



**OFFICIAL REPORT**  
AITHISG OIFIGEIL

# Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee

**Tuesday 7 November 2017**

**Session 5**



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

© Parliamentary copyright. Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body

Information on the Scottish Parliament's copyright policy can be found on the website - [www.parliament.scot](http://www.parliament.scot) or by contacting Public Information on 0131 348 5000

---

**Tuesday 7 November 2017**

**CONTENTS**

	<b>Col.</b>
<b>DECISION ON TAKING BUSINESS IN PRIVATE .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>AIR QUALITY .....</b>	<b>2</b>

---

**ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND LAND REFORM COMMITTEE**  
**27<sup>th</sup> Meeting 2017, Session 5**

**CONVENER**

\*Graeme Dey (Angus South) (SNP)

**DEPUTY CONVENER**

\*John Scott (Ayr) (Con)

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

- \*Claudia Beamish (South Scotland) (Lab)
- \*Donald Cameron (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
- \*Finlay Carson (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
- \*Kate Forbes (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
- \*Emma Harper (South Scotland) (SNP)
- \*Richard Lyle (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)
- \*Angus MacDonald (Falkirk East) (SNP)
- \*Mark Ruskell (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
- \*David Stewart (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)

\*attended

**THE FOLLOWING ALSO PARTICIPATED:**

- Chris MacRae (Freight Transport Association)
- Phil Matthews (Transform Scotland)
- Alex Quayle (Sustrans)
- Paul White (Confederation of Passenger Transport UK)

**CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE**

Lynn Tullis

**LOCATION**

The Robert Burns Room (CR1)



## Scottish Parliament

### Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee

*Tuesday 7 November 2017*

*[The Convener opened the meeting at 10:40]*

### Decision on Taking Business in Private

**The Convener (Graeme Dey):** Welcome to the 27th meeting in 2017 of the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee. I remind everyone to switch off mobile phones and other electronic devices as they can affect the broadcasting system.

Under agenda item 1, I invite the committee to agree to take item 3 in private. Do members agree to do so?

**Members** *indicated agreement.*

## Air Quality

10:40

**The Convener:** Agenda item 2 is evidence from a panel of transport stakeholders for the committee's inquiry into air quality in Scotland. I welcome Chris MacRae, head of policy, Freight Transport Association; Philip Matthews, chair, Transform Scotland; Alex Quayle, senior policy officer, Sustrans; and Paul White, director of Government relations, Confederation of Passenger Transport UK. Members have a series of questions for you, and we will get straight into them.

**Kate Forbes (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP):** I will start with a very broad question for each of you. Do you think that the Scottish Government's work to date on air quality is adequate to meet legal requirements in the medium to long term?

**The Convener:** Paul White wants to kick off.

**Paul White (Confederation of Passenger Transport UK):** I believe that the work that has been done so far is going in the right direction. As you would imagine, from my perspective, the key to meeting air quality targets through steps such as establishing low-emission zones is to frame bus transport as an integral part of the air quality solution, rather than villainising it. There is more to be done on that and on unlocking the benefits that are associated with a strong or comprehensive bus network. That may involve measures that you might not associate with air quality policy, such as creating a stable framework for bus policy that allows operators the certainty to accelerate fleet investment and invest in new services.

**Alex Quayle (Sustrans):** Although the cleaner air for Scotland strategy is a strong policy and has seen us move generally in the right direction, the fact that the number of air quality management areas has increased from 34 to 38 in the past year suggests that the direction of travel is not yet entirely right.

It is heartening that the consultation on low-emission zones will look at their introduction in air quality management areas by 2023 but that is a long-term goal. With the long term, I am quite confident; in the short and medium term, there is room for progress.

**Phil Matthews (Transform Scotland):** I agree with a lot of what has been said by the previous two speakers. I welcome the air quality strategy and the proposals on low-emission zones, but we believe that we could go further. We would like a low-emission zone to be introduced as quickly as possible in every city that has an air quality

management area at present. The commitment to ban combustion engines by 2032 is welcome but electric vehicles and so on will be very challenging to roll out, given that they will involve changing vehicles' fuel source as well as changes to roads. Underpinning all of this is a transport strategy that, despite what it says, has resulted in a growth in car transport, inadequate funding for walking and cycling and an overall approach to transport that does not really back the transformational change that we need to see in terms of the wider benefits—benefits for not just air quality but things such as public health.

In the medium to long term, some of the actions in the air quality strategy as well as the proposals on low-emission zones and so on are very welcome. We have to look much more strategically at the overall investment in transport, what we are proposing for different modes and how we incentivise people to choose healthier and less polluting forms of transport.

**Chris MacRae (Freight Transport Association):** Overall, we are moving in the right direction. We have obvious concerns about the implications for freight and for servicing deliveries in Scotland's major cities. The emissions standards for commercial vehicles are improving and, with the Euro 6 standards for heavy-good vehicles and the standards for vans, there will be dramatic improvement over time, but we must allow time for those benefits to filter through.

10:45

**Kate Forbes:** Some of you touched on this already, but is there an adequate focus on active travel in the cleaner air for Scotland strategy? If not, how would you develop such a focus?

**Phil Matthews:** Although the recent doubling of funding for active travel is very welcome, the vast majority of our transport spend still goes on roads. For example, there is £3 billion for the A96 upgrade and so on, yet we are talking about £80 million for active travel. That is disappointing. We would like the Scottish Government to move towards focusing 10 per cent of its transport budget on active travel. You would then start to see real transformational change in our cities, in public health and in other things as part of that.

There has been progress: the importance of active travel has been acknowledged and we have a cycling strategy and a walking strategy. That is all good, but the cycling strategy sets a target of 10 per cent of all journeys being by bike by 2020 and I do not think anyone is claiming that we are going to meet that. We are at 1 or 2 per cent now, so clearly we need to move a lot faster and more boldly than we are doing at present.

**Alex Quayle:** With regard to promoting active travel, part of the problem is that when the cleaner air Scotland strategy refers to transport, it talks more about different types of vehicles. However, this is not just about having a different type of vehicle that pollutes less but about having fewer vehicles in urban centres. Although electric vehicles have a fundamental role to play in future urban mobility, there will still be particulate matter from the brakes and tyres, for which there is no safe limit.

It is about making sure not just that we have vehicles that pollute less but that space is given within urban environments for walking and cycling, meaning that it will be safer for people to cycle and that more people will change their behaviour and switch to a less polluting mode. CAFS could do more to meet head on the problem of there being too many vehicles in our urban areas.

**Kate Forbes:** My final question is for Paul White. What discussions has the CPT had with the Scottish Government on evaluating or reinstating the bus investment fund, and what impact has the reduction in the bus service operators grant had on operations?

**Paul White:** The bus investment fund was a useful pot of money of, I think, £3 million over three years to kick start infrastructure projects. It came to a conclusion about two years ago and we were told there would be a report to evaluate its success. I think that it was hugely oversubscribed in the first year. There were some good ideas out there at the local authority level and among operators, and the money could have been put to good use. However, we are still awaiting the report. It is frustrating that we cannot progress any innovative projects that we might have had an eye on through the fund.

The bus service operators grant had a base rate of 14.4p per passenger kilometre and a top-up rate, which was also 14.4p if the vehicle qualified as a low-carbon vehicle, but which has been cut to 10.1p. The base rate remains the same. You could say that that flies in the face of the work that is done through the green bus fund to incentivise operators to purchase low-carbon vehicles. On the one hand you are incentivising them to purchase the vehicle but on the other hand you are saying that there are so many of them that you will have to cut the rate. That makes it difficult for operators to make an investment case for a low-carbon vehicle, because they know that the rate that they receive through BSOG has been reduced.

