



Scottish Association for Public Transport

SCOTTISH TRANSPORT MATTERS

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2022 SAPT Members Meetings

The committee has decided to restart "in-person" members meetings from June 2022.

The **AGM** is being held in-person at 10.30 on **Friday 10th June 2022** at the AK Bell Library, 2 York Place, **Perth** PH2 8EP. There is lots of space to allow social distancing.

Guest speaker is **Scott Prentice, Head of Business Development, ScotRail**. Scott will update us on current developments and thoughts for the future. This is an opportunity to give informed feedback at this time of great change on Scotland's railway.

SAPT Chair **John McCormick** will also give an update on **ClydeMetro**, now a major strategic project in the Scottish Government transport programme for 2022-2042 (section 1 below)

An **Inverness** meeting will be held on **Thursday 8th September** starting at **13.45** in the Mercure Hotel, Church St (near the station). Topics will include Highland developments and bus integration. **Frank Roach** of Hitrans has been invited. All SAPT members welcome.

A **Glasgow** meeting is scheduled for **Thursday 24th November** starting at **17.00** in the Mercure Hotel, Ingram Street (near Queen St station). All SAPT members welcome.

Subscription Renewal

Annual subscriptions are due. If paying by standing order at the correct rate* (below), no action is needed. Others will find a renewal slip enclosed which should be returned with payment to the new address below.

*Rates remain unchanged. Individuals £15; Family Rate £20; Pensioners, students, unwaged £8; Voluntary Organisations £18; Commercial Organisations £30; Local Authorities £100; Transport organisations £200; "Non-member" Newsletter and transport policy paper subscription £100

SAPT postal mail has for many years been handled by the Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector. Due to moving from their Queen Crescent premises, our postal mail will now be routed through their Albany Learning Centre, address as follows: **SAPT, c/o GCVS, 44 Ashley Street, Glasgow G3 6DS**
Our phone number and email address remains unchanged.

1 Strategic Transport Projects Review

Transport Scotland's draft STPR2 (second Strategic Transport Projects Review) was issued in February 2022. This lays out the Scottish Government's transport plans for the next twenty years (2022-2042). Comments are invited by April 15th. The priorities are very different from in previous years, with less emphasis on road schemes. The unforeseen impact of Covid-19 on public transport use, and the worsening climate emergency discussed at COP26, have created a high level of uncertainty for transport planning.

STPR2 objectives consistent with Scottish Government policy cover five broad topics: climate action, addressing inequalities, improving health, supporting economic growth, improving safety

