

'Connecting Communities' Transport Seminar – Introduction

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This seminar asks:

- How can local authorities support communities to reduce their emissions by shifting to sustainable transport?
- How can communities get started on this?
- How can communities engage with regional and national authorities on this?

We need to start by recognising that: the cost of using the car has gone down; the cost of using public transport has gone up. Community and Fife wide changes also require us ensuring changes at a Scottish Government level to (i) regulate public transport, and to (ii) invest in cycling and walking. But the issue of Government involvement in transport runs much deeper than this.

Scottish Govt Policy on Transport vis-à-vis Carbon Reduction Targets:

There is a stark contrast between the Scottish Govt's excellent ambitions on reducing CO₂ emissions, and the reality of their transport policy, which by their own admission would increase it. This is a key background to today's seminar: the way national transport policy constrains regional and local initiatives, and contradicts their own environmental targets.

The Scottish Government states that:

“As a percentage of total Scottish emissions, the 14.7MtCO₂e from transport accounted for 25.9% in 2007. This is considerably higher than the level of 18.9% recorded in 1990” (2010: 9).

Carbon Account for Transport 2010 edition (no 2)

In estimating the impact of proposed transport infrastructure projects, 12 out of the 14 are forecast to increase emissions further (Table 7 2010: 28).

The net impact of all Scottish transport measures are expected to increase emissions by 71ktCO₂e by 2022 (Table 9 2020: 41), and “this estimated increase in emissions is largely driven by a net increase in vehicle kilometres, which are anticipated to increase by 1.2% above a business as usual scenario in 2022 as a result of Scottish transport interventions” (2010: 41), this increase in emissions from transport by 2022 contrasts sharply with Scotland's ambitious target of reducing CO₂ emissions by 42% by 2020.

In summary this Scottish Government *Carbon Account for Transport* report states that the transport policies being put in place to help meet this 42% target are intended not to reduce emissions from transport but to “**slow** the increase in transport emissions” (2010: 42, emphasis added.). The report highlights the fact that the evaluation of proposed transport schemes is taken in relation to 5 equally weighted criteria including the environment, criteria which mean that in 12 out of 14 cases, the environment will be worse off as a result of the decisions being made now.