**The Convener:** Let me pick up on that point. I am not saying that this is my view, but one could argue that substantial public subsidy has already been provided through the green bus fund and that you are, in a way, looking for a double subsidy. That leads us on to the wider moral

question about the extent to which the bus operators have a responsibility to behave in an environmentally responsible way and the extent to which the public purse has to incentivise them to do that.

**Paul White:** Sure. Green bus fund grants are for up to 80 per cent of the price differential between a standard vehicle and a low-carbon vehicle. The vast majority of the cost is still paid by the operator, and that 80 per cent grant for the differential is the maximum level. If you want to be successful in bids to the green bus fund you probably have to pitch lower than 80 per cent.

Although the green bus fund is helpful, I think that it has incentivised the purchase of about 300 low-carbon vehicles, which is roughly half the number of low-carbon vehicles in Scotland. Therefore, operators are not saying that they will not invest in low-carbon vehicles unless they go through the green bus fund. Operators are continuously working to update and green their fleet but there is a big cost involved, especially given the uncertainty over the larger framework of things such as the BSOG and the proposed transport bill, which might lead to franchising. With that uncertainty, it is difficult for operators to make a case for accelerating fleet investment; indeed, they might even choose to pause it.

**Phil Matthews:** The subsidies for buses are a very small percentage of the overall transport budget. We have seen bus usage in Scotland decline quite significantly, and there is clearly a social justice aspect to that. A lot of people in Scotland do not have access to a car and the bus is their main mode of travel. Obviously, members have to look at the detail of individual schemes, but the overall amount of money that is allocated to support buses is not huge.

There are lots of other things that need to be done in relation to buses, such as providing road space for buses, bus preferential corridors and so on. We saw a big roll-out of such things maybe 20 years ago, which had a positive impact. However, we have seen some retreating or stalling in the past few years. In the round, we need to think more about how we can reinvigorate buses in Scotland and make them greener.

**Mark Ruskell (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green):** In relation to the green bus fund, has there been any analysis of the number of vehicles that would need to be retrofitted in order to meet the Government's aspirations for low-emission zones? At last week's meeting, we were given a figure—I think that it was plucked out of the air—which was that 1,000 buses in Glasgow alone would need to be retrofitted, but I do not know what analysis the industry has done on that.

**Paul White:** I imagine that there would be a separate fund. Let me demonstrate the lack of certainty that there might be around investment. The green bus fund of £3 million a year is usually fully taken up. However, this year only about half of it—about £1.4 million, I think—was taken up and the rest was not. I believe that there are discussions—this is not set in stone—that some of that money might be used as a separate pot to allow operators to bid for money to retrofit vehicles.

I do not have figures on the number of buses across Scotland that would qualify, but I can come back to you on that. Retrofitting is not the silver bullet that will solve the problem. It is a swift and cost-effective means of bringing certain vehicles up towards Euro 6 standards, but there are other factors. For example, retrofitting lowers fuel efficiency and increases maintenance costs. It might improve NOx levels but worsen carbon emissions. London, through Transport for London, had experience of doing a lot of retrofitting and they have the bruises to show for it. There are some lessons to learn as to how best to do it. Perhaps it should be done as part of a larger package that could involve scrappage or lead-in periods that would allow operators to invest over a longer period of time to reach Euro 6 standards.

**The Convener:** As no one else wants to come in on that, Finlay Carson has the next question.

**Finlay Carson (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con):** Do you think that Scotland should have more ambitious air quality targets than the European Union minimum?

**Chris MacRae:** That is a political matter for Scottish Government to decide. It is an ambitious target that presents challenges to the freight sector. As I said before, under the Euro 6 standards for commercial vehicles, air quality emissions from goods vehicles will improve. If the introduction of low-emission zones creates a temporary hiatus in the meantime, what will that mean for fleet replacement, particularly for smaller and medium-sized enterprises, what will it mean for supplying Scotland's cities, and what will it mean for the costs that are ultimately passed on to the consumer?

**Finlay Carson:** When we are looking at the transboundary impacts of air pollution, how can Scotland's approach be more agile to address the cleaner air for Scotland strategy's vision of our air quality being the best in Europe?

**Alex Quayle:** I could give a broad answer to that. It is a simplistic answer but the onus should be on the polluter to reduce the pollution. There is a problem with monitoring and acting upon that, but if we can set the policy so that the polluter is

disincentivised, that would be at the root of the approach.

**Finlay Carson:** We have heard something about this in previous answers but I would like to go into a little bit more detail. What work is the freight and passenger transport sector doing to improve pollution? Are adequate resources being directed at guidance and information to help facilitate that? What improvements would help you in future?

**Paul White:** Our individual operator members are investing as best as they can in greener vehicles. Lothian Buses, for example, recently received some press about its new electric vehicles. Investment is definitely happening.

We are working with Transport Scotland and local authorities to make the case for putting the bus at the centre of the solution.

Transport Scotland has said there will be no cuts to BSOG if we provide a stable framework, so we are asking local authorities to look at how we can work together through statutory quality partnerships or whatever partnership model emerges from the proposed Transport Scotland bill. If local authorities tackle the congestion problem, that will allow buses to raise their speeds, which will improve environmental performance. That will free up resources so that the bus service operators can offer a better service or have more money to invest in newer vehicles. We are encouraging that partnership to allow us to deliver that better.

**The Convener:** You are right that there are some very good examples out there. Lothian Buses is one, and Stagecoach in my constituency, is doing a lot of good work in this area. Is that happening across the board? They are also examples of areas that are lagging behind. Are the smaller operators lagging behind because it might be more difficult for them to buy into the idea?

**Paul White:** CPT's current chair—we elect a chair annually—is Sandra Whitelaw, who runs a bus company called Whitelaws. Its fleet is completely low carbon. There are examples of smaller to medium-sized operators who are doing some fantastic work.

Some smaller operators might find that monetary issues do not allow them to update their fleet, so their vehicles are perfectly road legal and up to a certain standard, but they are not low-carbon vehicles. Their vehicles might not be that modern but they serve a role, particularly in rural areas where it is very difficult to make a case for investing a lot of money in a low-carbon vehicle when air quality is not such a big issue in the area. An operator might be running supported services through the local authority where they want low cost tenders. So if an operator has spent all that

money on their bus, their tender will be so much higher than that of somebody who has a slightly older vehicle. It varies across the patch.

**Chris MacRae:** Freight is obviously a wholly private sector activity. As I have mentioned already, a lot of freight replacement is going on with the Euro 6 standard. The LEZ is, effectively, just seeking to bring forward a benefit that is naturally coming anyway.

As I mentioned earlier, there is a concern about the ability of smaller to medium-sized enterprises to replace vehicles. We talk about the freight sector, but it contains different sectors. Because of their fleet replacement policies, effectively this is not going to be an issue for some companies because Euro 6 standards will be across the board very soon.

Other companies, such as those that are involved in food distribution, for example, keep their vehicles for much longer because they do a lot lower mileage, so they will see a natural lag in meeting vehicle emission standards. That said, a lot of those companies are also looking at the use of electric fridges rather than diesel fridges in refrigerated vehicles, and that will cut down on emissions.

11:00

Colleagues from the bus sectors touched on the point about the efficient use of road space and partnering. Obviously, as with any vehicle, the most inefficient way to operate a commercial vehicle for emissions is slowly and in stop-start traffic.

