

# A Climate Emergency Plan for Transport

Stephen Joseph and Chris Todd, September 2019

## Overview

Transport has completely failed to address climate change. It is the worst performing sector in terms of carbon reduction, even excluding aviation. If aviation and shipping are added in the pathways for transport amounts to large increases in carbon emissions. And the main actions by Government are making things worse: heavy funding for big new roads, extra airport capacity (at many airports not just Heathrow), a freeze on fuel duty while rail fares increase, cuts in funding for buses, limited or no funding for local public transport and active travel (especially outside the cities), and a deregulated planning system which promotes car-based greenfield development. There is a need to change funding priorities, including unfreezing fuel duty and shifting funding into a cycling and walking programme, local public transport (especially high quality, high frequency, low cost bus services), better local rail services and integrated ticketing (across all modes and the new sharing economy). We need strategies that reduce demand, shift to active travel and public transport, and overall create pathways at all levels towards net zero emissions from transport.

In that context, what can a local authority do now?

### Firstly, Stop making things worse.

1. Stop building new roads and supporting the expansion of airports (in pipeline, design and construction).
2. Stop advocating new road building and airport expansion based on junk data/forecasting/models and the discredited link with boosting the local economy and reducing congestion.
3. Using planning powers, authorities (especially district/unitary councils) should review housing plans using the Transport for New Homes checklist (see below) and remove/oppose developments that will worsen car dependence.
4. Set up a commission to do the full plan for the sustainable transport alternatives to road building.

If authorities are members of sub-national transport bodies like Transport for the North, use that membership to push these bodies towards net zero pathways, demand management, modal shift and away from road building and airport expansion.

This will release funding that can be used to deliver a zero carbon transport plan, as set out below.

### Secondly, Establish key principles of a transport climate emergency: traffic reduction and modal shift (not business as usual plus a bit of electrification).

The government's Committee on Climate Change shows electrification not enough, and that a modal shift is needed, and suggests around 10% demand reduction.

(<https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/net-zero-the-uks-contribution-to-stopping-global-warming/>, p198)

The report by Lynn Sloman, of Transport for Quality of Life says there is a need for at least 20% demand reduction.

(<https://policy.friendsoftheearth.uk/insight/net-zero-carbon-budget-whole-transport-sector>)

There is a need to AVOID travel, and then SHIFT to public and active transport, before IMPROVING what is left. This requires planning.

**Thirdly, Agree a Plan that has clear actions and investments to reduce emissions now, and a vision and pathway to zero carbon transport for all.**

There are things all councils can do now to make a difference and build support for change in transport. This includes practical measures locally and changing investment plans, but also needs changes in Government policy and spending priorities. These are grouped as below:

**1. Improve the Gathering and Use of Data**

Bring together data on travel patterns and look for ways of providing alternatives to car trips. Sometimes this can bust myths – the % of people arriving at shops by car and the proportion of through traffic is often much lower than people think.

**2. Zero Carbon Planning**

- Review development plans and the location and design of development - focus development at public transport hubs rather than around big new roads. Without reasonably dense development public transport viability is likely to be poor and unable to sustain commercially viable bus services. This may involve challenging Government targets and requirements for housebuilding, and the “viability test”.
- Review design guidelines for developments to give priority to walking, cycling and public transport. Require local services and facilities to serve new developments.
- Ensure bus services for new developments are adequate – should aim for 7 day a week services for a minimum 18 hours a day.

For further information see:

Checklist for new homes, [www.transportfornewhomes.org.uk/the-project/checklist-for-new-housing-developments](http://www.transportfornewhomes.org.uk/the-project/checklist-for-new-housing-developments))

Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation: Better planning, better transport, better places. (See [https://www.ciht.org.uk/media/10218/ciht-better-planning-a4\\_updated\\_linked\\_.pdf](https://www.ciht.org.uk/media/10218/ciht-better-planning-a4_updated_linked_.pdf))

Campaign to Protect Rural England. <https://www.cpre.org.uk/what-we-do/transport>

Guidance from Stagecoach on designing buses into new developments. (see <https://www.stagecoach.com/~media/Files/S/Stagecoach-Group/Attachments/pdf/bus-services-and-new-residential-developments.pdf>)