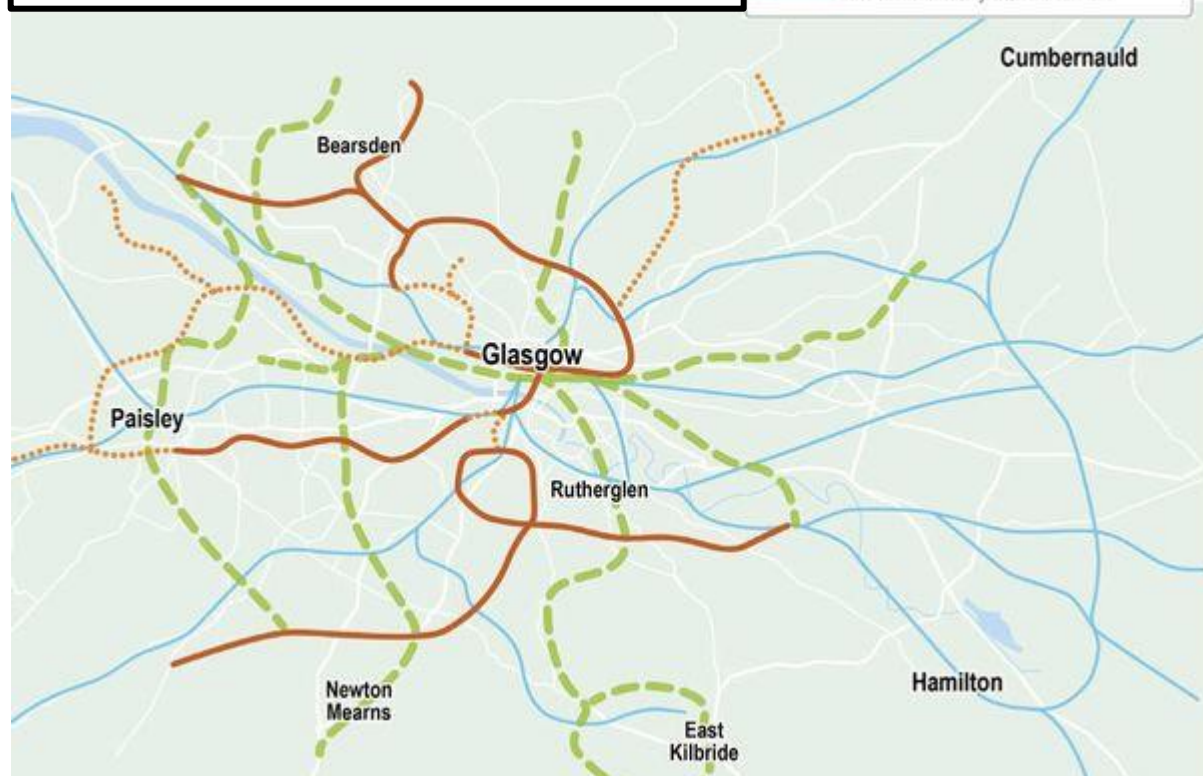
The STPR2 summary report makes 45 recommendations, with greater emphasis on public transport. The main public transport recommendations are listed below, with STPR2 order in brackets.

- Clyde Metro (11), a mixture of heavy metro, light metro (tram) and bus rapid transit routes (see map)
- Edinburgh and SE Scotland Mass Transit (12)
- Aberdeen Rapid Transit (13) (bus based)
- Strategic bus priority measures (14)
- Highland Mainline rail corridor enhancements (15)
- Perth-Dundee-Aberdeen rail corridor enhancements (16)
- Edinburgh/Glasgow-Perth/Dundee rail corridor enhancements (17)
- Infrastructure to provide access for all at railway stations and interchange facilities (19 and 21)
- Smart, integrated public transport ticketing (23)
- Investment in DRT (demand responsive transport) (20)
- High Speed and cross-border rail enhancements (45)

The prominence given to Clyde Metro, a concept which SAPT has championed since 2005, is welcome. However, extension of High Speed Rail to Scotland deserves a better placing than 45th out of 45, given the environmental benefits from reducing air travel. SAPT is working on a full response to the STPR2 report.

ClydeMetro indicative map included as part of a draft technical report in STPR2

- Heavy Metro from existing heavy rail
- ⋯ Heavy Metro extensions
- - - Light Metro
- Residual Heavy Rail network



By Paul Tetlaw

Paul is Transform Scotland's Rail Spokesperson and a SAPT committee member

The year ahead promises many changes and challenges for the railway in Scotland and Anglo-Scottish rail links. This commentary focuses on both the ScotRail network and the crucial Anglo-Scottish links.

Government Transport Policies

As ever the future success of the railway is dependent on a wider range of Government transport policies – both the Scottish and UK Government's. Given the many challenges posed by climate change, poor local air quality, wider public health concerns from factors such as obesity and traffic congestion it seems clear that the future focus should be on funding and prioritising sustainable transport modes. The recent publication of STPR2 appears to offer a welcome change of emphasis in Scottish Government thinking on transport priorities but will be seen as a disappointment to many who are campaigning for expansion of the rail network.

New Structure for ScotRail

Major changes lie ahead, as from 1 April 2022 the Abellio regime comes to an end and ScotRail service will then be operated by a new public body. At the start of the franchise we were pleased to see that many of our recommendations had been taken on board in setting out the franchise requirements but it is now clear that the franchise has failed to deliver on many of these aspirations. A combination of factors such as delays to new train delivery, industrial relations problems and the pandemic have all hindered progress. So it is now time to push the reset button.