During the Commonwealth games, we did a lot of work with Glasgow City Council on piloting night-time deliveries because of the physical restrictions that were going on as a result of the games. We would like one of the legacy benefits from that to be greater flexibility in delivery hours, greater use of road space, and priority for commercial vehicles in traffic calming—we would rather avoid traffic calming for commercial vehicles—because that is another way of reducing emissions in the city environment.

**The Convener:** David Stewart wants to come in and I can imagine what he is looking to explore.

**David Stewart (Highlands and Islands) (Lab):** I want to ask Chris MacRae about the Dutch model of consolidation centres. In a previous session of Parliament, the transport committee visited a consolidation centre and was very impressed with the model. As members might know, freight goes to an external site and low-emitting vehicles are used to take it from one area to another, unless there is a one-off drop to a large supermarket. For example, I was on an electric



freight bike, which I have never come across before, but I was very impressed with it. I understand that one of the freight companies is looking at Stirling as a possible place for that model. Have you had any experience of that?

**Chris MacRae:** Yes. The FTA is involved with the Scottish freight logistics advisory group of Transport Scotland and I chair the urban freight subgroup of that, which will produce—this quarter, I hope—guidance on best practice for urban deliveries and look at how planners, local authorities, developers, businesses that generate freight and freight operators can work together.

Consolidation centres have come up a number of times and there have been previous studies, particularly in the Glasgow area. Strathclyde Passenger Transport, the regional transport partnership, looked at it. The issue with consolidation centres is what they can do to the actual supply chain. If it involves another break in the bulk or another handling leg, then it will obviously mean extra costs.

There are two examples of consolidation centres operating at a local authority level in the United Kingdom so far. One is in Bath, which is funded, and the other is at Heathrow airport, which is basically a security type thing. I could be slightly blasé and say that Glasgow has a consolidation centre at Bellshill, which is the regional distribution centre for the major distribution companies that operate around there. If extra breaks are put into the supply chain so that we can use low-emission vehicles for that final mile, it will obviously put costs up. That has an implication for goods in the shops, because someone has to pick up that cost, unless, of course, it is going to be funded by the state or a local authority in some way.

The freight sector is incentivised by the margins in the sector to make the most efficient use of vehicles and load space, and to minimise empty running. So, in a sense, there is a degree of self-regulation from an economic point of view.

The freight sector is completely aligned to the ambitions that a consolidation centre is trying to achieve in terms of the self-incentivisation from the economic point of view.

**Finlay Carson:** Is there enough carrot or stick to drive technology when it comes to freight transport using articulated lorries and whatever? You said that that is mostly private sector, but the public sector is driven and we are seeing a rapid improvement in buses and increase in the number of electric buses coming online. Is there enough pressure on the lorry freight industry to develop electric engines? Would that need significant support from Government?

**Chris MacRae:** There are certainly sticks in the form of the low-emission zones and so on that are

being proposed, but there is probably a lack of carrot. Over the years, in the wider UK context, not just specifically in Scotland, we have seen changes in UK Government policy around financial support for alternative fuels for commercial vehicles. The reality is that there is not really an option on diesel at the moment. Electric is really for local operations, not for long-distance operations. We have talked about that already.

The gas network for refuelling commercial vehicles over longer distances is developing, but it is not there yet. We are in a period in which technology is coming along, but we are not quite there. What is important is that if the Government—and I mean that in the wider sense rather than the UK or Scottish Government—is setting up policies of support for alternative fuels, they need to be consistent in their approach in the long term. At the UK level, we have seen examples of support being given to one type of alternative fuel and then taken away after operators have invested. In a private sector environment, that is a very difficult thing to justify if there is no long-term fiscal certainty. Support for areas like that would be welcome but it has to be long-term committed support.

**Claudia Beamish (South Scotland) (Lab):** I would like to explore further the adequacy of the Scottish Government's approach. Before I do that, Mr MacRae, is moving from road to rail for freight relevant to the discussions we are having this morning? Do you have any further comments on that before I ask my other questions?

**Chris MacRae:** Absolutely. One of my other jobs at the FTA is head of the UK rail freight policy work. Rail freight across the UK probably represents 10 per cent of surface transport. Rail freight is good for doing certain things but it has to work in partnership with road freight. There will be a road leg to a rail journey, either at the beginning or the end; in most cases it will probably be at both. For urban freight and deliveries, although rail can take things right into city centres, there has to be a road distribution leg at the end of it.

Trials have been done at Euston station in London of bringing goods into the station at night and then taking them away in road vehicles. Unfortunately, at many stations, including, for example, Glasgow central, the infrastructure to do that has been removed over the years and vehicular access to our major stations—Glasgow central and Edinburgh Waverley, for example—that used to be used for parcel and mail traffic has been taken away.

Overall, rail freight is less polluting than road freight because of the amount of tonnage that can be shifted per gallon of diesel burned. However, the individual units of freight trains are actually far more polluting than commercial vehicles. The

benefit comes from moving larger volumes. That is why rail freight is more suited to bulk hauls and longer distance traffic, like Anglo-Scottish retail traffic, the Russell Group or the Malcolm Group, rather than urban freight distribution.

**Claudia Beamish:** Could I ask all the witnesses for a response to this question? What innovative measures should be put in place to discourage polluting forms of transport? Would cost congestion and availability of parking be adequate disincentives? If anyone is brave enough, I would like to hear views on congestion charging and workplace parking as well.

**The Convener:** Who is brave?

**Paul White:** I will be brave enough. The idea of congestion charging should not have been ruled out with the consultation on low-emission zones. We should seek views on that. Workplace parking levies are a success in Nottingham, I believe, and should be considered. You can use that alongside setting up salary sacrifice schemes for public transport season tickets and you can work with Traveline Scotland to provide everyone within a LEZ with a greener travel plan. You might reduce parking availability, and it might cost people to bring their vehicles into the city centre, but there is a financial benefit in travelling by public transport and you can provide the public with all the necessary information to make it easier for them. The appetite for it is something we would need to look into but there certainly are positives.

**Alex Quayle:** On the question of whether the cost incentive is enough, Sustrans would advocate a ban on vehicles of certain pollution standards. Rather than a facility for somebody who can afford it to pay to take their polluting vehicle into a city, there should be a certain standard below which a vehicle is not allowed into the centre of town.

On the question of parking levies, I am perhaps not as brave as the committee might hope, but they definitely should be under consideration. Perhaps the question is not necessarily just about workplace parking levies; a premises parking levy might be a better way of putting it. People are encouraged to drive their vehicles to these large-scale out-of-town developments, which have enormous parking facilities, and it is so much easier for them to drive there than to consider travelling actively. It is not simply a question of people's commutes to work.

Finally, on the question of innovation, I would not say that Sustrans sees the solution as particularly innovative; it is about innovative implementation. It is about reducing the number of vehicles in city centres and giving that space to people who would like to walk and cycle, or for public spaces for people to linger. It is a holistic

approach to the system but it is something that is already known; it is not a new idea.

**Phil Matthews:** Yes, on that final point, the vision should be a transformational change in our cities and city spaces, and in the way in which they are used and how people engage with them. That obviously impacts on planning, on the pricing of different modes, and on the limitations of or access to road space for different modes. Within that, the pricing issue is important but it should be seen within the broader framework.

Atkins produced a report in 2008 or 2009—this is more climate change rather than local air pollution—on cost abatement. The lowest cost options they identified included workplace parking levies and travel planning, and requiring organisations with a certain number of employees to have a proper travel plan that incentivises certain types of behaviours. Workplace parking levies were mentioned in the latest climate change plan. I do not think that it is strong enough, but we definitely see it as part of the solution and, as Paul White said, in Nottingham where workplace parking levies been piloted, it has proven to be a success. Simple things like travel planning are important.

