

Transport (Scotland) Bill

A briefing from TRANSform Scotland and Friends of the Earth Scotland



FRIENDS OF THE EARTH SCOTLAND

TRANSform Scotland
the campaign for sustainable transport

This Transport Bill is being debated in the same week that we are hearing reports of Arctic ice receding to its greatest extent since records began and the Environment Agency warning of repeats of the floods which devastated towns across the UK in recent years. **Transport is Scotland's fastest growing contributor to the global warming emissions which bring about these economic and environmental disasters.** With floods in Mozambique to storms throughout the Caribbean, failure to tackle climate change will only result in more climate victims.

Recommendations:

- The enabling powers for local authorities to introduce **urban road charging schemes**, where locally appropriate, must be supported if we are realistic about tackling urban pollution and congestion.
- The enabling powers for local authorities to implement **workplace parking levies** must also be supported. This is a crucial measure in tackling urban peak-hour congestion - as well as the resulting pollution.
- The Bill should include a discretionary extension of the parking levy to cover **out-of-town parking**. The Bill currently does little to counter the pollution caused by businesses and consumers choosing out-of-town developments, leading to reductions in the vitality of town centres.
- The Bill should include enabling powers for local authorities to designate residential streets as '**Home Zones**', thereby improving local quality of life and opportunities for childrens' play and exercise.
- **This Bill must ensure that we set, implement and monitor targets for reducing climate change emissions and levels of traffic.** Climate change emissions from transport are dependent on local authorities being given the powers to implement road traffic reduction.

The Need for Change:

- **Traffic growth must be reined back and then reversed.** Current trends mean we will have 50% more traffic in 30 years time. Local authorities must be provided with the tools to allow them to provide for road traffic reduction as called for in the Road Traffic Reduction Act 1997.
- **We need reduction in climate change emissions from the transport sector.** Transport is the fastest growing sector for production of climate change emissions. Scotland is already falling behind England in reducing emissions from transport. The UK climate change strategy requires the transport sector to deliver 40% of all proposed reductions.
- **Local authorities have a statutory obligation to reduce air pollution in cities.** Unless the Transport Bill measures reduce traffic, these air quality targets will not be met.
- **The price of motoring has remained constant for 25 years while public transport prices have soared.** UK motoring costs remained constant in real terms 1974-1998 (only a 2% increase 1993-1998); compared to substantial public transport price increases - the same period saw a 60-80% increase in public transport prices in real terms (2-4% increase for public transport prices 1993-1998).
- **Local authorities must be provided with the toolkit of measures they need to tackle rising traffic levels and improve local transport.** Powers for local road user charging and workplace parking levy schemes must be in the Bill.

What the Bill must legislate for:

(1) Road user charging - urban areas.

- Road user charging (RUC) gives the best way of making road users pay for their use of scarce road space (in terms of the pollution, congestion, crashes and road damage caused). **It is the application of the 'polluter pays principle' to the use of road space.** RUC is fundamentally **not** about raising money for transport investment although this is a welcome spin-off.
- The Bill makes a clear commitment to **hypothecation** (revenues ringfenced for local transport improvements), **additionality** (money will be on top of what is already spent on transport) and **transparency** (schemes should clearly show where the funds raised have gone). We support these commitments.
- **We welcome the Transport & Environment Committee's support for local authorities to be**

given the power to implement RUC schemes.

- We question whether dissenting voices to the inclusion of powers for local RUC schemes have any strategy to tackle congestion, air pollution, climate change and the funding of transport.
- We welcome the T&E Committee's proposal that local authorities be given the power to request charges on trunk roads that are complementary to a RUC scheme set up by a local authority - i.e. areas where a trunk road runs through a local authority area that might want to implement an urban RUC scheme.

(2) Workplace parking levy.

- Workplace parking levies are **a useful tool in tackling peak-hour traffic levels** by making businesses think more critically about the number of parking spaces provided to employees.
- A workplace parking levy would give a financial incentive for businesses to bring forward Green Transport Plans (e.g. discounted public transport, lift-sharing) in order to reduce parking provision.
- We strongly support the Executive's proposals for workplace parking levies, where locally appropriate.
- **Local authorities such as Glasgow City Council are considering a parking levy and the Parliament should legislate to allow them to take forward these proposals.**

(3) Out-of-town parking levy.

- The Transport Bill proposals as they stand do nothing to control the spread of out-of-town retail and leisure developments. There is also a real danger that unless out-of-town sprawl is reined back, that traffic levels will grow rapidly in urban fringe and outlying areas. Research for the Council for the Protection of Rural England in 1999 concluded that there could be a 265% increase in traffic on English rural roads over the next 30 years.
- We recommend that the Bill provide **a discretionary extension of parking levies to retail and leisure**

premises to produce a more 'level playing field' between town centres, where parking charges already apply, and out of town facilities, where they do not.

- We welcome the T&E Committee's support for more information from the Executive on how these problems can be tackled without a discretionary extension of the parking levy to non-workplace locations.

(4) Home Zones.

- We are concerned that the Bill does insufficient to promote local improvements in the use of streetspace.
- 'Home Zones' are local residential areas where pedestrians are given priority and slow speeds are enforced by traffic calming - and in which children's play can be better provided for. They are very common in the Netherlands and other continental countries. The Executive is supportive of the concept.
- **We welcome the T&E Committee's proposal that the Bill should include enabling powers for local authorities to designate residential areas as Home Zones.**

(5) Climate change commitments.

- **This Bill must ensure that we set and implement targets for reducing climate change emissions and levels of traffic. This should include the ability to monitor progress towards these targets.**
- **Local authorities must set out the expected level of road traffic and the expected level of climate change emissions as a result of measures implemented in their Local Transport Strategies.**
- We are disappointed that the T&E Committee has not recommended that LTSs be a mandatory requirement of local authorities (as Local Transport Plans are in the Westminster Transport Bill). Mandatory LTSs should be given the role of bringing together and strategising statutory targets such as the Road Traffic Reduction Act 1997 and Air Quality Management Areas, as well as other targets - e.g. for modal shift to sustainable modes and for increasing walking and cycling.

But don't just believe us...

Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution - 'Energy - the Changing Climate,' June 2000

"the need for improvements in transport is particularly pressing, given the rapid growth in this sector's energy consumption."

"reducing carbon dioxide emissions should continue to be a central objective of transport policy"

"local authorities which are considering implementing [charging schemes] will need sustained political and financial support from [government]."

SEPA - 'State of the Environment: Air Quality Report,' June 2000

"motor traffic emissions are now posing the principal threat to air quality in urban areas"

"traffic pollution problems are worsening."

SEPA will "work with the Scottish Executive to establish a CO2 emissions reduction target and take forward relevant and cost effective steps to achieve it"

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