

Briefing for the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee on petition [PE1906](#): Investigate options for removing and reducing the impact of the central Glasgow section of the M8, lodged by Peter Kelly of @ReplacetheM8

Background

The [M8 motorway](#) runs between Hermiston Gait in western Edinburgh and the West Ferry Interchange on the outskirts of Greenock. It is a significant element in Scotland's trunk road network, with the M8 at Harthill recording its highest daily traffic flows.

The central Glasgow section of the M8 cut through several existing communities, largely areas of high-density tenement housing, [as documented by the Glasgow Motorway Archive](#). It continues to present a barrier to movement for those living nearby and has been found to [limit walking and cycling by residents of such communities](#).

Several cities have successfully removed central urban motorways, including [Utrecht](#) (The Netherlands), [Seoul](#) (South Korea) and [San Francisco](#) (USA).

The transport network within Glasgow has been significantly reshaped in previous decades. In addition to the creation of the city's urban motorways themselves, these changes include:

- the closure of the Glasgow Corporation Tram network in 1962. This previously extended to 100 route miles and was served by over 1000 tram vehicles.
- the closure of St Enoch mainline railway station and several rail lines within the city following the publication of [The Reshaping of Britain's Railways](#) ("the Beeching Report") in 1963.

Scottish Government Action

The Scottish Government has not considered the removal of the central Glasgow section of the M8. However, it is worth noting that the [Scottish Government has committed](#) to reducing in the distance travelled annually by car by 20% by 2030. That is a reduction of 7.35bn kilometres, based on the

distance travelled in 2019. [Research has shown](#) that reducing road space can be an effective measure for reducing car travel.

In addition, in the foreword to the [National Planning Framework 4 position statement](#), then Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning, Kevin Stewart MSP, stated:

“By not always considering the needs of all people, irrespective of their age, gender, geography, disability or socio-economic status, it has become clear that decisions about our places that were made in the past have locked in future problems...National Planning Framework 4 will set out a new plan for Scotland in 2050. The strategy will have to make some big decisions about our future development. Our ambitious targets for addressing climate change demand a fresh approach and significant investment in infrastructure, as well as a new understanding of how zero carbon living might work.”

Scottish Parliament Action

The Scottish Parliament has not considered the removal of the central Glasgow section of the M8.

Alan Rehfisch
Senior Researcher
25 October 2021

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