



**TRANSPORT
SCOTLAND**
CÒMHDHAIL ALBA

Delivering for Scotland 2020-2023

National Transport Strategy

Report to Parliament

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Introduction



As Minister for Transport, I am pleased to commend this first report to the Scottish Parliament, fulfilling the first three yearly commitment set out in the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019, to detail progress we have made towards realising the vision of the National Transport Strategy since it was published in 2020.

The Strategy is for all of Scotland and its delivery remains a shared endeavour at the core, with responsibilities and actions across the Scottish Government, operators, local authorities, business, industry, communities and commuters working collectively towards a vision for an accessible, affordable and safe transport system for our country.

This report provides an overview of the continued commitment to the Strategy and, as detailed in the publication of our annual Delivery Plans, the actions being taken by the Scottish Government to deliver the vision and priorities for transport. Whilst this is a shared responsibility, I am pleased to highlight some of the key projects and actions taken by this Government to keep transport moving through the pandemic, our response to the cost crisis and the critical ongoing partnership working.

Fiona Hyslop

Minister for Transport

Publication of the Strategy

On 5 February 2020, former Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity, Michael Matheson MSP, laid the National Transport Strategy to the Scottish Parliament.

The Strategy was developed through three pillars: evidence gathering, collaborative working with partners and stakeholder engagement across Scotland.

The diagram below shows the Strategy's compelling vision statement for a sustainable, inclusive, safe and accessible transport system, helping deliver a healthier, fairer and more prosperous Scotland for communities, businesses and visitors. This vision is underpinned by four interconnected priorities: Reduces Inequalities, Takes Climate Action, Helps Deliver Inclusive Economic Growth and Improves our Health and Wellbeing, with associated outcomes.

Our Vision

We will have a sustainable, inclusive, safe and accessible transport system, helping deliver a healthier, fairer and more prosperous Scotland for communities, businesses and visitors.



The three-pillar approach to develop the Strategy, namely stakeholder engagement, collaboration with partners and building an evidence base, earned Transport Scotland a [commendation at the Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation \(CIHT\) awards](#) in 2020. In recognition of his leadership of the Strategy, Michael Matheson MSP – as Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport – [was awarded](#) the Honorary Fellowship of the CIHT in December 2021.

Context

The Strategy's vision and priorities are shared across the Scottish Government and are embedded in policy making for transport and associated sectors including planning and energy.

Our [Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy](#) shows how our four priorities contribute to nine of the 11 National Outcomes from the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework.

The National Planning Framework also recognises the cross-cutting nature of the Strategy, as it sets out the strategic framework within which future decisions on investment will be made, including the sustainable travel and investment hierarchies.

Transport Scotland continues to deliver its policies and projects within a wide context.

The First Minister's Policy Prospectus, '[New Leadership: A Fresh Start for Scotland](#)', centres on the themes of equality, opportunity and community, setting out how we will deliver for the people of Scotland over the next three years.

The [Mandate Letters from the First Minister](#) detail the transport outcomes that will be delivered for 2023-24, from building further resilience to climate change to making our public transport system more accessible, available, and affordable to investing in active and sustainable travel.

Our [Programme for Government](#) specifies our commitments in key areas such as a 20% car kilometre reduction route map and publishing the Fair Fares Review report.

The [Bute House agreement](#) with the Scottish Green Party and the [Verity House agreement](#) with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) also outline a number of commitments for partnership working in addressing the climate emergency, just transition and tackle poverty.

A Strategy for Scotland

The National Transport Strategy is for all of Scotland and sets the overall direction for local authorities and Regional Transport Partnerships. The Strategy itself does not identify or present specific projects, schemes, initiatives or interventions, but sets out the strategic framework within which future decisions on investment will be made across the public sector.

The Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) supports the delivery of the Strategy by providing a framework to identify and appraise transport interventions and reinforcing the focus on reducing inequalities and prioritisation of sustainable travel. The STAG process is designed to provide investment decision-makers with the information they need, in a clear and structured format.

What we have delivered

Since publication, the Scottish Government has delivered on a multiple key projects that make our transport system more accessible, available and affordable through the delivery of the four strategic priorities.

Aligned with the Strategy and ensuring public funds deliver best value for money on key infrastructure projects, in December 2022 we published the [final summary report on the second Strategic Transport Projects Review \(STPR2\)](#) which lays out our priorities for investment through 45 recommendations, of which 37 are already underway.