We are in favour of congestion charging. It is about creating the incentives and making sure that the more sustainable and healthier mode is the lower cost and more convenient mode wherever possible. Congestion charging is something we need to look at again in Scotland.

**John Scott (Ayr) (Con):** Going to back to the idea of a modal shift in freight transport, I have heard people in the margins talking about transport by sea becoming fashionable again, and about using the river structures and even occasionally canal infrastructures. Do you have any comments to make on that? How likely is that when just-in-time delivery is not of the essence?

**Chris MacRae:** The idea has certainly been looked at by a number of the major retailers. As city living changes and the number of people living in flats and single people in single occupancy households increases, how they are going to deliver what people want, and fulfil their requirements in food and other consumables?

Water freight is being looked at. The point I would make—it is not purely relevant to Scotland, it is a wider UK issue—is that a lot of commercial wharfage and the physical infrastructure on rivers within cities in the UK has been lost to housing development. You can almost get a vicious circle where you get housing developments on an urban river in what used to be an industrial area. If there is still commercial wharfage beside them, you can get complaints about noise and environmental concerns from the residents, so the commercial

wharfage operation gets hounded out. Therefore, although there is space for exploration of the suggestion, it is not a likely solution in the immediate term. I know that it has been done in some continental cities in mainland Europe, and they have been looked at, but the reality is that it is quite difficult to do for practical reasons.

**John Scott:** Is there an argument to be made for structural plans for preserving commercial wharfage?

**Chris MacRae:** Absolutely, in land use planning and structural plans. Major city plans can look at preserving freight sites, be that road or rail or water freight, because of their latent capability and the realistic chances of them being brought back into operation. I think that is enormously important because otherwise you are effectively precluding that for a future generation.

11:15

**David Stewart:** Mr MacRae will know that, in the previous session of Parliament, there was a major inquiry into freight transport in Scotland by the Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee, which I played a small part in. One thing that I found frustrating was that, for both rail and sea, there was excellent grant funding such as freight facilities grants but there had been no applications for those for four years. That might have changed, but it seemed bizarre that we had the funding available but the operators—particularly ports—were saying that it was so difficult to make applications that they had given up. I think that Montrose was the last one that had been successful.

It helps us to meet our climate change targets if we can get freight off the roads and on to rail and sea transport. If we go back in time, that was the whole purpose of the Caledonian canal, but there is next to no freight on that now. It is immensely frustrating that it is not used more for freight.

**Chris MacRae:** The FTA supports the use of all modes for freight transport where it is economically and environmentally sustainable. I gave evidence to the freight transport inquiry that you mentioned and I played a part in getting the freight facilities grant back when it had been cut in a couple of budgets in Scotland. It is worth noting that England has completely cut its freight facilities grant, whereas we still have it in Scotland.

You are absolutely right. There are frustrations and issues with the practical process. It seems wrong that a public pot of money is available yet it is undersubscribed. The reason that you quote for why it is undersubscribed is correct. There are problems and issues with how applications can be made. You should bear in mind that the grant is delivered under a system that has to meet EU

state aid guidance, so it is the UK that holds the permission. It then devolves the administration to the Scottish Government within the territory of Scotland, but there are some complex rules that it has to be administered under, which partially explains the lack of applications. However, I totally take your point that there is frustration about that.

**Claudia Beamish:** Several members of the panel have mentioned the importance of planning. In its oral evidence to us, the Royal Town Planning Institute Scotland focused on the need for further training of planners and mainstreaming of the air quality international planning framework. Do you have any comments on that or on the cumulative impacts of emissions and whether they are adequately evaluated in planning development? What priority should be given to air quality when planning decisions are made? You do not have to answer all of those questions, but if you have any comments, that would be helpful.

**Paul White:** Regarding bus transport, it is vital that planning departments are involved in local authority partnerships and that they work together to make sure that public transport is considered at the start of any planning development. Quite often, I hear from members that there has been a new housing development, for example, but it is impossible to serve it by bus because there is just not the room or the turning circles or it clearly has not been thought through. It is essential to involve planning officers at the earliest stage, to make the case for sustainable and active travel, to ensure that there is a travel hub so that people can cycle to get a bus, and to ensure that it is accessible. That might even discourage car use, so we can see the real benefits.

**Alex Quayle:** At present, it is unheard of for there to be a new housing development that people cannot drive their cars up to and move into, but that does not necessarily mean that there will be walking and cycling routes to schools, a shop and so on. Sustrans Scotland sees that as a product of the current planning system. There needs to be an infrastructure first approach in the planning system whereby all those facilities, whether for active travel or public transport, are in place before the houses are occupied.

**Chris MacRae:** That point also applies to retail and other developments from a freight point of view. It is vital that the delivery and servicing needs of outlets are properly planned in at the early development stage so that freight is considered as an integral part rather than as an afterthought. Such developments generate a large amount of freight—both inbound and outbound—so it is important to plan that in at the early stages.

**Phil Matthews:** We cannot argue with the actions that are set out in the strategy “Cleaner Air for Scotland: The Road to a Healthier Future”.

There are about six on planning, and a couple of them have been mentioned. However, I am not sure what they will mean in practice. One of them is to

“Ensure that future ... revisions to Scottish Planning Policy and the National Planning Framework take account of”

the strategy. What does that actually mean? What is the cumulative impact of numbers of small developments on air quality? That might not be factored in in the right way.

I was involved in a small way in previous iterations of the national planning framework and Scottish planning policy. What we have now has a stronger say on carbon and a range of other things than the previous iterations had. I always think that the challenge is that, when we see what is happening on the ground, there still seems to be a big disconnect. For example, we see the Aberdeen western peripheral route going up, and I imagine that there is already a lot of pressure for new retail and housing developments around Aberdeen, yet there is no rail transport in most of those areas and only very poor bus services.

As colleagues have said, we need appropriate design to make biking and walking—the healthy options—the most desirable options, and those routes need to be linked to schools, shops and other facilities in such a way that people do not have to use cars. I just do not see that tracking through. I know that there is always a delay in the planning system, but we really should be seeing better developments than we are seeing at present.

**Mark Ruskell:** I would like to develop that point a bit further. What is your impression of the local development plans that Scottish local authorities have at present? Are they adequate? Are they designing out air pollution and designing in active travel, bus links and appropriate sustainable transport? Is there a mismatch between local development plans and a lot of the transport strategies that councils are working on?

**Phil Matthews:** The basic answer would be yes. There is a link. Given the scale of a lot of local development frameworks, we lack a strategic overview in some ways. As I said, there are some decent aspirations in the objectives of local development frameworks and so on, but there are questions about how they are then applied to decisions about individual housing developments, retail developments et cetera. Others are more qualified to talk about the detail of that, but that is my perception.

**John Scott:** At times, we in Parliament have been told that there is a distinct lack of planners. I find it remarkable that there are not enough planners to elegantly plan all the things that we are asking for. I understood that that would be a

given. I am dismayed to hear you say that it is far from it.

**Phil Matthews:** There are pressures on planning developments, but I was not trying to make that point. I was saying that either the committees that oversee the work within local authorities are not necessarily always following through on the detail, or the framework is written in such a way that it requires people to “have regard to” things or whatever, which gives an awful lot of leeway for decisions. Individual decisions may not be seen as too controversial, but the overall cumulative impact may not contribute to a sustainable settlement.

