



**ASLEF response to Scotland National Transport Strategy Consultation
October 2019**

1. The Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (ASLEF) is the UK's largest train drivers' union representing over 20,000 members in train operating companies and freight companies as well as London Underground and light rail systems. The union represents over 1800 drivers in Scotland.
2. We are pleased to have this opportunity to respond to the consultation on Scotland's future transport strategy. While we are encouraged by the wide-ranging topics covered in the consultation, our response will be primarily focused on rail.
3. The union is supportive of the overall vision expressed in the strategy, particularly in terms of considering transport as part of a wider picture. As a public transport union we are consistently supportive of measures to increase the number of people using public transport to make their journeys, and as such it is good to see integration and interchange between transport modes raised in this document as a goal.
4. The climate crisis is the highest priority issue of our times and it is vitally important that transport – one of the largest emitters of greenhouse gases – plays its part in the reduction of emissions and other detrimental environmental impacts.
5. Rail freight produces on average 76% less carbon dioxide emissions than the equivalent road journey and just one freight train can take up to 80 HGVs off the roads. ASLEF welcomes the aspiration to move more freight onto rail and off the roads and we believe it is important to continue work on this transition in order to reduce emissions and hit climate targets.
6. Alongside a shift from road to rail, it is right that alternative fuels are considered for rail and other transport. While innovation is to be welcomed, the January 2019 initial report of the Rail Industry Decarbonisation Taskforce found that for high-speed rail and freight trains, the only viable replacement for diesel power is full electrification of the railway. ASLEF would therefore hope to see full electrification included in any future planning.
7. While electrification is of course a priority, the union also notes that the highest percentage of emissions comes from road transport, and that rail in all forms makes up a much smaller amount of the total. The draft plan also notes that there has been an increase in vehicle kilometres driven since 2013. We are eager to see additional programmes of electrification

rolled out but also support the simultaneous movement of passengers and freight from road to rail wherever possible in order to bring down the wider total emissions across the mix.

8. It is encouraging to see an acknowledgement that the links between transport and spatial planning can have a significant impact on the success of schemes to encourage both passengers and freight operators to use more sustainable modes of travel. This is particularly important for freight infrastructure which has sometimes been disadvantaged by spatial planning guidance.
9. The union also notes the suggestion that future innovations in transport could also help to reduce emissions and improving the accessibility of transport. While innovation is to be encouraged, it is also important to remember that existing machinery – including the railway and bicycles – can form an important part of the transport mix if the right infrastructure is in place to ensure their safe and efficient operation.
10. The vision statement that Scotland's transport system will improve health and wellbeing is welcome. Alongside safe transportation and active travel, the potential secondary impacts of improving air quality, and moving freight and passengers from road to rail should also be noted. Removing motor vehicles from roads, particularly in urban areas, and reducing congestion and queuing would lead to a significant reduction in carbon emissions and particulates impacting on those living nearby.
11. In addition to the headlines covered in the vision section of the document the union would also like to see a clear aim for a Scotland's railway to be vertically integrated with the infrastructure, operations and rolling stock all in public ownership. While the railway is run by franchise holders or private enterprises, there will always be a risk of profit becoming a higher priority than safety and passengers. The railway should be in public ownership to remove this profit motive.
12. ASLEF is encouraged to see an analysis of travelling habits broken down by gender, age and economic status. It is important to acknowledge the range of ways people travel and therefore design transport systems accordingly. Ensuring that the railway functions and is accessible to as wide a range of people as possible should be a key priority in designing a transport network that is fit for the future and reduces car use and emissions.
13. We acknowledge the drive to explore and develop autonomous vehicles for a range of uses but do not believe that replacing drivers on public transport – either road or rail – with autonomous vehicles is either a practical nor desirable solution to improving efficiency. Drivers on trains and other public transit vehicles are, in addition to physically controlling the vehicle, important for the safe operation of transport and for any necessary contact with passengers. Automating these aspects is not possible.
14. While reducing carbon emissions remains a major environmental goal, reducing road congestion overall must be a priority in order to reduce particulate emissions as well as improving road safety and journey times. ASLEF is therefore in agreement with the strategy

paper that self-driving cars would almost certainly add to congestion rather than reduce it when they are making journeys without a passenger.

15. In designing any strategy which seeks to redesign the way in which a sector operates, it is vital to consider the workforce involved and ensure that any changes are equitable and that workers are involved in any transition. ASLEF calls for a just transition for transport workers whose roles may be affected by any of the proposals in this strategy. Alongside declining industries, any future transport plan will also see growth and a fair transition process would see workers in the current sector given the resources and opportunities to work in the future industry.
16. Industrial relations are a top priority for ASLEF's work, and the union prides itself on successful and effective industrial relations with the companies in which our members work. This can only be achieved by mutual respect and a commitment to considering the impact on the workforce at every turn, including during pay bargaining and if there are to be any changes in working conditions. ASLEF would like to see the proposals for union recognition strengthened in the plan with a requirement that any transport operator recognise the relevant union for their workforce and commit to fair and effective industrial relations.
17. Alongside strong industrial relations, ASLEF would like to see as part of any transport plan a commitment to taking into account the working lives of transport staff and ensuring that policies are not made which would be unfair to workers – for example any proposed workplace parking levy, from which public transport workers must be exempt.
18. ASLEF welcomes this transport strategy, particularly its focus on the need to make transport accessible to everyone, to ensure that freight is considered at every level and the need to reduce environmental impacts of transport across Scotland. The union also believes that an increase in the use of public transport and rail freight, taking freight and passengers off the roads, will have wide reaching positive effects on communities, passengers and the environment.
19. The union believes that bringing public transport into public ownership and operation remains the most effective way to create a viable and well-integrated transport system which works for people rather than profit and maintains that this should be the priority for public transport.