

National Outcomes Review 2023

SEStran (South East Scotland Regional Transport Partnership) Response

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the National Outcomes Review. As our raison d'être is to promote improvements to the transport network and particularly in respect of sustainable transport, this response focuses on those transport outcomes which we believe should be elevated to be considered as National Outcomes.

As Sarah Sharples, Chief Scientific Adviser to the Department of Transport has said¹, “one of the most valuable aspects of the transport system is that it “allows people to access a healthy way of life, access healthcare, access leisure facilities. It also gives them access to work that gives them a standard of living that enables them to have positive health outcomes. So, you can absolutely think of transport as an enabler.”

As an enabler, transport underpins a host of wider policy initiatives and acts as a proxy for progress in a number of areas. For example, during the pandemic and since, levels of patronage on various transport modes have served as a proxy for both economic development and leisure activity as the nation has charted a course of recovery.

It is therefore somewhat surprising to us that currently, there is only one distinct transport outcome contained in the suite of National Outcomes, that of 'journeys by active travel'. We believe that outcome should be retained due to its obvious links to 'living well locally' and positive health outcomes. We also believe a number of other indicators should be elevated to become either National Outcomes or supporting outcomes due to their value in underpinning wider policy initiatives.

The good news is that we don't need to start from scratch, as these indicators are already being collected as part of the National Transport Strategy, NTS2, Delivery Plan². We believe that there is a case to be made for four of these to be elevated to be considered as National Outcomes and a new outcome to be adopted to measure the target of a 20% reduction in car km.

1. Target of 20% Reduction in Car km.

This is a key target linked to the necessity to reduce car vehicle mileage to help meet Scotland's statutory climate change targets. It has been recognised that although the switch to low emission vehicles is accelerating, it will take a drastic reduction in car vehicle mileage to meet the target.

There is already historic data available from which to measure progress, whether a baseline is taken from before or after the pandemic, as illustrated in the first table in Scottish Transport Statistics 2022³. This indicates that there has been a reduction of 12.5% in car traffic over 5 years from 2016/17 to 2021/22.

¹ <https://eandt.theiet.org/content/articles/2021/10/you-can-absolutely-think-of-transport-as-an-enabler-sara-sharples-chief-scientific-advisor-department-for-transport/>

² <https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/monitoring-and-evaluation-2019-baseline-report-may-2022-national-transport-strategy-nts2/>

³ <https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/scottish-transport-statistics-2022/>

This indicator can be monitored at a national level through NTS2 Delivery Plan monitoring, it could also be supported by monitoring a similar indicator through Regional and Local Transport Strategies, providing a measure of longitudinal progress against the target across the country.

2. Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Transport

Transport is now the sector that is generating the most carbon emissions thus contributing to Greenhouse Gas Emissions. It has also been the most stubborn sector in failing to contribute to the national reduction. While the current National Outcome has indicated an overall reduction of 58.7% up to 2020, the reduction on transport emissions has been just 6.25% up to 2019. We believe that transport emissions should be elevated as a supporting indicator to the National Outcome to provide a focus and clarity on the contribution being made by this vitally important but intransigent sector.

3. Air Quality

As the Low Emission Zones, LEZ, are enacted in Scotland's major cities, it is vitally important that the reduction in noxious gases is monitored at a national level to gauge the improvements being made to a reduction in harm and improvements in the quality of life. Since the landmark ruling of the Coroner in the death of Ella Kissi-Debrah⁴, that air pollution was a contributory factor in her death, the importance of reducing air pollution to protect health, particularly of vulnerable people such as children and the elderly, has elevated in importance. The relevant indicators for NOx, PM10 and PM2.5 are already being monitored as part of the NTS2 Delivery Plan, Indicator 4D, and given the major policy intervention by the Scottish Government, Local Authorities and partners including the RTPs, we believe this should be elevated to a National Outcome to track this policy intervention and measure improvements in the environment that impacts vulnerable communities.

4. ULEV Registrations

Supporting the indicators described above, a Transport Decarbonisation Plan has been adopted⁵. A key element of the plan is promoting the switch to low emission and electric vehicles. While recognising that a reduction in road traffic is required overall, as outlined in the first indicator above, the switch to EV's will provide an important policy plank in the response. In launching the recent policy document, 'Fit for the Future: Draft Vision for Scotland's Public Electric Vehicle Charging Network', Cabinet Secretary Michael Matheson stated that, "It is evident that an inflection point in electric vehicle uptake is underway"⁶. Given the importance of the uptake in EV's as the production of petrol and diesel vehicles cease after 2030, we believe this indicator, Indicator 2D, should be elevated to a National Outcome.

5. Access to Services

As the concept of the 20min Neighbourhood has been adopted as a national policy imperative as part of the latest National Planning Framework, NPF4, we believe that access to services and facilities within this timeframe should be adopted as a National Outcome. There is now a suite of indicators monitored by Transport Scotland that provide a useful picture as to how this policy aspiration can be delivered. As the concept of 'living well locally'

⁴ <https://www.judiciary.uk/prevention-of-future-death-reports/ella-kissi-debrah/>

⁵ <https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/decarbonising-the-scottish-transport-sector/>

⁶ <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/51271/a-network-fit-for-the-future-draft-vision-for-scotland-s-public-electric-vehicle-charging-network-revised-march-2022.pdf>

has different connotations in urban and rural areas, these indicators should be broken down so that delivery partners can be apprised of progress against that policy aspiration. There is also an indication of transport poverty, 'By contrast, 5% of data zones could not access public transport within 800m of the population weighted centre'. As more pressure is brought to bear on public transport as a result of rising costs and driver vacancies, elevating Indicator 3A, to a National Outcome would help retain a focus on transport accessibility.