A new structure will see seasoned railway professional Chris Gibb take on the role of Chief Operating Officer of Scottish Rail Holdings, the public body that will own and oversee ScotRail Trains from 1 April 2022. He will also chair the board of ScotRail Trains. Also appointed to Scottish Rail Holdings as Finance Director is David Lowrie. It is anticipated that further appointments will be made to this public body but no announcements have yet been made.

Separately, Joanne Maguire has been appointed as ScotRail Trains' Chief Operating Officer taking up post from 1 April 2022. Her background lies in the education, manufacturing and retail sectors. Eyebrows have been raised at her apparent lack of experience in the railway industry but given the industrial relations problems experienced by ScotRail it seems clear that her experience in HR will be key as ScotRail faces up to the challenges ahead.

Turning now to those challenges, top of the list must be the impact of the pandemic on railway patronage which has seen passenger numbers severely depleted following government messaging to avoid public transport and to work from home. This has resulted in a significant loss of the commuter traffic which had previously contributed to ever-rising passenger numbers over the last twenty years. The prolonged period of home working may well have created an end to traditional five-day working at the office. However, it seems clear that for organisations to continue to innovate, prosper and provide a professional service then people need to come together to create the right environment to allow ideas to flourish and services to be delivered.

While commuter travel has been badly affected there has been a very encouraging recovery in leisure travel which helps to show the undeniable attractiveness and convenience of rail travel. ScotRail recently launched a consultation on future timetables and services. What was clear from this was that on average only around 25% of seats were occupied on ScotRail trains before the pandemic – which incidentally is around the average car occupancy rate. In terms of the railway in Scotland that statistic shows a huge potential to promote and market rail services. Scotland's railway with its numerous scenic routes and connections into and between cities offers a tremendous opportunity to help market and better connect Scotland for visitors and locals alike. New thinking is required at all levels within Government and the railway.

The railway must be seen as the backbone of the public transport network and a key part of the solution to the transport challenges we face. For those running the railway a new approach is required to tap into the many and varied markets and changing travel habits of the public. Fleet of foot response to these changes will be needed and an active and on-going marketing strategy which seeks to work with others to promote rail as the obvious choice for travel to all areas where the railway penetrates. To quote just two examples the new Scottish Tapestry Centre in Galashiels is easily accessed by rail from Edinburgh – a joint promotion would benefit both the Borders Railway and the Tapestry Centre. Equally the many attractions in our cities offer excellent potential for joint promotions to ensure that the journey to the city is by rail.

We can always learn from history and the first half of the 20th century has numerous examples of the way railways sought to promote rail travel by offering rail tickets combined with entry to visitor attractions, numerous outlets for ticket sales, rover and round-robin tickets and indeed whole holidays by rail. In the 21st century that is just what many of the rail charter operators now offer and Scotland is a frequent destination of choice. There is surely a message here.

New Routes and Stations

The Levenmouth Line will reopen in the current control period – scheduled for 2024. Preparatory work is already underway and new stations will be built at Cameron Bridge and Levenmouth. The line will be double track and was scheduled to be electrified. However it is now being reported that ‘there will be provision to electrify the line in future’. The initial service will be provided by diesel trains as opposed to the bi-mode trains originally planned as electrification work from Edinburgh to the Forth Bridge has also yet to commence and there is no news of the necessary new trains being ordered. Just what this means for the ambitious decarbonisation plans remains to be seen.

Three other new stations are likely to open in the current control period before those on the Levenmouth Line – namely Reston, East Linton and Dalcross (for Inverness airport). Reston is almost complete and should open in the spring; in each direction it appears that it will be served by five Transpennine Express trains providing a local service between Edinburgh and Newcastle, one LNER and two Cross Country services. Whilst this may be adequate for Reston in the short-term, it is clearly not sufficient for the other East Coast Main Line station at East Linton. When this opens in 2024 it needs to receive an hourly service to ensure its success – this is most easily achieved by enhancement of current Edinburgh-Dunbar trains.