**Mark Ruskell:** I would like to follow up on that point with Alex Quayle. Who should pay for the up-front infrastructure? If someone builds a new housing estate that is disconnected from a town and transport links, that is a problem. When people move in, they will start using their cars, and they will then be unlikely to move on to other, sustainable forms of transport. Who should pay for the infrastructure? Should the cost fall to the development industry and be reflected in house prices or should it be public investment? What is the right balance for the investment that is required?

**Alex Quayle:** I cannot say what the precise balance should be, but there should definitely be more of an onus on developers. It is possible to prove a link between higher house prices and good walking and cycling links to schools, shops and other local amenities. Especially if a developer wants to establish a new community in an area where those links do not exist, I think that the cost should be borne within what they hope to reap from the profits.

**Claudia Beamish:** On the adequacy of the Scottish Government’s approach, are the cycling action plan for Scotland and the national walking strategy adequate? Are we going to reach the target of 10 per cent of all journeys being made by bike by 2020? If not, what can we do to be more sure that we will reach it? We have covered walking and cycling spatially, in terms of planning, but if you have any final comments on those topics, that would be great.

**Alex Quayle:** As the cycling action plan for Scotland was referenced, I will answer first, as the cycling and walking chap. On how we will hit the target and maximise the number of people who walk and cycle, we need to target short, easy journeys in urban areas. It is about modal shift and encouraging people, instead of making a five-minute car journey to the shop, to make a 10-minute cycle journey, or something like that. Even in urban areas, it might quite possibly be quicker on a bike.

My point is that targeting urban areas, where there is maximum population and maximum capacity to get benefit from infrastructure and behavioural change programmes, is the quickest way to increase the proportion of people walking and cycling for everyday journeys.

**Claudia Beamish:** What do you mean by “targeting” in that sense?

**Alex Quayle:** By targeting, I mean making the facilities available to people, putting infrastructure in places of high population density and having behavioural change programmes where they are going to hit large communities, whether that is a school or a workplace—things like that.

**The Convener:** Angus MacDonald, do you want to come in on that point?

**Angus MacDonald (Falkirk East) (SNP):** Last week, there was a debate in the chamber on the promotion of active travel. Many opposition speakers were not convinced that cycling would increase its modal share to 10 per cent in the next two years. However, the Government has committed an extra £40 million to deliver that. Where should that £40 million be spent?

**Alex Quayle:** Are you asking where it should be spent geographically, or on what sort of projects?

**Angus MacDonald:** Both, although I am thinking mainly of projects. Where should that money be targeted to make a difference?

**Alex Quayle:** One of the first products that we have seen is the funding of the five community links projects. Those are large-scale active travel interventions. Two projects are in Edinburgh and one each in Stirling, Glasgow and Inverness. They are transformative in scale and, rather than small measures, they will offer a completely different neighbourhood to people who live and commute along those corridors. That is the level of transformative change that is necessary and that level of ambition is now possible with the increased budget for active travel.

It is important to remember that infrastructure is key to modal shift—to getting more people to choose to walk and cycle—and without that infrastructure it is difficult to persuade people. The behavioural change programmes run by organisations such as Sustrans, Cycling Scotland and Paths for All make a lot of difference to catalysing that change. While it will be very important that we see better infrastructure from the funding, the complementary measures, such as helping people overcome their personal barriers to active travel, will be equally important.

**Angus MacDonald:** Can you get to 10 per cent in two years?

**Alex Quayle:** I am not sure. We shall wait and see. I will say that there are a lot of people working very hard on it and making good progress.

**Claudia Beamish:** Does anyone else have any comments on that issue?

**Phil Matthews:** A lot of good stuff is going on. The increase in funding is very welcome but, given where we are now, it is probably too little, too late to meet the target of 10 per cent modal shift by 2020; I would be very surprised if we did. That does not mean that we should not redouble our efforts to do so.

We would like to see more along the lines of what there is already in London: cross-city, segregated cycle ways in all Scotland’s cities. That would be a big and very bold step and a statement about the priority of cycling in cities. I believe that 20mph zones help to reduce the fear factor of cycling and so on.

There must be big engagement and public conversation around cycling because a lot of people, despite the fact that it is a low-cost and very healthy way of travelling, are resistant to it. There needs to be encouragement around that.

11:30

We propose a target of 10 per cent of transport spend on active travel. Scottish Government spending has moved up to £80 million, but it needs to go further than that. Local authorities—I think that Edinburgh is leading the way—need to go up to 10 per cent and think about cycling. In Edinburgh, where we have seen a bigger spend for longer, we have seen an increase in cycling that we are not seeing in other Scottish cities, which shows that it can be done.

Underpinning all that is a transformational vision. Look at comparable European cities, such as Copenhagen or Groningen. There is 30 per cent cycling in Copenhagen, which is as big as Glasgow, if not bigger. Twenty-five per cent of the city centre is pedestrianised, so there is a very big active travel contribution to the overall modal share in a very big developed city. That has been good for not just public health, transport and emissions, but quality of life in that city. It is a city that people want to invest in, send their kids to school in and live in. Businesses want to move there too.

We need to think about the vision, where the spending on cycling fits in with that, and the other things around place making and planning that we also need to do to deliver that transformation.

**Claudia Beamish:** Before Mr White responds, I will say that it is interesting that there has been more focus on cycling, although there is a national walking strategy too. Very briefly—because we still

have a considerable number of questions for you, just to warn you—could anyone comment on the adequacy of the walking strategy, which we must not forget?

**Phil Matthews:** It is a good first step. The problem is that we seldom think of walking as a transport mode, although 25 per cent of journeys are walking. As has been alluded to previously, 50 per cent of journeys in urban centres are of less than 2 miles and 80 per cent are of less than 5 miles. There are huge opportunities there.

As I said, it is very welcome. Let us see how it turns out in the next few years.

**Mark Ruskell:** You talked about the transformational culture change in other European cities. Has that reduced NO<sub>x</sub> and PM<sub>10</sub> levels? Do we see the same kinds of air quality problems in those European cities or not, and can you confidently attribute any difference to walking and cycling?

**Phil Matthews:** Air quality is part of an overall approach to a sustainable city or sustainable transport. The fact that more people are cycling is good in all sorts of ways. It is good for public health more widely—for tackling obesity, inactivity and so on. It is good for quality of life and it is good for the atmosphere in a city, as you see if you go to those places.

I could not point to the evidence on air quality one way or the other, but I am sure that others will be more qualified to talk about that.

**Finlay Carson:** What is your reaction when you hear that major road infrastructure such as the Maybole bypass is being constructed without provision for cyclists or walkers?

**Alex Quayle:** I am not familiar with the bypass in question. However, at Sustrans we regularly find ourselves responding to consultations—or even decisions—and trying to make the case that the prominence or safety of walking and cycling has been diminished at the expense of what seems to us to be a very small reduction in journey times. That seems to be a common problem.

**The Convener:** Paul White, my apologies; you may come back in and respond.

**Paul White:** Not at all. I was cheekily going to pitch for some of that active travel budget. Part of encouraging walking and cycling is not to focus on that as the mode for the entirety of the journey, to but link modes up. If you invest in bus shelters and in cycle racks, or in bus shelters and hire cycles, you are integrating the journey, so you no longer consider only the 5 or 10-minute journey but the first step towards a longer journey. You may see a small rise in the number of people cycling.

**The Convener:** Thank you for that. Let us move this on a little bit. Sustrans noted in written evidence:

“The legal requirement to protect people in local air quality management areas is vague and there is no penalty for failing to reduce harmful air pollution. Whether this is a question of insufficient powers, resources or accountability, it is apparent that necessary local action on air pollution is not inevitable.”

Can you provide any examples of a lack of resources manifesting in no action being taken when it was clear that that was required?

