

Scottish Government Consultation:
Scotland's National Transport Strategy
October 2019

Introduction

The Scottish Government are consulting on the new draft National Transport Strategy to help determine whether the Strategy's Vision, Priorities and Outcomes are the right ones for Scotland's transport network for the next twenty years. The focus is on whether the policies contained in the Strategy are the right ones to help deliver it, and how the Strategy can continue to support what works well and address what does not work so well in our transport system.

The Scottish Women's Convention (SWC)

The Scottish Women's Convention (SWC) is funded to engage with women throughout Scotland in order that their views might influence public policy. The SWC uses the views of women to respond to a variety of Parliamentary, Governmental and organisational consultation papers at both a Scottish and UK level.

The Scottish Women's Convention engages with women using numerous communication channels including Roadshow events, Thematic Conferences and regional contact groups. This submission provides the views of women and reflects their opinions and experiences in a number of key areas relevant to the issues set out in terms of the transport system.

The National Transport Strategy lays out a Vision and Four Priorities each with 3 Outcomes

Vision: We will have a sustainable, inclusive and accessible transport system, helping deliver a healthier, fairer and more prosperous Scotland for communities, businesses and visitors.

Promotes equality:

Will provide fair access to services we need

Will be easy to use for all

Will be affordable for all

Takes climate action:

Will adapt to the effects of climate change

Will help deliver our net-zero target

Will promote greener, cleaner choices

Helps our economy prosper:

Will get us where we need to get to

Will be reliable, efficient and high quality

Will use beneficial innovation

Improves our health and wellbeing:

Will be safe and secure for all

Will enable us to make healthy travel choices

Will help make our communities great places to live

Is the Vision that is set out for the National Transport Strategy the right Vision for transport policy over the next 20 years?

Yes. Any strategy with a clear focus on encompassing equality as a significant priority is well suited to correct the significant imbalances that exist at present in how women access transport throughout Scotland.

It is wholly advantageous that the Vision outlined above clearly accounts for equality and the different ways in which women use transport at all levels, both nationally and locally. Enshrining inclusivity at the heart of the Vision for Scotland's National Transport Strategy alongside a mantra of being healthier, fairer and prosperous is tantamount to the emphasis that should be placed on women's equality across all factors relating to transport.

Are the Priorities and Outcomes that the Strategy is trying to achieve the right Priorities and Outcomes for transport policy over the next 20 years?

Yes. With emphasis on the first Priority, inequality is at the heart of the ways in which women throughout Scotland currently encounter obstacles related to transport for a number of reasons. The fact that the Strategy takes account of women's access and safety is a substantial achievement that should seek to be replicated across all divisions of transport planning nationally, regionally and locally.

Are some of these Priorities and Outcomes more important than others or are they equally important?

Whilst the first priority of Promoting Equality explicitly highlights the problems women encounter when accessing transport, all the Priorities outlined are interconnected with women in fundamental ways. Prioritising a "Prosperous Economy", for instance, must take into account the promotion of equal, fair and flexible work for women across all sectors with transport being a direct aim of this.

Are the Challenges the Strategy highlights in Chapter 3 the key Challenges for transport, or are there others the Strategy should focus on?

Throughout our body of work, the SWC travels across the breadth of Scotland to both rural and urban localities to gauge real women's lived experiences. A significant factor that comes up time and time again is inaccessibility to transport for a variety of reasons. Despite variations in localities, this tends to centre around issues of cost, connectivity and safety. The fact that the Strategy seeks to highlight these is advantageous for women and should be borne in mind when planning future investment and infrastructure to ensure women's direct lived experiences are accounted for.

Through the process to develop the National Transport Strategy, 14 policies have been identified that will deliver its Vision and Outcomes and address the Challenges. These are listed below:

- Plan our transport system to cope with the effects of climate change
- Continue to improve the reliability, safety and resilience of our transport system
- Embed the implications for transport in spatial planning and land-use decision making
- Integrate policies and infrastructure investment across the transport, energy and digital system
- Provide a transport system which enables businesses to be competitive domestically, within the UK and internationally

- Provide a high-quality transport system that integrates Scotland and recognises our different geographic needs
- Improve the quality and availability of information to enable better transport choices
- Embrace transport innovation that positively impacts on our society, environment and economy
- Improve and enable the efficient movement of people and goods on our transport system
- Provide a transport system that is equally accessible for all
- Improve access to healthcare, employment, education and training opportunities to generate inclusive sustainable economic growth
- Support the transport industry in meeting current and future employment and skills needs
- Provide a transport system which promotes and facilitates travel choices which help to improve people's health and wellbeing
- Reduce the transport sector's emissions to support our national objectives on air quality and climate change

Are these the right policies to deliver Priorities and Outcomes of the National Transport Strategy?