No other new stations are scheduled to open in this control period.

Great British Railways

This report branded as the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail was launched with great fanfare by the UK Government in May 2021. There is much to welcome in here with proposals for much greater integration of the different parts of the railway and simplification of the archaic and complex ticketing system. However, exactly when parliamentary time will be allocated at Westminster for the necessary legislative changes and what impact this might have on Scotland remains unclear.

HS2, the Integrated Rail Plan and the Union Connectivity Review

There have been a number of recent announcements from the UK Government which mostly centre on the railways in England but have significant consequences for Scotland and Anglo-Scottish rail routes. The Integrated Rail Plan resulted in a downgrading of the planned HS2 network and the scrapping of the eastern leg of HS2 to Leeds. Naturally this has caused great angst in Leeds and the north east of the country and plans to instead upgrade classic routes such as the East Coast Main Line (ECML) are fraught with problems and are unlikely to create the extra capacity for local services and for freight that was a key element of HS2.

For Scotland this means that planned HS2 services to Edinburgh now seem unlikely via the ECML. Scotland will be served by HS2 trains on the West Coast Main Line (WCML) as the new trains to be ordered will be ‘classic compatible’ so will be able to leave the high speed lines and run on to destinations on the existing (classic) lines. Services are initially planned to Glasgow with a degree of uncertainty about how Edinburgh might be served from the WCML. Journey times to London will see only modest improvements.

Separately the Union Connectivity Review has recommended upgrades to both the ECML and WCML to maintain competitive rail journey times from Scotland to England. These are crucial to reduce rail journey times and create extra capacity for more services. The lack of capacity on the ECML was dramatically highlighted by a recent consultation exercise on improving LNER journey times. It became clear that this can only be achieved by removing other services from the route and by existing stations such as Berwick-upon-Tweed having a reduced frequency of stops. Added to that, there remains uncertainty about how to serve new stations such as Reston and East Linton.

Work had been ongoing by Transport Scotland to develop plans to upgrade both the ECML and WCML for extra capacity and to improve journey times. I have been a member of Transport Scotland's High Speed Rail Partnership Group for many years and was party to the plans being developed which clearly need co-operation by those on both sides of the border. However we now know that the development work ceased around two-and-a-half years ago.

Why does all of this matter? Well before the pandemic there were over a hundred daily flights from Central Scotland to London with the modal share between air and rail being 70% air 30% rail. Added to that, there is no current capacity for extra local services and freight. So where does this sorry saga leave ambitions for decarbonisation and modal shift from road and air to rail? A recent report featured in the Independent newspaper on 19th January showed that cutting rail journey times from Edinburgh and Glasgow to London to 3 hours would enable rail's modal share to grow to 75%. France and Germany have developed clear strategies to convert domestic air journeys to rail journeys. Now is surely the time for clear and coherent action plans from the UK and Scottish Governments.

(this article appeared in Transform Scotland's Newsletter)

3 Rail North of the Border

This conference was the first post-pandemic in-person rail conference held in Scotland, in the Radisson Hotel in Glasgow on 3rd March. The new transport minister Jenny Gilruth announced that the Scottish government is to hold a national conversation on the future of the public rail service as it returns to public ownership. She stressed the importance of freight in the Scottish electrification programme, and the need for end-to-end electrification to ports and freight depots to allow efficient operation of freight trains.

Alex Hynes, Managing Director, Scotland's Railway, mentioned that Covid is still affecting the railways, with 127 ScotRail staff off with Covid the previous day. ScotRail revenue is 45% lower than pre-Covid. But weekend travel is recovering back to pre-Covid levels. ScotRail will seek to reduce net cost. Electrification is key to cutting emissions. The target is to reduce electrification costs to under £2M per single track km.