**Alex Quayle:** The point that I hope that the consultation is making is that there is a lack of examples of intervention in local authority areas. Local authorities have to act on air quality management areas, but they often take quite small measures, such as relocating a taxi rank. While that quite possibly reduces the spike in air pollution, it does not reduce the ambient air pollution, so although there is improvement, it is not to the extent that you would hope.

There is a lack of examples of intervention from a higher level. As far as I am aware, the powers that the Scottish Environment Protection Agency has to direct local authorities have never been exercised, so it is hard to know how effective they would be. Given that, Sustrans would argue that the threshold for action may well be too high. If SEPA has not seen the need to act, yet we are seeing an increase in air quality management areas, it may be that the levels for an intervention in air quality in a local authority area are too high. That is not to say definitively that that is the case, but it should be considered.

**The Convener:** You are saying that there is a gap in the ability to act, who should act and on what basis they should act.

**Alex Quayle:** There is definitely the potential for a gap, because the system in place is untested.

**The Convener:** I will move on to cover the question whether targeted support for upgrading to Euro 6 commercial vehicles would improve uptake.

Without a support scheme, how long would it take to convert Scotland's commercial fleet? The question that sits alongside that is, when these vehicles are taken out of service what happens to them? Are they scrapped? Are they sent off to other parts of mainland Europe? What happens?

**Chris MacRae:** As I said earlier, Euro 6 and Euro 6 compliance is coming naturally with fleet replacement. The issue will be fleets that keep their vehicles for a longer time, or small to medium-sized operators. We have flagged up in our written evidence an issue with LEZs, in that

introducing them when that number of vehicles is still not available will be a challenge.

As for what happens to older vehicles taken out of service, there is anecdotal evidence that a lot of older vehicles that do not meet current standards end up in eastern Europe, outwith the EU, where there is quite a second-hand market, so arguably the pollution issue is being shifted elsewhere.

**The Convener:** I understand that some diesel vehicles in Germany are being shipped to eastern Europe. That is not taking the problem away; it is simply moving it somewhere else.

**Paul White:** A lot of operators have been saying that when they buy a bus they expect its lifespan to be between 10 and 15 years. If new standards are introduced, it may be that that bus depreciates over a shorter period of time. It is a cost pressure. The second-hand market is then also affected, because you get a flood of vehicles that are no longer suitable for use in certain areas. At the same time, low-emission zone progress is happening and others are looking at clean air zones, but the build capacity of bus manufacturers is limited. Even if a business has the money for accelerated fleet investment, there may not be the capacity to provide those vehicles.

**Richard Lyle (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP):** In answer to a previous question, Mr MacRae mentioned the excellent freight and rail distribution facilities in my Uddingston and Bellshill constituency. I thank him for that and encourage people to come and visit Bellshill.

We have heard in previous evidence that there are an abysmal 95 air quality monitors across Scotland. That is three per council. SEPA has only two trailer-mounted monitors and additional equipment. Air quality data cannot easily be presented or shown in real time. Are existing monitoring stations in the right places and collecting the right data to provide a broad picture of air quality across Scotland? Are more monitors and broader coverage required?

**Paul White:** I agree with that. A case for an LEZ should very much be based on evidence that is as accurate and as up-to-date as possible—and perhaps that is not always the case.

To give anecdotal evidence, I know that in Hope Street, which is one of the streets that should fall within the Glasgow LEZ, there is an air quality monitoring station positioned right beside a taxi rank, where the taxis all sit with their engines idling. By virtue of where it is sited, it is spiking; there are engines idling beside it.

Yes, you need the evidence to make a case for an LEZ, so there should be wider collection of data.

**Alex Quayle:** Sustrans is certainly not in enough of a position to talk about the science behind the monitoring, or the modelling that will go into low-emission zones, but we support modelling to make such decisions, so that they are scientifically based and there is less opportunity for decisions to be political.

I know that there are debates about whether Scotland's modelling is correct and, again, Sustrans does not have the expertise to comment on that. When the low-emission zones are implemented, a wide level of monitoring will be required to ensure, first, that the low-emission zone is functioning correctly and, secondly, that the modelling that is being undertaken is correct and producing results that will enable people to implement future low-emission zones in other towns and cities that will make a positive difference.

**Richard Lyle:** Mr Quayle, do you agree that we should have visible air quality information next to a monitoring station, so that people like me or the ordinary public can see what the data is, rather than it being hidden inside the machine? Would that not make a direct impact on public awareness and behaviour? How could we encourage that?

**Alex Quayle:** I certainly agree that public visibility of the air quality reading is a good idea. We have information on water quality on the beaches, but there are many more people breathing in the air in our cities than are having a swim, so it is somewhat surprising that we have not done that yet. There are various ways that you could do it, but one simple way would be similar to what you see at the beaches: signs in prominent places. You could also have systems that allow people to sign up for alerts, but I do not know what Scotland is doing on that. That may already be possible.

**Richard Lyle:** How can we improve air quality? I will comment again on the design of the M74 and M8. There are piles of walking routes that have just been constructed in a £500 million project in my area, so I would encourage Mr Carson to drive through it. Should planning for active travel be mandatory when designing roads? Is vehicle performance affected by traffic calming? If we make vehicles go more slowly, does that not mean that the pollution stays longer?

**Chris MacRae:** That is the point that I all but made earlier on. Managing road space and managing traffic and traffic flows is absolutely key to improving emissions from freight vehicles and I am sure that that is equally true of buses. Certainly, we want to see some form of prioritisation measures for freight, so that vehicles can get in and out of cities as quickly and efficiently as possible. That brings with it a cost saving but, more important, it brings an

environmental saving. You are absolutely right that that needs to be designed in.

**Emma Harper (South Scotland) (SNP):** I appreciate that the panel are not health professionals. I am a nurse and am co-convener of the cross-party group on lung health, so I am interested in the health angle, about which you can maybe give me some advice. We are looking at lung disease, heart disease and stroke prevention. The purpose of improving air quality is to keep folk out of hospital in the long term. I am interested in monitoring. Are there enough monitors? Are we engaged with the schools enough? Are you engaging with SEPA on schools and other engagement to raise awareness of the importance of air quality?

**Alex Quayle:** Sustrans runs a programme called "I bike", with which I am sure many members of the committee are familiar. It is currently operating in 12 local authorities in Scotland. It is an holistic approach to trying to get more children to cycle to school. Part of it is about working with schools so that they build the benefits into the curriculum. I am not sure whether air quality is covered in the curricula—that will depend very much on the school—but it is the type of thing that we encourage in the programme in order to ensure that schools, pupils and parents are aware.

11:45

**Finlay Carson:** Should planning for active travel and air quality be mandatory? Chris MacRae mentioned that perhaps, when installation of traffic-calming measures such as speed humps is being considered, allowance should be made for commercial vehicles to bypass them. "Attitude" traffic lights are being installed in my constituency: they will stop traffic that is speeding. Should we be looking at mandatory inputs on air quality and active travel when it comes to all traffic-calming measures?

**Paul White:** The simple answer is yes. I would say that, in modelling the LEZs through SEPA, a very technology-driven approach is being taken. If we ask what will happen if we replace all Euro 4 buses with Euro 6 buses, we will get an answer to that, but we could also model based on asking what happens if lights are phased, if bus priority through certain junctions is introduced and the average speed of buses is brought up by just a couple of kilometres per hour. The amount of NOx that comes out a vehicle can be halved just by keeping the average speed up and by keeping the vehicle in an optimal drive cycle without its having to stop and start. Modelling such things should be being considered in order to get the best approach to air quality.

