

Introduction & structure

I'm going to talk about:

- The imbalance and injustice built into our current transport system
- The challenges and insights presented by the Covid-19 crisis
- How we can create a society that prioritises accessibility over mobility

Cars cause **40% of transport emissions** in Scotland, and even if every new car sold in Scotland in 2030 were electric, we'd still need to reduce overall car mileage by 20% to meet our climate commitments.

Our transport system is based on a **one-size-fits-all** approach – where the size is a two-tonne metal box. Scenes like this in cities up and down the country – when our high streets could look like this instead.

Climate and transport – the intersection of inequalities

A discriminatory transport system that is designed around

- A presumption of car ownership – when up to 49% of [households](#) in the most deprived areas don't have access to car
- 9-5 office commutes – overlooking shift work that is often lower-paid and is disproportionately carried out by women and people with Black or Minority Ethnic backgrounds
- A to B journeys – overlooking trips that go from home to school to work to the shops, that are mainly carried out by women
- Major roads cutting through inner cities, imposing poor air quality on low income households
- Shockingly, children in Scotland's 20% most deprived communities are three times as likely to be in a collision with a motor vehicle as children in the least deprived 20% - [Sustrans research](#)

Meanwhile, the current pandemic has thrown up new challenges to our society:

C-19 – challenges and lessons

Online shopping - in May, online sales were 130% higher than the same time last year, while sales in shops dropped by 87%. [That means](#) more vans on our roads, and another challenge for our high streets.

Public transport – squeezed by **public fear** and 70-90% **reduced capacity**, operators are desperately short on revenue and may go out of business. Transport for London needed a £1.6bn bailout last month to avoid going bankrupt.

Car ownership – risk that many people will be pushed into cars and change travel habits permanently

Governments are acting to address this with **temporary measures for active travel** - Milan, Berlin, London, Dublin – and in Scotland, a £30m fund for local authorities has demonstrated our ability to make transformative changes swiftly

What have we learned?

- we value greenspace (which is a key inequality issue)
- Many of us can WFH, but don't want to do it all the time; - though the poorest can't

- we can attend conferences;
- we enjoy car-free roads and improved air quality
- Life is easier when the services you need are close to you

The solutions

We need to stop thinking about transport as mobility, and prioritise accessibility – both access to services, and access to transport.

Access to services – planning and the 20 minute neighbourhood

Where everyday services – schools, shops, GPs, parks, work spaces – are within a 20 minute walk of home. This makes active travel – walking, cycling, using mobility aids – the default choice for travel, and makes services more accessible for everyone.

This requires a shift in thinking from mobility to accessibility – rather than making it as easy as possible for people to travel large distances, make it easier to access services. And there are a wealth of other reasons for us to take this approach:

- regenerating high streets, creating places for work, leisure, retail – especially as consumer habits change after lockdown
- Community spaces, shared workspaces in more local areas – the office experience
- Cargo consolidation hubs on the edges of cities, to minimise van and lorry traffic – combined with pick-up hubs on high streets (or shops, as they are also known)
- Melbourne is the world leader in this, Paris Mayor is standing for re-election on basis of 15 minute cities, and UK examples – Waltham Forest in London [**slides**]

Access to transport – providing alternatives to car ownership

Lowering the access barrier to cycling by offering loans & grants for purchase of bikes. Cycle to Work only covers those on PAYE, and if you earn well above the minimum wage.

Providing cheap bike sharing schemes beyond city centres – including e-bikes in rural areas to complement public transport

Extending this to accessible EV-sharing schemes, for those journeys where cars or vans make the most sense. Fostering a move from car ownership to car accessibility – which frees up street space for people, rather than cars that spend 96% of their time parked.¹

Ellie will talk more about this in a minute - Improving regularity and affordability of public transport – particularly buses, which are a lifeline to poorer and more rural communities

Designing all infrastructure with multi-mode trips in mind – so it's easy to switch from train to bus to bike.

High quality active travel infrastructure that works for the people who need it most

Wrap up – speed of interventions

Transformational change is upon us – it's now up to us how to shape it, to avoid embedding existing inequalities.

¹ <http://www.racfoundation.org/research/mobility/spaced-out-perspectives-on-parking>

This morning, I looked out of window in quiet suburban cul-de-sac and saw **33 cars and a caravan**. Less than 30 houses! Think of what we could do with that space – playparks, public green space, outdoor seating for cafes, gardens (urban creep)

A bike can't replace a car – but together a bike, public transport and a car club can, and save you money.