

Decisions made now on our transport system will determine our transport infrastructure for the next 20-50 years. Unfortunately most of those made so far commit us to continue spending mainly on an unsustainable roads system based mostly on using fossil fuels.

Investment in public transport per capita in Northern Ireland is less than half that in the other UK regions and in the Republic of Ireland. Recent investment has led to substantial increases in Metro and Ulsterbus passengers since 2005 and rail passengers on local Northern Ireland routes.

Domestic transport emissions in Northern Ireland now account for 25% of our total greenhouse gas emissions. A move away from reliance on personal hydrocarbon-fuelled cars may soon become an economic as well as an environmental necessity. Transport is the only sector that is utterly reliant on a single source of primary energy. The emission reductions required can only be achieved by promoting active and public transport and in the longer term through major co-ordinated changes to land-use policies.

Northern Ireland's transport policy requires revolution not evolution to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Government must show **leadership**, reconsider **investment** priorities, embrace new **technology** and promote **behavioural change**. Reducing the energy used should be a central aim of the new transport policy for clear economic and environmental benefits for all of Northern Ireland's people.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ☀️ Plan to eliminate the use of fossil fuels for transport by 2030.
- ☀️ Provide the infrastructure to make most journeys possible by active/public transport (including rapid transit) and promote car sharing for other journeys.
- ☀️ Introduce taxation schemes and a 20 mph urban speed limit to promote active/public transport and constrain or remove motor vehicles from residential areas.
- ☀️ Ensure every child can travel safely to school by active or public transport and reduce risk exposure for vulnerable road users.
- ☀️ Develop local goods and services to reduce freight transport needs.
- ☀️ Set up transport nodes linked by fast, frequent, accessible and affordable public transport.
- ☀️ Use vehicles powered by renewable energy and introduce 'intelligent' vehicles fit for future requirements.
- ☀️ Use the Planning Service to design settlements around sustainable transport and local services.
- ☀️ Promote working from home and technical solutions such as teleconferencing to minimise business travel.
- ☀️ Enforce responsible and lawful use of the roads.

1. In 2002 the Department for Regional Development launched the Regional Transportation Strategy with a vision for:  
*a modern, sustainable, safe transportation system which benefits society, the economy and the environment and which actively contributes to social inclusion and everyone's quality of life.*  
Despite decades of underinvestment in public transport, two-thirds of investment was allocated to roads infrastructure and just one third to improving public transport. The aim was a modal shift from car use to use of public transport, walking and cycling. Unfortunately, travel survey and emissions figures suggest in general we are heading in the opposite direction.
2. The Programme for Government and Investment Strategy released in 2008 commit Northern Ireland to a continuing unsustainable transport system with highway measures allocated 80% of the transport spend.
3. Although domestic transport emissions in the UK increased by 9% from 1990 to 2006, those in Northern Ireland increased by a staggering 51%.
4. A 10% increase in the number of frequent cyclists would save the NHS £200 million per year. A frequent cyclist is expected to be as fit as a non-cyclist who is 10 years younger.
5. Recent investment in public transport in Northern Ireland has led to a 31% increase in Metro passengers since 2005 and a 53% increase in rail passengers (excluding cross border journeys) between 2001/2 and 2007/8.
6. A default 20 mph or lower speed limit is recommended in all residential areas. Slower speeds help to improve road safety, encourage walking, cycling and use of public transport and reduce fuel consumption, carbon dioxide emissions and noise. The NI Cycling Initiative calculated that there are 4.37 fatalities per 100 million km cycled; the Danish rate is 1.1 fatalities.
7. The Northern Ireland Transport Survey (2005-2007) included the following statistics:
  - o Approximately 35% of journeys travelled by the average person are short journeys of less than 2 miles of which 44% are taken by walking;
  - o The average number of journeys by walking and cycling has fallen since 2002;
  - o 23% of journeys were made for leisure, 21% to and from shops, 16% for commuting and 14% for personal business;
  - o There has been a slight increase (2%) in the percentage of journeys to work undertaken by private transport (84% in Northern Ireland compared to fewer than 70% for the UK); and
  - o Belfast residents make 59% of journeys to work by private transport.
8. A new rural transport policy is required that includes the needs of the immobile and socially excluded. Sustainable rural communities need viable alternatives to the motor car.