Consultation on the 20% reduction in car km route map

Cycling Scotland submission
April 2022

1. Do you agree with the overall behaviour change approach, and do you have any comments on the four behaviours outlined above? Please explain.

Cycling Scotland welcomes and supports the behaviour change steps. Scotland is facing a climate emergency and reducing car km is a key action in tackling this.

As we outlined in our response to the National Transport Strategy: "Policy should be focused on reducing the need for travel and replacing vehicle journeys with active and sustainable modes for short journeys, promoting modal integration between these modes, to deliver truly sustainable door-to-door journeys."

2. What are the key opportunities of reducing car kilometres

One of the positive outcomes of the pandemic has been an increase in rates of cycling (and walking) across the country. Compared to 2019, rates of cycling from March 2020 to March 2021 were much higher (by 46% nationally) and increased by more than 100% in some areas[1].

For many, the increase in cycling through the pandemic was associated with roads being quieter, when the volume of traffic had significantly reduced and the roads felt safer, quieter, and less polluted. Research conducted by Cycling Scotland shows that concerns about safety is a key barrier to more people cycling[2].

Going forward, action is needed to permanently embed this (behaviour) change, with the aim of achieving a sustained modal shift to active travel, and the reduction in transport emissions – amongst many other benefits – that result from increased rates of walking, wheeling and cycling.

Many of the benefits of cycling, and active travel, present ready-made solutions to some of the greatest current challenges we face: improved physical and mental health reduces pressure on the NHS and social care, reduced emissions and congestion addresses the climate emergency and, as the cost of private vehicle use rises, active travel can help with the cost of living crisis. There may never be a better time to make the case for reducing our reliance on cars.

3. What are the key challenges faced in reducing car kilometres?

Despite the positive progress that has been made reducing road casualties in the last 10 years, improving road safety of vulnerable road users, particularly people cycling, remains a challenge. As mentioned above, fear of road traffic remains a key priority.

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[1] https://www.cycling.scot/news-and-blog/article/one-year-on-cycling-up-47-percent-in-scotland
[2] https://www.cycling.scot/news-and-blog/article/cycling-attitudes-and-behaviour-research-2021

If we are to reduce car kilometres, and encourage people to consider cycling for short journeys, improving road safety is a number one priority.

Safe, segregated, easy to access cycling infrastructure is therefore required to improve safety, and where it already exists, such infrastructure must also be maintained to a high standard. Research shows that segregated cycle lanes can reduce vehicle-bike crashes by as much as 30%. The primary focus for investment going forward should be on enabling cycling, and reducing the reliance on private vehicles, through changing the physical environment to make it easier for anyone, anywhere to cycle.

A further challenge or consideration is that some behaviour change actions will not be as readily feasible or available all groups or contexts. For example, local amenities might not always be within walking or cycling distance in rural or island locations, and where this is the case, we support interventions in active and public transport.

We recognise the challenge of implementing a national policy at a local level. To ensure successful delivery of the vision for a 20% reduction in car km, we strongly encourage an approach that integrates this vision into regional/local transport plans. Consultation with communities is key, as are the resources, funding and personnel for local authorities to deliver on the target.

It is important to acknowledge that it will not be possible to deliver this policy objective without ensuring that the cost of car journeys fully reflects the cost to society, including pollution, congestion, crashes and social exclusion.

4.Are there any further actions you would like to see included in future to support behaviour change 1) - reducing the need to travel?

No further comments

5. Are there any further actions you would like to see included in future to support behaviour change 2) - choosing local options?

It should be easier, safer, and more appealing for people to choose local options. Key to delivering this is the availability and connectedness of active travel infrastructure.

As the Public Health and Sustainable Transport Partnership Group reported in the recent Health Impact Assessment of temporary road space reallocation for active travel interventions, "road space reallocation has a role to play as part of a whole-system approach to 'living well locally'[3] and impacts positively upon multiple policy areas.

We strongly support measuring the impact of Spaces for People interventions, and using this evidence to expand and make permanent infrastructure that will support walking, wheeling and cycling, and reduce car use.