Yes. In particular, the emphasis on accounting for different geographic needs and a transport system that is equally accessible for all is advantageous. Taking each policy and adapting them using women's real lived experiences is set out below:

- Plan our transport system to cope with the effects of climate change

Women have voiced concern over the effects of climate change for a number of years to the SWC. This is a policy area that should be seized upon by the Scottish Government in a way that promotes sustainable employment and healthy living. It is advantageous that the Strategy recognises the effect that increased congestion has had on public health. Policies going forward to tackle this should emphasise clear drives to boost women's representation in new jobs within the Green sector.

- Continue to improve the reliability, safety and resilience of our transport system

A major focus for many women at SWC events concerns the safety of public transport, particularly for those working unsociable hours until late at night. All strategies should seek to ensure flexibility and take account of this when designing public transport plans. Additionally, many women have spoken about the sexual harassment they have encountered on public transport and the detrimental effect this has had on them. All design plans should focus on drawing up strict zero tolerance policies which are displayed clearly on public transport to augment this issue. Alongside this, ensuring stations and vehicles are adequately staffed to prioritise women's safety is key.

- Embed the implications for transport in spatial planning and land-use decision making

New builds, particularly those for social housing, must include coordinated approaches to ensuring public transport is readily accessible in the area. Many women have noted that whilst new housing estates built on refurbished land is advantageous for women's access to safe accommodation, it oftentimes lacks links to public transport, potentially hindering ability to get to employment and other services.

- Integrate policies and infrastructure investment across the transport, energy and digital system

Many women have voiced concern about the lack of joined up approaches in transport implementation at present, particularly in more ruralised localities where services are often reduced or cut. The integration across all systems mentioned above should take account of the unique struggles women are faced with when accessing transport for both employment and other means.

- Provide a transport system which enables businesses to be competitive domestically, within the UK and internationally

In order for business to thrive and drive productivity and be competitive, systems which seek to enforce women's equality within the labour market is key. Having a transport network that fully delivers accessibility to employment for women is fundamental to this.

- Provide a high-quality transport system that integrates Scotland and recognises our different geographic needs

As mentioned previously, the ways in which women utilise transport is dependent to a large extent on the geographical make up of where they stay. Bearing this in mind, transport must be utilised at a local level with public consultation key to ensuring women's needs are accounted for.

- Improve the quality and availability of information to enable better transport choices

In line with this particular policy, ensuring information is available and accessible to women is crucial to implementation of all transport strategies. Not only does this cover ways in which information around transport is disseminated both physically and digitally, but also that women are aware of consultations within their own communities surrounding the creation and design of transport policies within their area. Failure to include women's voices throughout these processes fails to take into account the inequality women face at all levels when accessing transport and beyond.

- Embrace transport innovation that positively impacts on our society, environment and economy

In order for transport to have a positive impact on all of these factors, the ways in which women encounter obstacles relating to transport must be taken into account. This includes looking at the ways in which women access employment and crucial services through the use of both public and private transport. Potential solutions must include a focus on women's issues that actively seek to redress concerns at a wider societal level around inequality such as the ways in which transport strategies can alleviate potential sexual harassment on public transport.

- Improve and enable the efficient movement of people and goods on our transport system

Ensuring that Scotland's transport system runs smoothly and efficiently must seek to implement a flexible and coordinated approach that allows women to interact positively with it. This should include measures to understand the range of factors that stop women accessing transport as well as a clear understanding of the differing nature of Scotland's localities. Much of the ruralised parts of the country view car ownership as a necessity due to the infrequency of public transport. This must be considered when developing strategies that are seeking to increase demand for public transport and reduce Scotland's carbon emissions.

- Provide a transport system that is equally accessible for all

The likes of limitations on public transport is a severe barrier for disabled women, who may struggle to get to assessments that they must attend in order to be eligible to receive the benefits they rely on. Ensuring a system that is reliable and takes account of the multiple barriers women face should be a key factor when implementing transport strategies.

- Improve access to healthcare, employment, education and training opportunities to generate inclusive sustainable economic growth

Women are disproportionately impacted on all of the above opportunities due to inequality at a wider societal level. Policies must take into account ways in which transport can have a positive impact on how women access all of these.

- Support the transport industry in meeting current and future employment and skills needs

A key component of this is addressing gender streaming from a young age and ensuring the uptake of women in employment opportunities within the transport industry. At present, the sector can be seen as a typically male environment which may inhibit many women from entering. Drives to target women in particular to come into the transport industry should be utilised with training and promotional opportunities easily accessible.