From 1st April the state-owned ScotRail will use most of the same staff as Abellio ScotRail. But service changes and improvements will be easier as there will be no need for complex franchise renegotiation every time an alteration is made. The impact of Great British Railways will need to await Westminster legislation, but devolved responsibilities will continue so GBR is less likely to affect ScotRail, which is in any case a more self-contained network than many rail services south of the border. The UK government's concept of a "single guiding mind" for GBR is incompatible with devolution of rail service planning.

Bill Reeve, Transport Scotland's Director of Rail, said freight is growing strongly and is now back to pre-Covid level. Transport Scotland's goal is for 25% of freight to move by rail.

LNER reported that their traffic is now back to 90% of previous levels. Anglo-Scottish recovery has been particularly strong. LNER has also successfully developed inclusive day trip packages to specific destinations, involving local businesses and tourist attractions providing "goody bags" on trains including visitor guides. This is an initiative that would be very appropriate for ScotRail to adopt.

The impact of free bus travel for under-22s on ScotRail revenue was discussed. ScotRail does not consider this as a major threat. Trains are used by some schools for pupil travel. And lots of young people still make use of trains. A young person with a free bus pass may not need to buy a car and so will use public transport into the future.

Collated by John McCormick with contributions from John Wilson and John Yellowlees

S Scotsman *EN Evening News* *T Times* *H Herald*

Rail

ScotRail peak and off-peak regulated fares rose by 3.8% in January, in line with RPI, the largest rise in nearly a decade (S).

The Argyle line that serves Glasgow Central Low Level, the Hydro, SEC, Celtic Park and the Emirates Arena has closed for two months from March 13th for track replacement work.

The future of ScotRail's **Inter7City fleet** of High Speed Trains is to be investigated by a steering group following the fatal crash near Stonehaven in August 2020. The Rail Accident Investigation Board report identified failings with a drainage system built in 2011, but said that the victims may have survived if the train had met modern safety standards (T). The HSTs had been the mainstay of East Coast and Great Western InterCity pre-electrification services for decades since their introduction in the 1970s without any major safety concerns, though are now affected by corrosion. SAPT understands that the running costs of the trains are very high. The current steep increase in the cost of diesel has worsened the situation. Replacing the HST with a fleet of new InterCity Express trains (IETs), possibly bimode, would bring progressive benefits from phased extension of electrification of ScotRail's InterCity network through the lower costs of electric power compared with diesel. But the HSTs are on lease until 2030 so replacement would depend on renegotiating and extending this lease to incorporate new trains.

The rail industry has been ordered to make speed restrictions clearer after six trains were found to have exceeded a reduced limit in Aberdeenshire (EN).

The RMT has called for a ban on anti-social behaviour offenders on trains (EN) to improve safety for passengers, particularly women. New transport minister Jenny Gilruth said she feels threatened by drunk men sitting next to her on trains as she announced plans to make public transport safer for women. An alcohol ban on trains, brought in during the pandemic, is still in place (T).

Transport workers have marched through Edinburgh in protest at rising fares and plans to cut railway ticket offices (EN).

Network Rail is trialling new technology that will allow digital sensors to spot track faults and improve safety. Hitachi Rail has been awarded a contract to install the monitoring equipment on trains across the network including North Clyde, Borders and Fife (S).

Updated plans have been submitted by Network Rail for guided walks to the top of the Forth Bridge. Up to three groups an hour would be permitted, with each tour lasting around two-and-a-half hours (EN). Peak time commuter services on Scotland's railways will never return to pre-pandemic levels, according to David Simpson, the ScotRail Operations Director. ScotRail will run about 2150 services from May 2022, compared with 2400 pre-covid. ScotRail is catering for about 50% of pre-covid passenger numbers. Most people who previously worked every day in the office are now going to be doing two, three or four days with hybrid working (T).

A train cleaning robot, designed by the National Robotarium, is set to keep train seating spotless for the travelling public. Supported by UK and Scottish Government funding of £21M and £1.4M respectively, scientists from Heriot-Watt and Edinburgh University have spent two years on the design (EN).

