoning.

> *Yes*
>
> *If the proposals are successful in reducing car traffic then a number of potential health and environmental benefits could accrue.*
>
> *If improvements in public transport services help to replace car use, this in turn will reduce the adverse impacts of car traffic such as air pollution, noise, injuries, physical inactivity, and severance.*
>
> *Other benefits could arise both directly from increases in active travel and indirectly from reduction in motor traffic.*
> *•   Improvements to the green infrastructure, biodiversity and contribution to climate change mitigation and adaptation.*
> *•   Increased community sense of ownership of public space*
> *•   Reductions in road traffic injuries*
> *•   Reduction in community severance*
> *•   Reductions in air and noise pollution and greenhouse gas emission*

Other Comment

1. Do you have views you would like to express relating to parts of this consultation which do not have a specific question? If so, please elaborate

    Reducing car travel by 20% will require significant changes to the current travel offer. A reduction may be aided by the long-term shift towards home working and the reduced affordability of driving, but efforts are also needed to improve the active travel infrastructure and the public transport offer (reliability, cost, efficiency and route options). With continued increases in the cost of living, it is possible that the required reduction in journeys will be achieved at least partially as a result of people being priced out of driving. This situation has the potential to increase inequalities in access to transport if alternatives to the car are not offered.

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