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Achieving Car Use Reduction in Scotland

Equality Impact Assessment: Results

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Title of policy:

Achieving Car Use Reduction: A Renewed Policy Statement

Summary of aims and desired outcomes of Policy:

To restate the commitment of the Scottish Government and COSLA to reduce car use in Scotland. It sets out four key next steps to continue to develop the policy:

- Revising the existing car use reduction target, informed by the advice of the Climate Change Committee and other relevant evidence, to develop a new, longer-term target which will support our 2045 net zero target.
- Undertaking a regulatory check of existing Transport (Scotland) Act 2001 powers for discretionary local road user charging schemes to allow local authorities and/or regional transport partnerships the option to implement these.
- Working with key stakeholders at national, regional, and local level to develop place-based and experience- specific delivery plans to support reduced car use and alternative transport options.
- Driving a national communication and engagement campaign and set out a positive vision around how reducing car use can deliver outcomes for public health, air quality, and the environment.

Directorate: Transport Scotland

Division: Transport Strategy & Analysis

Team: Climate Change & Just Transition

Executive Summary

“Achieving Car Use Reduction in Scotland: A Renewed Policy Statement” restates the Scottish Government and COSLA’s commitment to reducing car use in Scotland

in a fair way. We are committed to doing so in a way which ensures that the equality, economic, and health and wellbeing benefits of car use reduction are experienced nationally

While the policy statement does not contain any individual interventions to reduce car use and is more of a high-level document, it does commit to four key next steps, which have been set out above.

This EQIA is comprised of evidence from published data sets and literature as well as feedback from statutory consultation on the draft route map document. Impacts are assessed against each protected characteristic group, as defined by the Equality Act (2010).

As a result of the consultation findings and this EQIA process, the renewed policy statement has been drafted to make clear that any proposed policy should not negatively impact people from marginalised groups, particularly disabled people who may rely on cars more heavily for mobility.

It is recommended that there is continued engagement and consultation with impacted groups on the detailed design of delivery plan(s), and in the development of any road user charging schemes at a local authority or regional transport partnership level.

Background

In 2019, [Scotland declared a global climate emergency](#). [Research commissioned by Transport Scotland](#) in 2021 concluded that it would not be possible to reach net zero emissions through a transition to electric vehicles alone, and that changes in people's behaviour to reduce overall car use will also be required. Car use remains the largest emitter within the transport sector with 39% of total transport emissions and 12.4% of Scotland's overall emissions, so reducing car use is deemed essential for the transport system to be de-carbonised, therefore Scotland's [Climate Change Plan update](#) included a target to reduce car distance travelled in Scotland.

In 2022, we subsequently developed and consulted on a [draft route map to achieve a 20 per cent reduction in car kilometres by 2030](#) and draft impact assessments. The route map was aimed predominantly at national, regional, and local stakeholders to facilitate a collaborative approach to meeting the target and intended to raise awareness of the need for change and empower people to switch to more sustainable travel modes in Scotland.

The development of the target was informed by the statutory emissions target of net zero by 2045 and the interim target to reduce emissions by 75% by 2030. Following the passage of the [Climate Change \(Emissions Reduction Targets\) \(Scotland\) Act 2024](#), we will now set out our carbon budgets through secondary legislation taking into account the latest advice from the Climate Change Committee once available. This means that the 75% reduction in emissions by 2030 target is no longer statutory, which allows the opportunity to review the approach to car use reduction in Scotland with a longer-term lens.

Audit Scotland, in their [Sustainable Transport Audit report](#), called for the Scottish Government to clarify its commitment to reducing transport emissions through the car kilometre (km) target, and to set out how this aligns with the new carbon budget approach towards its climate change policy.

The publication of the policy statement is the first step in our renewed approach to achieving sustainable car use reduction in Scotland. In the document, we reaffirm our commitment to this policy outcome, setting out the current national context, the societal benefits to pursuing this ambition, and our overarching approach to the policy. Following receipt of the necessary evidence this summer, we will develop a new, longer-term target for reducing car use and set out our approach to delivery of this target alongside key stakeholders.

This is a crucial part of enabling Scotland to achieve its ambition of reaching net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045.

Car use reduction also has wider benefits to offer, by reducing the negative impacts of existing car use including air and noise pollution, road danger, physical inactivity, community severance and congestion.

The principle of a just transition is at the heart of car use reduction policy, and it is recognised that there will be some people for whom this will be more challenging. This will be true in rural areas where people may face longer trip distances and where there may be fewer alternative mode options; as well as for disabled people who use cars as a mobility aid; those having to trip chain with children (which evidence shows are primarily women); and some workers and businesses for whom car use may be more important. It is for this reason that the policy is a national one rather than a policy for all regions of Scotland or indeed all individuals within Scotland to achieve the same percentage reduction in car use.

It is however important to recognise the inequity of a status quo that facilitates car use at the expense of other modes. This is because cars are not currently used equally by all groups, with young people, older people, disabled people, women, and

some ethnic minorities likely to use cars, they are therefore less likely to benefit from a status quo where significant public space is allocated to private vehicles.

The Scope of the EQIA

This EQIA is comprised of evidence from published data sets and literature as well as feedback from statutory consultation on the draft route map document. Impacts are assessed against each protected characteristic group, as defined by the Equality Act (2010).

In developing car use reduction policy, Transport Scotland and the Scottish Government are mindful of the three needs of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 - eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Where any negative impacts have been identified, we have sought to mitigate or eliminate these. We are also mindful that the equality duty is not just about negating or mitigating negative impacts, as we also have a positive duty to promote equality. We are considering how best to work with under-represented groups and are tailoring our communications and engagement strategy to raise awareness of the benefits of reduced car use as well as alternative and active travel options.

