

# Transport in a net-zero future

A briefing on a more sustainable transport system, and how we get there.

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**Friends of  
the Earth  
Scotland**

This document sets out a number of Friends of the Earth Scotland's proposals for achieving the kind of transport system Scotland needs to tackle climate change, and reduce the health impacts of pollution. While not a definitive list, these are tangible changes that politicians in Scotland can, and should, make in the near-term.

Details are set out below but, in brief, we recommend politicians should:

- Legislate for an end date for the sale of fossil fuel vehicles in Scotland of 2030, backed up by supporting measures
- Increase the active travel budget year-on-year, while reducing spend on new roads
- Take a cross-party approach to improving transport, instead of making politicised attacks on proposals which reduce car use

## The climate and health needs

Road transport is Scotland's biggest climate polluter. Greenhouse gas emissions from transport made up 37% of Scotland's total emissions in 2017<sup>1</sup>. Emissions actually went up from 2016, when traffic on Scottish roads consumed just over 3 million tonnes of petrol and diesel<sup>2</sup>, while every other sector made reductions in emissions. Total emissions from road transport are up on the 1990 base level<sup>3</sup>. This is a national shame, and is contributing towards the 'climate emergency' politicians have pledged to tackle.

There are nearly 3 million vehicles licensed in Scotland; the vast majority of these use fossil fuel. Car use is pervasive. But people on the lowest incomes, people from ethnic minority communities, and people living with disabilities are least likely to own a car.<sup>4</sup>

Air pollution, which is primarily from transport, is responsible for the early deaths of 2,500 people in Scotland each year.<sup>5</sup> It causes heart attacks, strokes, and respiratory problems<sup>6</sup> - with children and the elderly amongst the worst affected. Seven sites in Scotland are still exceeding air quality legal limits, nearly ten years after the limits were formally introduced.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>8</sup>

## Progress to date

It's clear that Scotland needs a new transport system. The current car-centric system is destroying our climate and our health. It is also leaving Scotland uncompetitive, as other countries transition away from internal combustion traffic, and move towards cleaner streets and healthier travel.

<sup>5</sup>

<https://foe.scot/press-release/new-research-means-2500-deaths-a-year-in-scotland-are-from-air-pollution/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.who.int/airpollution/ambient/health-impacts/en/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://foe.scot/scotlands-most-polluted-streets-in-2018/>

<sup>8</sup> Page 30/44.

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32008L0050&qid=1455033222658&from=EN>

<sup>1</sup>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-greenhouse-gas-emissions-2017/pages/5/>

<sup>2</sup> As above. P.85

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/44207/sct01193326941.pdf> p.221

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/44207/sct01193326941.pdf> p.53

Rome is banning diesel cars from 2024<sup>9</sup>. Athens and Paris will remove diesel cars and vans from their cities by 2025<sup>10</sup>. Meanwhile, a huge coalition of cities around the world have pledged to introduce electric-only bus fleets by 2025, and remove fossil fuel vehicles by 2030.<sup>11</sup> Many of these cities compete directly with Scotland's cities for tourism and investment.

On a national level, several countries have announced plans to prevent the sale of fossil fuel vehicles beyond 2030, including Ireland, Germany, and, most recently, Denmark<sup>12</sup>.

In May 2019 the UK Committee on Climate Change advised a 2030 end date for fossil fuel cars and vans<sup>13</sup> across the UK. The Scottish Government's current commitment - "to phase out the need for fossil fuel vehicles by 2032" - was a welcome step but it is somewhat unclear and the target is not yet in law.

### Active travel

In 2018 the Scottish Government doubled the active travel budget to £80million - a significant commitment, but one we need to build on further. In May 2019, the Scottish Government accepted it would miss its target of 10% of commuter journeys being made by bike.<sup>14</sup> In the most recent statistics, only 2.6% of people cycled to work.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> <https://electrek.co/2018/02/28/rome-bans-diesel-cars-2024/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/dec/02/four-of-worlds-biggest-cities-to-ban-diesel-cars-from-their-centres>

<sup>11</sup> <https://climateprotection.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Survey-on-Global-Activities-to-Phase-Out-ICE-Vehicles-FINAL-Oct-3-2018.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-48668791>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Net-Zero-The-UKs-contribution-to-stopping-global-warming.pdf> p.35

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.scotsman.com/news/transport/10-per-cent-cycling-target-unlikely-to-be-met-ministers-concede-1-4949530>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/41863/scottish-transport-statistics-2017-with-correction-to-table-214.pdf> p.17

We need to continue to increase investment in active travel, making walking and cycling safe, easy, and accessible for more people.

### A vision for the future of transport

To tackle the dual issues of climate change and air pollution, we need to see a step change in our approach to transport. The era of large scale private car ownership must come to an end. To deliver the transport system we need, politicians must:

- Bring the end date for the phase out of fossil fuel vehicles to 2030, in line with advice from the CCC, and put this into legislation.
  - This must be underpinned by a plan to ban fossil fuel vehicle traffic, beginning in city centres.
  - More powers and resources for councils to disincentivise car use and invest in sustainable transport options.
- The active travel budget must increase year-on-year, while the billions spent on new roads rapidly decreases. As a minimum, 10% of the total transport budget should be spent on active travel - as public health experts have been recommending for years.<sup>1617</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> [https://www.adph.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Active\\_Travel\\_release\\_FINAL\\_-\\_24-April-081.pdf](https://www.adph.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Active_Travel_release_FINAL_-_24-April-081.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> [http://www.adph.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Take\\_action\\_on\\_active\\_travel\\_20104.pdf](http://www.adph.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Take_action_on_active_travel_20104.pdf)