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[3] https://www.publichealthscotland.scot/media/12260/road-space-reallocation-in-scotland-a-health-impact-assessment-briefing.pdf

6. Are there any further actions you would like to see included in future to support behaviour change 3) - switching to more sustainable modes of travel?

As referred to above, we support interventions that will make our roads safer as we know that this is the biggest barrier to more people switching to more sustainable modes of transport.

We, therefore, welcome Intervention 3e and the continued action on road safety, in line with Scotland's Road Safety Framework to 2030.

In addition to the national deliverables set out in the Annual Delivery Plans of the Road Safety Framework, including a national strategy on 20mph speed limits/zones, a national speed management review and the development of a pilot to report dangerous driving, we would like to see further efforts to reduce the use of commercial vehicles in urban locations, notably LGVs and HGVs which have increased in recent years, especially so during the pandemic.

The route map should include actions that support businesses to switch to more sustainable transport modes, including, for example, e-cargo bikes being used for first/last mile deliveries which has the potential to make roads not only greener but safer.

LGVs should be included in this 20% reduction target, given the massive rise in vehicle mileage, risks posed to people driving and others by this rise.

The introduction of Workplace Parking levies as an additional tool for traffic management is to be welcomed. It is vital that any income generated by such interventions improves sustainable and active transport options for those who don't have access to a car.

While a reserved matter, it is clear that road pricing will be necessary to replace fuel duty, given the increase in e-vehicle usage. If implemented correctly, road pricing will support a just transition and enhance accessibility for all, both those who require using a car for a particular journey and those using other forms of transport.

7. Are there any further actions you would like to see included in future to support behaviour change 4) - combining or sharing journeys?

No further actions, but we would like to see this fourth behaviour change as supplementary to behaviour changes 1 – 3.

Actions outlined in the first three behaviour changes should be prioritised over further promotion of car use. In particular given the impact of the pandemic on public transport, it is vital that the environmental benefits of public transport are emphasised.

8. Do you have any comment to make on any of the specific policies contained within the route map?

Impact Assessment

1. Do you think that the proposals set out in this plan could have positive or negative impacts on any particular groups of people with reference to the listed protected characteristics?

a. If you think the proposals will have a particular impact on certain groups due to protected characteristics, what measures would you suggest to maximise positive impacts or mitigate negative impacts?

2. Do you think that the proposals set out in this plan could have a particular impact (positive or negative) on island communities?

We welcome the recognition that the approach isn't a 'one size fits all'. Whilst it is a national ambition, we agree that a tailored, bespoke approach is needed for regions, especially rural and island locations, that are more reliant on the use of the private car.

Where this is the case, we support interventions that focus on shifting behaviour to digital models, as well as improving accessibility, availability and affordability of public transport and access to active travel networks.

a. If you think the proposals will impact on island communities, what measures would you suggest to maximise positive impacts or mitigate negative impacts?

3. Do you think that the proposals set out in this plan could have a particular impact (positive or negative) on people facing socio-economic disadvantages?

As referenced in the guiding principles of the consultation, we support and welcome the commitment to a just transition, ensuring that communities are empowered, engaged and consulted on changes.

We fully agree that people facing socio-economic disadvantages should not be affected negatively by changes and that existing inequalities are tackled rather than deepened.

The actions, therefore, have the potential to have a positive impact on those facing socio-economic disadvantages, however changes need to be carefully managed.

There are strong links between deprivation and low levels of car ownership. By continuing to prioritise road development, the present transport system currently places an unequal burden on those in the most deprived communities, and there is a risk that growth in car ownership further isolates those without access to a car. Re-focusing on providing integrated and responsive active travel services and infrastructure instead of building new roads is essential and will contribute significantly to reducing inequality in the transport system in Scotland.

a. If you think the proposals will have a particular impact based on socio-economic factors what measures would you suggest to maximise positive impacts or mitigate negative impacts?

The Environment

1. Do you think the actions proposed in the route map are likely to have an impact on the environment? If so, in what way? Please be as specific as possible in your reasoning.

Other Comment

1. Do you have views you would like to express relating to parts of this consultation which do not have a specific question? If so, please elaborate