

Cross-Party Group on Sustainable Transport

24 May 2022, 18:00

Held as a virtual meeting on Zoom

Minutes

Present

MSPs

Graham Simpson MSP (Convener)

Sarah Boyack MSP (Vice-Convener)

John Mason MSP (Vice-Convener)

Invited guests

Guest speaker: Clare Linton (Urban Transport Group)

Guest speaker: Professor Iain Docherty (University of Stirling)

Non-MSP Group Members

Colin Howden (Transform Scotland)

Elsbeth Wray (Transform Scotland)

Ros Browning (Transform Scotland)

Marie Ferdelman (Transform Scotland)

Tom Flanagan (Transform Scotland)

Clare Linton (Urban Transport Group) - Speaker

Professor Iain Docherty (University of Strathclyde) - Speaker

Josh Hill (office of Graham Simpson MSP)

Rona Gibb (Paths for All)

Stuart Hay (Living Streets)

Suzanne Forup (Cycling UK)

Vic MacKinlay (Light Rail Transit Association)

Mike Harrison (Midlothian Disability Access Panel)
Phil McCluskey (Transport Scotland)
Ralph Roberts (McGill's Buses)
Richard Ardern (Friends of the Far North Line)
Robert Samson (Transport Focus)
Kate Samuals (Cycling Scotland)
Ken Haig (Levenmouth Rail Campaign)
Lara Henderson (Community Transport Association)
Maina Coroller-Larifla (Sustrans)
James Harkins (Light Rail UK)
Jane Ann Liston (Railfuture Scotland)
Jim Densham (Cycling UK)
John Yellowlees (ScotRail)
Emma Scott (Disability Equality Scotland)
Gordon Webster (City of Edinburgh Council)
Graham Dunn (Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland)
Greg McDougall (City of Edinburgh Council)
Ian Budd (Friends of the Far North Line)
Ian McCall (Paths for All)
Chris Day (Edinburgh Bus Users Group and Transform Scotland)
Cllr Mark Flynn (Dundee City Council)
Dave du Feu (Spokes)
David Giles (Scottish Association for Public Transport)
Andrea Thompson (Strathclyde Partnership for Transport)
Andrew Fry (Get Glasgow Moving)
Andrew Lindsay (CPT Scotland)

Apologies

Mark Ruskell MSP (Vice-Convener)

Neil Bibby MSP

Brian Whittle MSP

Ros Browning (Transform Scotland)

Lawrence Marshall (Railfuture Scotland)

Helen Todd (Ramblers Scotland)

Stuart Leslie (Rail Action Group Scotland)

David Kelly (Community Transport Association)

Welcome and introductions

The Convener, Graham Simpson MSP, commenced the Zoom call at 18:00 and welcomed those present. He then handed over to the first speaker, Clare Linton, from the Urban Transport Group.

Speaker Clare Linton:

Clare, the policy and research advisor at the Urban Transport Group, made a presentation on the decarbonisation of freight and logistics.

Clare's presentation included:

1. Background information on the Urban Transport Group
2. The benefits and challenges associated with urban freight
3. The journey to urban areas
4. Distribution and consolidation
5. Making the last mile: green, safe, smart and unobtrusive.

As part of her discussion, Clare discussed a variety of points, including:

- The significant role that the freight and logistic sectors play in our economy. (The freight sector contributes £86.5bn to the UK economy and employs 2.5m people.)
- The challenges that freight brings: congestion, road safety issues, air pollution, carbon emissions, road and track maintenance, noise and vibration, impacts on quality of life and the urban realm.
- That freight travel by rail and water should be encouraged as far as possible.
- How to make the final mile safer, smarter, greener, unobtrusive and more efficient.

Q&A

The Convenor then invited comments and questions. A variety of themes and topics emerged:

- Staffing shortages and how to overcome this
 - The importance of showcasing and promoting a career in the transport sector, especially in schools, colleges and universities.
- Incentivising rail freight
 - How to encourage Governments to prioritise rail freight.
- Urban v rural realities
 - Flexibility of delivery times in rural areas.
- Separate cycle network to avoid cyclists going onto the pavements when out delivering
- The role that freight might play in helping us towards reducing the car kms in Scotland by 20% by 2030
- The importance of the customers
 - If we can inform people better then they might make more sustainable choices
 - More nuance in consumer choice around deliveries (if a van is already in your area on a particular day, then picking this delivery slot reduces number of journeys).
 - Sustainable behaviours should be rewarded, less sustainable should be more expensive.

Speaker Professor Iain Docherty:

The Convenor then welcomed Professor Iain Docherty from the University of Stirling to present to the group.

Iain proceeded to discuss the 20% reduction in car kms target set out by the Scottish Government, and give his thoughts on this commitment.

Iain's discussion was diverse and touched upon:

- How this target is a great example of academic research influencing policy.
- Where the target comes from (research that shows a net zero vehicle fleet needs to be a third smaller roughly).
- The reality that in reaching a net zero future, modal shift must happen.
- Importance of behaviour change as well as decarbonisation of vehicle fleet (driving less).

- People automatically assume that an absolute reduction in road traffic means a reduction in economic output. This is not the case and is a result of historic discourse surrounding increased transport resulting in an improved economy.
- Travel time budgets essentially haven't changed as long as we've measured them (100 years plus). What we've done is travel further to do the same things. So what we're really talking about is travelling a little less to do the same things.
- Quality of life and reduction in driving.
- Lessons from the pandemic that help us think about these things:
 - Change can happen quickly if it has to.
 - Our digital tools are now good enough to replace a lot of travel.
 - We've seen a significant localisation of economic activity with significant car reduction benefits (people are walking more).
- On the downside...
 - There has been an explosion in light vehicle freight.
 - The key issue remains what it's always been: who pays for transport and do prices/incentives align with our policy goals.
 - Pre-pandemic driving was getting cheaper (across the board... fuel duty freeze, car purchase credit etc).
- Now in a cost of living crisis we need to think quickly about how we make the system better and fairer because just protecting the status quo won't get us to where we need to be.

Q&A

The Convener then invited comments and questions. A variety of themes and topics emerged.

- Rural vs urban areas
 - Should the focus be placed more on cities or rural areas?
 - Most people who live in rural Scotland, live in small towns. Therefore, the potential to shift active modes in these areas is high (i.e. through 20 minute neighbourhoods).
 - The importance of subsidising zero emission vehicles in rural areas.
 - Fringe urban areas are more problematic as they have poor public transport access and have people who are used to doing everything in their lives by car. No public services in these areas that are in active travel distance.
- Pricing tools
 - People who pollute the most should pay the most.
 - Withdrawing ability of local authorities to subsidise car parking spaces?

- The importance of using both carrot and stick methods to secure behaviour change.
- Political will
 - The tools are all there but political will is lacking.
- Importance of messaging and framing the narrative
 - Promoting the individual benefits of reducing car use.

Date for subsequent meetings and close of meeting

The Convener advised that a report would be prepared over the summer which includes the debates and outcomes of the four meetings that have been held this year.

The Convenor closed the meeting at 19:15.

Minutes

Draft minutes prepared by Rachel McFarlane (Transform Scotland) on 26.05.22.