There should also be a focus on the promotion of flexible working and quality part time working for women to assist with caring responsibilities.

- Provide a transport system which promotes and facilitates travel choices which help to improve people's health and wellbeing

As described above, strategies which seek to put women at the forefront can lead to improvements in health and wellbeing throughout Scotland. Allowing women to thrive in a country where equality is at the heart of all policies relating to transport improves access to services for women and their families.

- Reduce the transport sector's emissions to support our national objectives on air quality and climate change

In keeping with the commitment to equality as enshrined within the Priorities above, a key focus around climate change should be on encouraging uptake of public transport. This should include coordinated drives targeted at women including local public consultation on transport in their area to ensure that it works well for them.

Are some of these policies more important than others or are they equally important?

Given the imbalance in equality that women face at all levels within society, it is crucial that all policies provide a clear gendered focus that takes into account women's direct lived experiences and seeks to utilise this. Enabling sharp guidelines around this means that all points of the Strategy clearly take into account the unique impacts of barriers to accessing reliable, high-quality transport and the implications that this has on women.

Are there specific decisions about transport in Scotland that are best taken at the national level (e.g. by Transport Scotland or the Scottish Government), at a regional (e.g. by Regional Transport Partnerships), or at a local level (e.g. by Local Authorities)?

Please explain your answer, by providing examples of where you believe transport related decisions should be taken.

Decisions made at national, regional and local levels should be joined up and ensure consultation takes account of women's real lived experiences in how they access and utilise transport. Focus should encompass transport as a major approach to alleviating poverty and women's inequality in rural and urbanised settings.

Should local communities be involved in making decisions about transport in Scotland? If so, how should they be involved, and on which specific issues should they be involved in making decisions on? Please explain your answer, by providing examples of which

transport decisions local communities should be involved in, also suggesting how they should be involved.

All transport related decisions should have at the very least input on a local level in order to gauge women in their communities' voices and experiences. The unique make up and diversity of Scotland's local areas is indicative of the differences that must be taken account of in national strategies. Engagement and consultation events must be utilised to ensure proper planning when implementing transport strategies.

Does the National Transport Strategy address the needs of transport users across Scotland, including citizens and businesses located in different parts of the country?

Yes. In keeping with points mentioned above, seeking to promote equality as a main Priority within the Strategy is crucial to gauging women's experiences of navigating the transport system. Ensuring that the Vision, Priorities and Policies are all underlined with women's equality at the forefront must be kept at the heart of the Strategy and further plans for transport across Scotland.

What aspects of the transport system work well at the moment?
Please provide details.

National Entitlement Card Schemes for those over the age of sixty and for certain disabilities are seen as a lifesaver to many women. These not only provide a route by which many can access services but are also instrumental in helping beat the risk of social isolation.

What practical actions would you like to see the National Transport Strategy take to encourage and promote these?
Please provide details

Further drives to promote the National Entitlement Card Scheme, including looking at expansion of who qualifies would be beneficial in order to help many women who may be experiencing transport poverty. Looking at eligibility in terms of social security, for instance, is one way in which more women would be able to take advantage of this.

What aspects of the transport system do not work well at the moment?
Please provide details.

Public transport continues to impose difficulties on women's lives, including employment, education and social security.

Other issues include:

- Buses which join up local towns and villages rather than just providing services to main towns can often be unreliable and limited in terms of time frames.
- Lengthy bus waiting times, most notably in the evenings with many services stopping after 6pm. This coupled with the infrequency of public transport in less inhabited localities throughout the Islands and parts of mainland Scotland is a key issue. For many, this means that car ownership is a necessity.
- Transport is often unreliable in both urban and rural localities. Buses may often just *“turn up when they like”* leading to difficulties for women.
- The unsuitability of much public transport for disabled passenger’s access.

8b. What practical actions would you like to see the National Transport Strategy take to improve these?

Please provide details.

At the very least, ensuring women’s lived experiences are taken into account when designing and implementing a system is key to ensuring improvements to transport take account of women at all levels. This should include:

- Community stakeholder meetings and public consultations to ensure the best use of public transport.
- Consultation with local communities around the best use of public resources in improving access to transport.
- An increase in community bus services for rural localities.
- Joined up approaches that account for local variations that play a part in the ways in which women utilise transport.
- Furthering of concessionary schemes to relieve the cost of public transport.

Conclusion:

Women are disproportionately impacted where obstacles to transport access manifest themselves. Ensuring that future strategies and investment within Scotland's transport system take account of the inequality that women still face in all areas of life is crucial to producing vibrant and sustainable policies where women feel empowered to access transport at both a public and private level within society.

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