The vast majority of Transport Scotland's activities and finances are focused on maintaining and operating our existing transport system that we all use every day, whether it be to travel to work, visit family and friends, access services, run our businesses or get our goods delivered. During the pandemic, the Scottish Government put in place [financial support packages to help bus operators](#) maintain and increase essential services as we moved through the COVID-19 Route Map, as well as support for ScotRail services and [support for light rail](#) in Glasgow and Edinburgh.

With over two million people - including all children and young people under 22, eligible disabled people and everyone aged 60 and over – eligible to benefit from free bus travel, Scotland has the most comprehensive concessionary travel scheme in the UK. As of end October 2023, over 98 million journeys have been made through the [Young Persons Free Bus Travel scheme](#) since its launch in January 2022 and we are currently undertaking an evaluation of the scheme.

Following careful consideration, in 2022 we transferred ScotRail into public ownership and, in June 2023, [Caledonian Sleeper services were brought into public control](#). This has been a monumental change behind the scenes, including all staff transferred over to ScotRail Holdings, however services have been business as usual for day-to-day commuters and leisure travellers. Seizing on the opportunities to improve affordability, we have already been able to institute savings through trials including the [Scotrail Peak Fares Removal Pilot](#) running between October 2023 and March 2024.

Taking each of the Strategy's priorities in turn, we have undertaken and delivered a number of actions:

To reduce inequalities, we have:

- expanded our concessionary bus travel offer with the introduction of [free bus travel for young people aged under 22](#) and [free bus travel for people seeking asylum](#) in Scotland;
- held [ticket prices on the Northern Isles and Clyde & Hebrides ferry networks](#) at current levels, from October 2023 until the end of March 2024, to help people and businesses from Scotland's remote rural and island communities;
- announced [four free single ferry journeys per year](#) for young island residents to the mainland;
- introduced the [Scotrail Peak Fares Removal Pilot](#) between October 2023 and March 2024;
- introduced the [Network Support Grant](#) to support commercial and community bus services;
- improved accessibility at many of our railway stations including [Croy](#) and [Johnstone](#) through the provision of step-free access;
- funded various initiatives to help provide free and affordable bikes to people who need them, including the pilot for the [free bikes scheme for school children](#), Cycling UK's [Access Bikes Project](#), the [Shifting Gears Project](#), the [Wee Bikes Programme](#); and to Scottish Cycling with grant funding to deliver the [Rock Up and Ride](#) programme.

To take climate action, we have:

- launched the second round of the [Scottish Zero Emission Bus Challenge Fund](#) (ScotZEB2) to support change in the bus market in favour of zero-emission technologies;
- progressed our [rolling programme of railway electrification](#), including the East Kilbride Enhancement Project and Barrhead route electrification and station improvement works;

- published our discussion paper to support engagement on a [just transition for the transport sector](#);
- launched the [Active Travel Transformation Fund](#) to provide £20 million directly to Local Authorities, Regional Transport Partnerships and National Park Authorities to deliver ambitious, construction-ready active travel infrastructure schemes across Scotland;
- since April 2020, invested over £34 million on the National Cycle Network to connect towns and villages by active travel;
- published the [draft route map](#) to achieving a 20% reduction in car kilometres driven in Scotland by 2030;
- provided local authorities with discretionary powers to implement a [workplace parking levy](#);
- published our [Vision for Scotland's public electric vehicle charging network](#), setting out what an ideal public charging offer for cars and vans would look like across Scotland; together with private sector provision, our public charging network is the most comprehensive in the UK outside of London; and,
- published the [Approach to Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience](#) which outlines the key climate risks affecting Scotland's transport system.

To help deliver inclusive economic growth, we have:

- initiated 37 of the 45 [recommendations in the Strategic Transport Projects Review](#) for transport investments across Scotland;
- progressed work on the [Levenmouth rail project](#) which is due to enter service in Spring 2024,
- completed work on the [A77 Maybole bypass](#);
- opened the new [railway station at Inverness Airport](#) in February 2023 as part of our wider £42 million investment in Scotland's Railway;
- invested over £450 million to date on the [A9 dualling project between Inverness and Perth](#) and completed work on the [Luncarty to Pass of Birnam section of the A9](#), improving journey times and safety on the route;
- provided funding to [procure four new major vessels](#) for Islay and the Little Minch routes, which are on track for delivery in 2024 and 2025; and,
- established new air services from Scotland to destinations such as Atlanta and Calgary

To improve our health and wellbeing, we have:

- supported local authorities to look at different ways of [delivering bus services in their areas](#) through the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019;
- continued the [roll out of 20 miles per hour speed limits](#) in built up areas;
- [introduced Low Emission Zones](#) (LEZ) in our four largest cities, as well as the [LEZ Support Fund for 2023-24](#) which offers cash incentives and Travel Better credits if non-compliant vehicles are removed from Scotland's roads;
- invested in [active travel behaviour change programmes](#) aimed at encouraging, empowering and inspiring children and young people across Scotland to develop sustainable travel habits from an early age; and,
- invested over £250 million on the [Places for Everyone](#) active travel infrastructure programme since April 2020 to deliver a range of sustainable travel projects, including [Stockingfield Bridge](#), the [South City Way in Glasgow](#), the [City Centre East West Route in Edinburgh](#), the [Hawick Sustainable Travel Super Highway](#), the [Broughty Ferry Active Travel programme](#).

Major events

UN Climate Change Conference (COP26)

In 2021, we engaged with a number of partners during the COP26 event in Glasgow to showcase transport projects from across Scotland that tackle climate change and promote sustainable travel. We co-hosted the Whole Systems Approach seminar which provided a platform for Scottish companies to engage with international businesses and organisations on the integration of green energy and sustainable mobility. We ran the Greener Transport Future Schools Competition to raise awareness of the 20% Reduction in Car Kilometres Routemap, promote active travel, increase youth engagement and awareness of more sustainable transport options, with the competition receiving over 300 entries from across Scotland. Our travel demand management campaign which ran prior to COP26 helped to prepare for the disruption expected as a result of the summit.

Operation Unicorn

Following the death of Queen Elizabeth II in September 2022, we worked closely with a number of partners during Operation Unicorn, leading on resilience for the various ceremonial events and the cortege which travelled 175 miles through Aberdeen, Dundee, Perth, Fife and Edinburgh.

UCI Cycling World Championships

Our Major Events and Resilience team played a vital role in the UCI Cycling World Championships in August 2023, helping to ensure the events across the country ran smoothly for participants and visitors while keeping our transport network moving.

Setting out what we will deliver

We continue to publish Delivery Plans for the Strategy, which highlight the actions being taken forward to deliver our shared vision. These Delivery Plans focus on the activities of the Scottish Government, not the wider public sector – recognising the sheer breadth of action and work ongoing across transport in Scotland cannot be captured in one list.

Actions in these Delivery Plans are consistent with the Climate Change Plan Update and are underpinned by the Sustainable Travel Hierarchy and the Sustainable Investment Hierarchy, prioritising walking, wheeling, cycling and shared transport options in preference to single occupancy car use, and with the aim of reducing the need to travel unsustainably.

The first Delivery Plan (2020-2022) was [published in December 2020](#), bringing together Scottish Government actions to help achieve our vision for the first time. Within the context of the uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, we remained focused on delivering our priorities, which are central to achieving a green recovery and a just transition to net zero greenhouse gas emissions. We undertook a series of impact assessments on the Scottish Government's actions contained within this Plan and [published these](#) on our website.

The second Delivery Plan (2022-2023) was [published in June 2022](#), setting out the practical actions which are underway, or due to begin, across Scottish Government which will deliver the vision, providing a coordinated overview to our transport investments and projects.

This Report to Parliament is being published alongside the [third Delivery Plan](#) in autumn 2023.

Engaging with partners

While our Delivery Plans focus on actions being taken by the Scottish Government, a collaborative approach across all partners and sectors remains crucial to ensure successful delivery and progress towards our vision.

We carried out a range of engagement activities during the development of the Strategy. Four thematic working groups, each co-chaired by Transport Scotland and an external partner, were established to focus on the priorities and members included representatives from over 60 partner organisations. We held almost 100 in-person stakeholder events which reached over 6,500 people in rural, island and urban areas across Scotland, including community forums and Citizens' Panels. Our engagement activity also included a formal public consultation in 2019.

In the post-COVID-19 era, it is vital to recognise that the successful delivery of the vision and priorities depends ever more importantly on shared delivery across all sectors and the ongoing collaborative approach with partners. In that context, we continue our positive engagement with a wide range of individuals, businesses and third sector organisations.

National Transport Strategy Delivery Board

The Delivery Board, established in October 2020, is co-chaired by the Minister for Transport and COSLA and brings together senior partners from across the transport sector to be accountable for the successful delivery of the Strategy.

Board members include representatives from Regional Transport Partnerships, the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE), the Society of Chief Officers of Transportation in Scotland (SCOTS) and the Association of Transport Co-ordinating Officers (ATCO).

