

RURAL ECONOMY AND CONNECTIVITY COMMITTEE

SUBMISSION FROM EDWARD HAWKINS

THE DRAFT CLIMATE CHANGE PLAN (RPP3)

1. It is welcome that good progress has been made decarbonising the electricity supply sector. It is also a laudable target for Scotland to produce the equivalent of 100% of its electricity from renewables.
2. However, sadly, the transport sector has made little or no progress in reducing dangerous climate change emissions. Too great an emphasis has been placed on efficiency improvements in engine technology, which we now know to be grossly overstated. Furthermore, any efficiency gains have been absorbed by an increased number of- and length of- journeys due to road building and poor planning decisions (e.g. out of town shopping centres). These poor planning/road-building decisions have already locked-in unsustainable transport choices for decades to come.
3. Continuing to build new roads, continuing to widen roads and continuing to make junction improvements only serves to encourage more traffic and worsen CO2 emissions.
4. Instead, active travel (cycling & walking) infrastructure should be properly funded as it is proven to reduce CO2 emissions, as well as having numerous other benefits (e.g. reduced health care burden, improved amenity & better use of space in our towns & cities). Other countries are already doing this. At present an appalling 1.9% of the transport budget is spent on active travel – this should be increased to at least 10%, if not 20% or more.
5. Railways should also be given greater investment. Dual-tracking of the railway from Perth to Inverness should be a priority as it is already at capacity. More freight could be transported this way, as well as providing a more attractive passenger service. Similarly the borders railway should be dualled and extended. The bulk of the remaining transport budget should be spent on the railways, with roads spending only to cover repairs.
6. The draft climate change plan should explicitly state that:
 - All new road building and widening schemes will be stopped.
 - At least 10% and preferably 20% of the transport budget will be spent on active travel, with year-on-year increases.
 - Road spending will only be for necessary maintenance of existing infrastructure.
 - The remaining budget to be spent on public transport.
 - New out-of-town shopping/business centres will not be permitted.
 - New housing developments must provide adequate amenities with walking distance e.g. schools, shops.

- If existing out-of-town shopping/business centres wish to expand, they must submit plans to reduce the number of parking spaces and provide transport alternatives (buses, trams, and safe & convenient cycle routes for example). This could be achieved by building any new stores/offices on the existing car parks.

Edward J R Hawkins
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