

RAIL

Rail is the most energy-efficient form of public transport. Good progress has already been made in electrifying lines in the Central Belt to provide zero emission travel between Glasgow, Edinburgh, Stirling and intermediate towns, expanding on the extensive electrified network in the Glasgow City Region. Attracting more car users to choose rail for all or part of their journeys is the best way of cutting emissions from transport while reducing car kilometres by the government's 20% target.

Further Electrification

Electrification of the busy East Kilbride line should be followed by Edinburgh to Fife and the Borders. The Scottish Government's transport budget should prioritise a phased programme to upgrade and electrify InterCity routes northwards to Aberdeen and Inverness as the spine of a national zero-carbon transport network. Replacing ScotRail's diesel InterCity High Speed Trains with a new fleet of electric or bimode high quality trains would provide Scotland with a world-class zero emissions intercity transport network.

Rail Re-openings

Following very successful re-opening of railway lines to Larkhall, Maryhill, Alloa, Airdie – Bathgate, the Borders and Leven, further opportunities to link towns without rail services to the national network should be evaluated. Grangemouth already has an electrified freight railway where passenger services to Glasgow could be restored at low marginal cost, with connections at Falkirk to Edinburgh and Stirling. There is also demand to reconnect Hawick, Ellon and St. Andrews to the rail network, with possible future extensions to Peterhead and Fraserburgh.

High Speed Rail

London-Edinburgh/Glasgow is the busiest domestic air corridor in Europe, making a significant contribution to the UK's greenhouse gas emissions. While extension of HS2 northwards from Birmingham to Scotland now seems unlikely, it is vital that planning of rail upgrades in the North of England also includes a strategy for much faster Anglo-Scottish rail journeys. The Scottish Government needs to be fully involved in discussions with the Department for Transport. A journey time target of 3 hour 30 minutes for London-Glasgow/Edinburgh rail journeys is realistic.

Tourism and Trains

Scottish scenic lines such as the West Highland Line are impressive feats of engineering through world-class scenery. Great rail journeys like the Jacobite steam train are major international tourist attractions.

There is an opportunity to boost tourism and rail revenue by introducing new zero-emission tourist trains on the West Highland, Kyle, Far North, and Stranraer lines to replace the current ageing diesel rolling stock. New inclusive tours combining ferry and coach connections with scenic rail journeys would further boost "green" tourism and reduce car traffic pressure on tourist hotspots.