This impact assessment was conducted using published data on travel and transport in Scotland and how this relates to protected characteristic groups¹. Additional evidence was gathered through a formal consultation process, as well as through ongoing engagement with stakeholder groups. In total, there were 679 responses to the consultation, of which 64 were from organisations and 615 from individuals.

¹ It is important to recognise that the Transport Scotland data is unadjusted for potential contributing factors, and it is acknowledged that some differences in transport behaviours by protected characteristic group may be influenced by other underlying factors, for example the group's employment rate, income level or propensity to live in an urban location.

Key Findings

As set out above, impact was assessed against each protected characteristic group. Evidence showed that some groups are more likely to feel a direct impact than others as a result of proposals. There will be little direct impact on people due to their sexual orientation or gender re-assignment status as a result of reduced car use, so this has been assessed as neutral.

Potential positive impacts

Positive impacts have been identified for the equality groups who are less likely to use car and/or more likely to use other modes. These are young & older people, women, disabled people and minority ethnic groups.

Positive impacts have been identified for the equality groups that are more vulnerable to the harmful health impacts of transport, including from air and noise pollution and road traffic danger. These include children, older people, pregnant women and minority ethnic groups where the prevalence of chronic disease such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease is higher.

Positive impacts have also been identified for the equality groups that would benefit from increased opportunities to be physically active through active travel. These include children and older people, disabled people, women, pregnant women and minority ethnic groups where the prevalence of chronic disease such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease is higher.

Positive impacts have been identified for all equality groups through the dimension of 'promoting good relations', as reducing car use can help reduce community severance. Interventions such as road space reallocation away from private car use can facilitate increased quantity and higher quality of public spaces that allow people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds to come together.

Consultation feedback supported the conclusions above, although with a caveat that the degree of positive impact will depend on the extent to which improvements are made to public and active travel infrastructure. Additional positive impacts were identified by consultation respondent of 'providing easier use of cars for disabled people who are car dependent due to the targeted overall reduction in car use', and 'benefits from perceived intermixing via increased use of public transport and active travel, engendering more community spirit'.

Potential negative impacts and mitigations

Consultation feedback also cited some negative impacts in response to the question 'could the proposals in this plan have positive or negative impacts on any groups of people with protected characteristics?'. While we welcome this feedback, it is important to note that the negative impacts identified mostly related to the perceived disbenefits to people if they were prevented from driving entirely, rather than the Scottish Government's proposed approach of pursuing overall reduced car usage across Scotland. The renewed policy statement explicitly sets out that the Scottish Government has no intention to prevent individuals who need to use a private vehicle, for example as a mobility aid, from doing so.

Messaging will be tailored in future car use reduction policy and communications to re-assure those that rely on cars as a mobility aid for example, that car use is not being banned, and that they are not going to be looked on unfavourably for their continued car use.

While no direct negative impacts have been identified because of the commitments made in the renewed policy statement, it is acknowledged, in line with the comments received via consultation, that in the implementation of individual policy measures, guidance on inclusive design will need to be followed. This will ensure that restructured environments, including online environments, are accessible, inclusive and safe for use by disabled people and older people, including those with sensory and/or physical disabilities. This includes ensuring that access is maintained for those who need to use private vehicles because of their disability.

It is also recognised that in the implementation of individual policy measures consideration will need to be given to safety and security. This will ensure that travel environments do not exclude women; those of different sexual orientations; those of different ethnicities; and those of different religions or beliefs; who may fear the risk of harassment or assault.

Importantly, it is also recognised that the implementation of individual policy measures should consider ways to avoid placing any unfair financial burden on those who are less able to reduce their car use, including disabled people, older people, carers, those on lower incomes and those in rural areas.

The consultation on the draft route map and impact assessment also sought feedback on measures that could be taken to maximise positive impacts or minimise negative impacts. The majority of measures identified in this question were in fact measures that will be delivered through the interventions that were set out in the previously published route map, including reduced traffic speeds; banning of pavement parking; segregated cycle infrastructure and safer routes to schools; improved pedestrian environments; 20-minute neighbourhoods and Mobility as a

Service. As the car use reduction policy develops, we will ensure to take measures which mitigate these concerns when developing delivery plans with local authorities.

Additional suggested mitigation measures included engagement and consultation with impacted groups on the detailed design of specific interventions and Transport Scotland and the Scottish Government will seek to involve disabled people in the design and development of policies which are likely to affect them. This includes via the national communication and engagement campaign which will aim to set out a positive vision around how reducing car use can deliver outcomes for public health, air quality, and the environment.

Recommendations and Conclusion

The renewed policy statement for reducing car use has been developed with Transport Scotland's four priorities of *taking climate action*; *reducing inequalities*; *helping deliver inclusive economic growth* and *improving health and wellbeing* at its core, and thus impacts on groups with protected characteristics (as well as other marginalised groups including those living in the Islands and other rural communities and those living in socio-economic deprivation) have been considered throughout the development and policy selection process.

As a result of the consultation findings and this EQIA process, the renewed policy statement has been drafted to make clear that any proposed policy should not negatively impact people from marginalised groups, particularly disabled people who may rely on cars more heavily for mobility.

In line with the General Equality Duty (Public Sector Equality Duty) the renewed policy statement will seek to advance equality of opportunity; eliminate unlawful discrimination and foster good community relations. This impact assessment demonstrates the positive impact that the renewed policy statement will have on these objectives, as well as to flagging areas where the potential for negative impacts should be assessed and mitigated as the individual policies are developed. It is recommended that there is continued engagement and consultation with impacted groups on the detailed design of delivery plan(s).



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