ScotRail is undertaking a review of the safety of taking e-scooters on trains following reports of the vehicles having caught fire in railway stations (EN).

Britain's rail industry bosses are earning almost four times as much as Boris Johnson. Mark Thurston, chief executive of HS2, earns at least £620,000. Senior rail officials make up seven of the top ten earners in the public sector. Alex Hynes, director of Network Rail in Scotland, earns at least £330,000 (T).

Hand signals by passengers at request stops on the Far North and Kyle lines will be unnecessary under a £5 million Network Rail scheme to install electronic station kiosks linking to the driver's cab radio.

Shipping

P&O suspended services and sacked 800 seafaring staff on March 17th, claiming to have lost £100M in the last year. This affects Cairnryan-Larne sailings as well as routes across the English Channel and from Hull.

CMAL (Caledonian Maritime Assets) has named the Turkish shipyard Cemre Marin Endustri as preferred bidder for two ferries to serve Islay and Jura. Delivery is due in 2024 and 2025. Ferguson Marine, owned by the Scottish Government, were not in the bidding process and are still struggling to complete two ferries for Arran and the Uig Triangle, ordered in 2017 (T).

Princess Anne announced that the turbine steamer **Queen Mary**, built in 1933, is now being restored by a charity which has raised £3.8 million, and may sail again on the Firth of Clyde (T).

The First Minister has ruled out privatising CalMac ferry services to Scotland's islands. She also made clear there are no plans to split up the CalMac network (S).

Islanders have complained that not a single islander is on the board of Caledonian Macbrayne. The government responded that appointments are made on merit and political activity plays no part in selection (T).

The Scottish Government has been urged to fund the development of new sea links between Scotland and Europe by East Lothian MP Kenny MacAskill (EN).

Relacing the Mull ferry with a bridge would risk undermining the island's special identity according to residents. A ten mile long bridge from Oban to Mull has been suggested in the Strategic Transport Projects Review. But, aside from the feasibility of building a bridge across the Firth of Lorn, most of the roads on Mull are single track and unsuitable for higher volumes of car traffic (T).

Community councillors in Helensburgh have given their backing to efforts to bring the town's pier back into use. The "Connect Helensburgh" idea forms part of a potential bid through Argyll and Bute Council to the UK Levelling Up fund (Helensburgh Advertiser).

Saga cruises have recovered to 86% load factor in the six months to January 26 (T).

Caledonian Marine Assets has hosted an online webinar to discuss details of the new Mallaig to Lochboisdale ferry project, together with upgrades at Lochboisdale ferry terminal. The plans are to replace the "Lord of the Isles" ferry which was launched in 1989.

Air

Ryanair has lost €200 million due to the outbreak of the Omicron variant of Covid-19. But more than 1000 jobs are being created at **Edinburgh Airport** as it prepares for a return of travellers jetting off for holidays (EN). Ryanair is to invest heavily in its Edinburgh operations. Two additional aircraft will be stationed at Edinburgh airport, bringing the total to ten. This summer Ryanair will operate to 65 destinations, running 250 flights each week over the summer, 50 more than in 2019 (T).

But Scotland's air travel connections have been set back by decades by the coronavirus. Gordon Dewar, Chief Executive of Edinburgh Airport, said the airport lost £100 million since the start of the pandemic.

EasyJet reported losses of €256 million over the Christmas trading quarter (T).

The Scottish Government has ditched plans to sell Prestwick Airport, almost a year after a preferred bidder had been chosen. One barrier to the sale may have been the £43.3M loan from the Scottish Government which had kept the airport going since 2013 (T).

Virgin Atlantic flights between Edinburgh and Barbados have stopped in February, earlier than planned due to subdued bookings (EN). They will restart next winter, from 12th December 2022.

Loganair flew every day during the pandemic using their aircraft as ambulances and delivery vehicles for Royal Mail. They are also taking part in short test flights of electrically powered aircraft (T).