Membership and minutes from each meeting are [published on the Transport Scotland website](#).

Transport Business Group

The Business Group was established in 2021 and includes representatives of associations for transport providers and wider interests from across the business sector. The group's purpose is to share experiences and expertise and to support the delivery of the four priorities, but particularly to help to deliver inclusive economic growth.

Members include the Airport Operators Association, British Ports Association, Chambers of Commerce, Confederation of Passenger Transport, Logistics UK, Rail Freight Group, Road Haulage Association, Visit Scotland, Scottish Council for Development and Industry, Scottish Engineering, Technology Scotland and Scottish Enterprise.

People's Panel

Between October 2021 and January 2022, a People's Panel met on four occasions to bring together individuals from across Scotland to consider issues highlighted under the four priorities, strengthen our evidence base and identify possible policy initiatives. The findings from the People's Panel were [published in October 2022](#).

Equality Group

As an agency of the Scottish Government, Transport Scotland is responsible for ensuring that any policy decision about service delivery is made taking full account of all equality issues.

Established in June 2020, the Transport Equalities Network was set up in response to the need for real time evidence and data gathering to reflect the lived experience and movements of the people of Scotland during the pandemic. By working virtually with the Network we were able to gather real time data and evidence through stakeholder organisations using surveys and other engagement tools. This provided valuable insights which fed in to the Transport Transition Plan Equality Impact Assessment and the Scottish Government's Route Map.

We continue to engage with a wide range of organisations on equality issues including Disability Equality Scotland, Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland and will shortly be re-establishing the Equality Network.

Our engagement with stakeholders helps to ensure that, where data exists, our data is current and our evidence is therefore reflective of the lived experiences of users of the current transport system. With this, we can improve our approach and fulfil our statutory obligation under the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 to support a rights-based approach to the Strategy.

Regional Transport Partnerships

Scotland's seven Regional Transport Partnerships are in the process of developing their Regional Transport Strategies, which must align with our national vision and priorities and provide a detailed overview of their priorities and actions. As of November 2023, Ministers have approved three out of seven of these Strategies.

Local Transport Strategies

Draft Local Transport Strategy guidance has been issued for consultation with stakeholders including local authorities, COSLA, SCOTS, public agencies and

advocacy groups. Local Transport Strategies offer an opportunity for local authorities to set priorities, agenda, direction and process for change at the local level.

This review of the draft guidance is intended to support local authorities as they develop and implement their strategies at a local level. A working group is being established following the analysis of the consultation and finalised guidance will be published during the period of this plan.

Monitoring our progress

Our Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy, published in 2021, established our approach to report on the performance of the National Transport Strategy over the short, medium and long term. A baseline report which sets out the key indicators that underpin the Strategy provides data related to the transport sector in 2019 and the context surrounding travel behaviours, emissions, freight, barriers and access to transport and safety issues. As the report focuses on data, it largely omits discussion of transport policy.

Though we have continued to collect and publish transport and travel data through our annual official statistical publications, it has not been possible to accurately report on the performance of the Strategy on an annual basis. This is primarily due to our data collection methods being affected by the pandemic and comparisons between the baseline position and travel in 2020 and 2021 not being robust due to the profound impact that the pandemic had on travel behaviour over this period.

We will produce a three-yearly evaluation report in 2024, which will include the baseline data and updates from 2020, 2021 and 2022, qualitative case studies from our stakeholder groups and transport partners and data from additional sources.

This will be a comprehensive report, focusing on a wider set of data, to provide an overview of the Strategy's performance to date against the outcomes and vision it has set out to achieve. The three-yearly evaluation report will enable us to present a more assessment of the strategy, drawing on data that reflects transport and travel behaviours both during and crucially, post-pandemic.

In addition to specific monitoring of the Strategy's headline indicators, Transport Scotland undertakes a range of analytical activity which contributes to our understanding of how the Strategy is performing. This includes:

- Routine analysis of car and public transport demand
- Monitoring and reporting on a number of policy frameworks including the Road Safety Framework; Active Travel Outcomes Framework; and Accessible Travel Framework

- Climate Change Dashboard
- Policy and Programme Evaluation.

We will feed existing targets and strategic objectives into the overall performance monitoring, such as achieving net zero by 2045 and our road safety targets, and we will show the links between the Strategy and the National Performance Framework and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Next Steps

Transport Scotland will continue to deliver and embed the Strategy across the Scottish Government and with our partners, report on the monitoring and evaluation process, engage through our established forums and publish our annual Delivery Plans.



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