**John Scott:** To develop that point, will you say whether it would be sensible in future traffic management to favour development of roundabouts, rather than traffic lights, in order to maintain traffic flow? Is that so obvious that I should not even be asking the question?

**Paul White:** I do not know, but that suggestion sounds like common sense, and would be a better approach. For example, on Hope Street in Glasgow, because the lights are phased in such a way, because of where the bus stops are situated and because there is car parking, it is difficult for vehicles to navigate the street. That is not a situation in which a roundabout would be the solution, but one in which you have to consider measures that would allow vehicles clear passage through the street, through which you would see the air quality improve before having to think about what improvements we would get by moving from Euro 4 to a Euro 5 or 6 vehicles.

**John Scott:** What about where there is the practical option to consider a roundabout?

**Paul White:** That should certainly be modelled. I agree that there should be an evidence base for that alternative and that it should certainly be modelled.

**Chris MacRae:** On those last couple of points, I say that it is important that the air quality impacts of traffic-design measures are properly considered. Finlay Carson mentioned traffic calming in his constituency. That is partly to do with safety measures, vehicle speeds, and appropriate operations on the A75 corridor, which my association is involved in. There may be a dominant theme—safety—in that case, but the air quality connotations of traffic management and traffic planning certainly need to be properly considered when such measures are being put in place.

**Alex Quayle:** I will add a point on that. Air quality concerns should be factored into transport planning, but I would be concerned about a debate that took into account avoiding traffic calming measures, maintaining vehicle speeds or even increasing vehicle speeds as ways to reduce emissions. A public safety question is being neglected in that approach. There is a similar opportunity to reduce emissions by having slower speeds and safer traffic, and by reducing the number of people in vehicles because they are happier to walk and cycle.

**The Convener:** A balance must always be struck. Paul White wants to come back in.

**Paul White:** I just want to clarify that what I said about speed improvement was in relation to urban areas where you may be looking at moving the speed up only from 6kph to 8kph, such is the congestion. It is certainly a threshold that is well



below the 2020 zones when I am talking about increasing speeds.

**John Scott:** I think that what Paul White and I are referring to would be responsible design.

**Mark Ruskell:** It seems that there are two separate issues. The first is the impact that maximum speeds and speeding, particularly in residential areas, might have on walking and cycling, and on the increase in emissions—in particular, NO<sub>x</sub> PM<sub>10</sub>—that studies have shown result from driving faster. The second issue is average speed. My understanding of average speed and the point that Paul White made is that levels of congestion in urban areas are reducing the average speed: cars are simply not moving. Is that right? What exactly is the panel arguing for in relation to speed?

**Paul White:** There is fantastic work by Professor David Begg on congestion that shows that average speeds in Scotland's city centres are falling by about 1 per cent a year; they have fallen by 10 per cent over the last decade. Working from that basis you can see that that will impact on operating costs, through the impact on the willingness of passengers to use buses because reliability and punctuality have been affected by congestion. There is a vicious circle in which use of buses decreases. Increasing the speed of those vehicles allows them smooth passage so that the journey is not stop-start. That is beneficial to air quality and beneficial to passengers.

**Emma Harper:** This is my final question. Is the level of detail in the "Cleaner Air for Scotland—The Road to a Healthier Future" annual report adequate for scrutinising progress?

**Phil Matthews:** I will make a very minor comment on that. In our submission, Transform Scotland reviews actions and progress against all the actions in the strategy in the annual report. We struggled to identify whether some actions had been completed and, for actions that were in progress, we struggled to identify the end point of progress towards delivery. I do not want to comment beyond that.

**David Stewart:** I will move the panel on to low emission zones, which we have debated earlier. The panel will know that the Government's policy is to have a pilot in Glasgow in a year's time, to have four by 2020 and thereafter to introduce LEZs around Scotland. The first question is this: do we need a pilot project?

**Alex Quayle:** It is not a problem to have a pilot project: a lot of lessons on modelling and implementation could be learned from Glasgow. However, the pace of implementing low emission zones has been slow. I think that Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen all completed feasibility studies between 2010 and 2013, so we could have

completed pilot studies by now and be in a position to roll out low emission zones to all the cities in Scotland that were deemed to need them, with a good idea of what would be effective.

I am not opposed to there being a pilot project. However, it would be more cause for concern if digesting the pilot project were left too long without action being taken in the other cities, as well. It is appreciated that at least a target had been set, through the low emission zone consultation, of having them in four cities by 2020.

**Phil Matthews:** There is nothing wrong with pilots per se, but there are already more than 200 low emission zones across Europe. We know the different models and we know the experience from other countries. As has been said, Aberdeen and Edinburgh, as well as Glasgow, have expressed an interest in the idea. There are air quality management areas in those cities and, I believe, in Dundee and Perth. Progress seems to be rather slow: if we are not even at the Glasgow pilot phase yet, what are the implications for the other cities? We would like roll out in all the Scottish cities as soon as possible. I am not sure that we need a pilot before doing that.

**Chris MacRae:** The committee will have seen from the written evidence that we have reservations about the focus on low emission zones being a way of delivering air quality improvements, so we would want to see the lessons that were learned from a pilot scheme at a very practical level, from the freight point of view. A number of practical issues and challenges come up with low emission zones, especially with regard to freight, so learning lessons from a Glasgow pilot and digesting that before moving on to other cities will be important.

**Paul White:** I echo that: it is sensible to have a pilot project. We all knew that the 2018 date was attached; what has made it made it very difficult is that we were unaware of which city the pilot would be in until relatively recently—last month or the month before. There are issues around that, but the idea of a pilot project is sensible.

**David Stewart:** Is there time to put a Euro 6 LEZ in place?

**Paul White:** You can put in an LEZ and set the standard as Euro 6. There would then be different options for how you would achieve that. Probably the most sensible way would be to say that there will be a lead-in time for reaching that standard, so it should be phased in. In projects in Europe and in London, it has been four to five years before the standard is reached. If you want to shorten that time, you will have to accept that it will possibly have a cost: the local authority or the transport authority may decide to contribute through retrofitting, scrappage schemes and assistance

with purchasing new vehicles, or the cost may be passed on to the passenger through operators increasing their fares in order to mitigate the cost of accelerated fleet investment.

**David Stewart:** Is there a danger that, as some have suggested, we may have a nominal LEZ in Glasgow in 12 months' time but it will not be effective until years later?

**Paul White:** It depends what you envisage an LEZ to be. If there is a structure in place whereby everyone knows what is expected of them, and they are working towards those goals, that is probably a good starting point. I am sure that there will be certain people even within this panel who have a different view of what an LEZ should be from its moment of inception, but you have to be careful not to undermine the sustainability of the alternatives to the car if you are hoping to tackle car use.

If you set up an LEZ to Euro 6 standard, which would mean that some operators would remove routes because they did not have the vehicles to meet that, and then you looked to tackle car use, there would be no public transport network for drivers to use, because that would have been undermined. Therefore, I think that a sensible approach would be to have lead-in times.

**David Stewart:** It is obviously vital that we do not end up reducing services in Glasgow and increasing costs, with the result that people end up using their car rather than the bus.

**Paul White:** Yes. You could have the perverse situation in which you introduce an LEZ and it encourages car use.

**Chris MacRae:** I would certainly echo much of the principle of those points from a freight perspective, in the sense that freight still has to be delivered to and collected from premises in the low-emission zones. Lead-in times are important from a freight point of view, too. We would not want the perverse, unintended consequence that it becomes difficult to service the area from a commercial and retail point of view and there is a debilitating economic effect on the area.