Empty "ghost flights" used to hold onto take-off and landing "use it or lose it" slots at Heathrow are to be reduced as the threshold for the rule is to be relaxed to 70% utilisation from 80%. If usage falls below the threshold, the airline loses all its slots at the airport.

Buses, Trams, Cars and Roads

The number of new buses and coaches built in 2021 fell year-on-year by 16.8% to reach its lowest level since records began in 1996. Total registrations amounted to 3,467 vehicles in 2021 as the pandemic continued to impact passenger levels around the country. In 2017 7,666 new vehicles were registered (T).

Stagecoach has reversed its decision to merge with National Express, and has agreed instead to a £595 million takeover by a German fund, DWS Infrastructure, a division of Deutsche Bank (T).

The Commons transport committee has called for a **tax on electric cars** to avoid a £35 billion black hole in Treasury coffers from the loss of fuel duty (T).

A revised Highway Code has introduced a hierarchy of road users, giving priority to pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders (EN). A trial of new road signs in East Lothian has almost halved the number of drivers passing dangerously close to cyclists (EN).

More than £60M of public funds is being made available to replace 276 old diesel buses by new electric models, through the government's Zero Emissions Bus Challenge Fund. 137 of the new buses are being built in Falkirk. Meanwhile, McGill's have experienced targeted attacks involving windows being smashed on its fleet of 56 new electric buses. First Scotland has experienced similar attacks in West Lothian (S). The West Lothian Bus Alliance has been awarded £225,750 by Transport Scotland's Bus Partnership Fund to improve bus travel in West Lothian (S).

A radical approach is needed to reduce traffic levels in Glasgow, including making more roads car-free, according to the Glasgow Centre for Population Health (H). Glasgow residents face a 40% price hike for parking permits, with the council also considering a workplace parking levy (T).

An estimated 719,000 vehicles are being used despite their vehicle excise duty not being paid. Lost revenue from non-payment of the tax has soared since the abolition of the paper tax disc in October 2014 from £35M to £113M in 2021 (S).

Travellers under 22 must endure a "Stasi-like" application process to secure the new young persons' free bus travel scheme. Nearly a million people aged 5 to 21 are now eligible for free bus travel. But parents have told of their struggles to apply as they did not have or could not find their child's birth certificate and complained that a biometric face scan was part of the process. (T).

Electric car sales are predicted to overtake diesels in 2022, with around 300,000 new electric vehicles expected to be sold in the UK, accounting for 15% of the market, though grants are being cut by 40% (T). But a new £60M fund will increase the number of public charging installations by 2,100, adding to the 14,000 installed at households. Electric lorries in the 7.5 to 18 tonne range are being developed for Volta in Coventry. These are aimed at the urban delivery market above the 3.5 tonne delivery van range. They will have a range of 100 miles and cost £200,000 each. The cab is being redesigned for better visibility and safety: currently lorries are responsible for only 4% of total road vehicle mileage but account for 26% of pedestrian fatalities and 78% of cyclist fatalities (T).

One in three drivers are unaware of major changes that were made on January 29th to the highway code, according to a poll by the AA. Drivers will have more responsibility to watch out for people walking, cycling or riding a horse.

Nearly £900,000 of taxpayers' money was spent on a study commissioned by Boris Johnson which found it would be too expensive to build a bridge or tunnel between Scotland and Northern Ireland (EN).

Glasgow and Edinburgh are pressing ahead with Low Emission Zones.

Road charging will be considered to help the Scottish Government meet its target of cutting car travel by 20% by 2030, amongst a range of initiatives (EN).

The Scottish Government has cut the budget for development of a Scotland-wide travel smartcard (S).

A tram extension to the Edinburgh bioQuarter has been recommended, but no funding has been confirmed. Meanwhile, the inquiry into Edinburgh's tram scheme, started by Alex Salmond in 2014, has so far cost £12M. It involves more than 3 million documents. There is no completion date for the inquiry(T).