**3. Scale-up Public transport**

- **Proper audit of public transport need.** Authorities are in fact required to assess need, but most don't. Use powers in Bus Services Act for partnerships to get data on usage and seek to improve services in short term, move towards franchising.
- **Zero emission buses:** use Government funding to shift to low/zero emission buses. Use the Bus Services Act powers to move towards all electric fleet longer-term. (see <https://bettertransport.org.uk/sites/default/files/pdfs/bus-services-act-guidance.pdf>)
- **Total transport** - review all public sector transport contracts locally (social services, education, non-emergency patient transport), also bespoke private sector transport e.g.

business parks, and bring them together as far as possible, to create a mainstream public transport network as opposed to lots of different transport services. (see <https://bettertransport.org.uk/blog/buses/total-transport-more-cost-effective-approach-commissioning-local-transport-services>)

- **Explore community/social enterprise/ local ownership** for public transport services. Good examples include <http://www.hctgroup.org/> and <https://thebiglemon.com/>.
- **Bus priority:** promote bus priority – bus lanes, bus-operated traffic lights, allied with good marketing and high-quality bus stops and stations
- **Rail:** develop rail stations as transport hubs with good bus stops, integrated timetables, cycle parking, good pedestrian and cycle access (see Cornwall’s One Public Transport Network - <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/transport-and-streets/public-transport/ongoing-developments/one-network/>). Look for opportunities for new/reopened rail stations and lines (CBT and Railfuture have lists). Use rail stations as hubs for development/ gateways to towns.

#### 4. Scale-up Cycling and walking

- **Plan. Establish Local Cycling and Walking Investment Plans (LCWIP).** LCWIPS are referenced in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) so having one gives local planning authorities greater leverage, including to support bids for government and developer funding.
- **Put pedestrians and cyclists at top of road user hierarchy.** Review all road crossings to give pedestrians priority and time to cross, ban pavement parking
- **Develop cycling and walking networks** (see Manchester’s Bee-Line network - <https://tfgm.com/press-release/beelines>)
- **“20 is plenty”:** Set 20mph as default speed limit in whole residential/urban areas (see <http://www.20splenty.org/>).
- **Promote e-bikes, cargo bikes and bike hire schemes**

Further information: see <https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/> and <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/>.

#### 5. Develop travel plans for major travel generators - workplaces, schools, hospitals etc.

In some places, even just having more commuters sharing cars would make a difference. Such plans are also important because it makes being part of climate emergency solutions a broader-based movement. Local employers and school heads should commit to promote car sharing and provide cycle parking/showers and good walking routes to their sites (as opposed to expecting pedestrians to negotiate giant car parks). If they do, action on transport – and climate emergency generally - might carry more weight with Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and others.

#### 6. Vision Zero for Road Safety

Set a plan to reduce road casualties to zero (linked to other measures).

See <http://www.brake.org.uk/news/10-whats-happening/take-action/252-zero>.

For details of reported accidents anywhere in the UK see <https://www.crashmap.co.uk/>.

#### 7. Cut the Total Amount of Traffic

- Parking: review the price and availability of parking – resident parking schemes, town centre parking charges, redevelop car parks. Introduce options for workplace parking levy as in Nottingham
- Reallocate road space to sustainable transport: - bus priority, cycle networks, traffic light priorities etc
- Car-free streets and areas, designing for shared space such as the “mini-Holland” low traffic neighbourhood in Walthamstow. (see <https://www.enjoywalthamforest.co.uk/about-mini-holland/>)

## 8. Freight

Look at cargo bikes, other last mile options, rail where possible, restrictions on diesel trucks.

Include freight in strategic transport planning.

## 9. Consider Co-benefits.

High carbon transport policies also have other downsides – congestion, air pollution, obesity etc.

Low carbon policies improve equality, strengthen local economy, improve health and well-being etc.

For example, regarding Air Pollution see the network for communities committed to clean air (<https://www.uk100.org/>) and the Healthy Air Campaign (<https://www.healthyair.org.uk/>).

## 10. Seek policy and funding shifts wherever possible.

Lobby for more money and use funding opportunities where available – e.g. towns fund, housing investment, transforming cities, green buses etc.

## 11. Eliminate fossil fuel vehicles.

Alongside the above we do need **electric vehicles**, so local EV charging infrastructure is needed, including on all new homes/conversions. Electric vehicles should be chosen for all new buses and trains, and railways electrified. But this should not be the main focus of a zero carbon transport plan.

## Summary

Bring all this together into a plan that shifts short car journeys to walk/cycle/bus, and longer trips to rail/shared transport.

## Contacts for further information/support

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Campaign for Better Transport – <https://bettertransport.org.uk/>

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