**Phil Matthews:** Timetables absolutely have to be realistic. Although we might have wanted to be progressing more quickly towards the 2018 deadline than we have been up to the point, it is vital that support is given to get over the issues that Paul White talks about and that support is given to bus providers to invest in buses that meet the standard. It is clear, particularly given the short lead-in time, that support from the Government is needed to help bus providers do that.

**David Stewart:** One of the crucial areas is a discussion about whether private vehicles should be included in LEZs. The plus side is that private

vehicles, particularly older and diesel vehicles, pollute as well. The other side of the coin—to answer my own question—is that including private vehicles will maximise resistance among local people to the LEZ taking place. What is the panel's view on the role of private vehicles in LEZs, particularly in Glasgow, where the LEZ is, it is hoped, only a year away?

**Paul White:** Through the modelling that is included in the low-emission zone strategy, which looks at the level of pollution within the suggested zone, you will see that the bus is the main polluter in between a quarter and a third of the streets in the zone, and the private car is the major polluter in the rest of the zone. Not to include the private car would be not to solve the issue of air quality in Glasgow—you have to include it.

**Phil Matthews:** Pollution is pollution. Obviously there are different types of pollution, but if a vehicle is emitting pollution and the aim is to reduce that pollution to a safe level, clearly you have to look at that now. There needs to be a conversation about how that is phased in, and it needs to look at the evidence around that, but I think that, logically, any low-emission zone should be against all polluting vehicles, regardless of the type of vehicle.

12:00

**Chris MacRae:** I completely agree with that. It is important that this focuses on getting the best environmental outputs, and therefore it has to target the vehicles that contribute to pollution. Empirically it is wrong to exclude certain types of vehicle. I appreciate there are political considerations with private vehicles, but it is something that still has to be looked at. It would be wrong just to target certain types of vehicles and certain types of operation.

**David Stewart:** I will raise the issue of buses and displacement. Some of the evidence from bus companies suggests that they will put their best-practice electric vehicles in the LEZ and there will be a trickle down of the older, more run-down vehicles to areas outwith the LEZ. It is a bit like what happens with rail carriages in the Highlands and Islands, but I will not go there today. That is a real concern. We may have best practice in the LEZ, but parts of Glasgow outwith the LEZ will have older, more polluting vehicles. What is the panel's view on that possibility?

**Phil Matthews:** It is a bit like the issue that was raised before about the possible dumping of old vehicles in other countries. Clearly, that is not a sustainable solution. There might not be the local concentrations of air pollution in the areas where the vehicles have been displaced to, so overall there will still be a gain in terms of air quality, but

the desire is that, over time, the LEZ will lead to an upgrading of the emission standards of vehicles across the wider urban area, not just in the zone. Certainly, that will have to be monitored and assessed and, if that is not the case, responded to.

**David Stewart:** I am conscious of the time, so I will close on this question. How can we best future proof the design and delivery of LEZs to allow for the use of large and integrated data sets? For example, as you know, there has been a debate—not least in relation to Volkswagen, and the BBC has covered the issue—about vehicle emission standards and the difference between laboratory and real-world conditions. Obviously, the data that we currently have is from the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency. Should the LEZ have a lot more complex data so that it can help manage that? We need to get the right sort of data; to use an old example we do not want to invest in a Betamax when it is a VHS world—I am showing my age with that example. Do you wish to respond?

**Paul White:** It is a difficult point. We always urge the Scottish Government to be technology neutral in its approach to where we are going to go with it, so it should not encourage investment in electric vehicles or biogas. The future is open and investment in vehicles should depend on their emissions performance rather than the technology that lies behind that. The Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership is trying to certify the emissions performance of different retrofit builds to assist in having that data to know what level of pollution is associated with which. It is useful to have that data, but you have to remain technology neutral.

**Chris MacRae:** I agree with the point that it has to be very much output led and it is about delivering the best environmental outputs. Real-life monitoring of emissions from different categories of vehicle is key to understanding the real-world situation here.

**Mark Ruskell:** I want to go briefly back to David Stewart's point about the source of emissions and about the types of vehicles that we may be targeting through LEZs and other measures. Are you confident that the modelling really the nature of the problem? Paul White talked about the source of emissions and the proportion from buses and the proportion from private cars. What about the effects of the congestion that private cars bring to the road network, which can, as I understand it, have an impact by reducing the average speed and causing more delay? Is that adequately accounted for in the kind of modelling and approaches that we see?

**Paul White:** I am sorry to jump in, but my response to that would be no. We see an LEZ as part of a package of measures to improve air quality, among which would have to be measures

to tackle congestion. The modelling that lies behind the Glasgow pilot project does not take that into account when looking at how to improve air quality. It is looking strictly at engine standards and is not saying, "Well, what happens if the same engine standards apply but the vehicles are moving freely or there are no cars in that area?" You need to consider ways to tackle congestion, and not just through an LEZ but through a statutory partnership between a local authority and bus operators, where the authority invests in measures to tackle congestion and the operator then invests in the fleet. It is not all on one side.

**The Convener:** Members may be aware of an email that has been sent regarding an incident on the campus at the moment. We will continue with the committee meeting while that is being assessed—members may have spotted that information coming through.

**Angus MacDonald:** I have a tidying-up question to get the panel's views on the record. As we know, under changes to the payment rates for the bus service operators grant—if I could drag you back to that—that were introduced in April this year, low-carbon buses now attract the lesser top-up rate of 10.1p. How do panel members think that the conflict between increasing numbers of low-carbon buses and the reduction in the BSOG grant might be resolved?

**Paul White:** As I am the bus representative, I will come in on that. The policy should be aligned in such a manner that, if you are encouraging investment in low-carbon vehicles through the green bus fund, that is mirrored through BSOG, so maybe the BSOG budget should set a rate but not be capped, to allow operators to have certainty for their investment decisions.

We are looking at BSOG changes again for the coming year that may change what is regarded as a low-carbon vehicle. An operator may purchase a vehicle through the green bus fund this year that may not arrive until May next year, because of the time that it takes to build a vehicle and provide it. Meanwhile, BSOG changes that take place in April will mean that that vehicle is no longer regarded as a low-carbon vehicle because the standard has changed. You need to look at this holistically and make sure that the policies are aligned to encourage investment in that kind of low-carbon vehicle.

**Angus MacDonald:** Are you confident that that is being done?

**Paul White:** No.

**The Convener:** I think that we have covered everything. No members are indicating that they have any further questions to ask.

I thank you all very much for your time this morning. It has been a useful exercise. If there is anything that you wish to follow up on, you can do that in writing, although I would encourage you to do so as soon as possible. Thank you very much for your time.

At its next meeting on 14 November, the committee will continue to take evidence as part of its inquiry into air quality in Scotland. The committee will also review its consideration of petition PE1636, which requests that all single-use drink cups are 100 per cent biodegradable.

As agreed earlier, we will now move into private session.

12:08

*Meeting continued in private until 12:24.*

This is the final edition of the *Official Report* of this meeting. It is part of the Scottish Parliament *Official Report* archive and has been sent for legal deposit.

---

Published in Edinburgh by the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body, the Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP

---

All documents are available on  
the Scottish Parliament website at:

[www.parliament.scot](http://www.parliament.scot)

Information on non-endorsed print suppliers  
is available here:

[www.parliament.scot/documents](http://www.parliament.scot/documents)

For information on the Scottish Parliament contact  
Public Information on:

Telephone: 0131 348 5000

Textphone: 0800 092 7100

Email: [sp.info@parliament.scot](mailto:sp.info@parliament.scot)

---



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba