

# Cross-Party Group on Sustainable Transport

18:00-19:30, Wednesday 11 June 2025

## Minute

## Present

### MSPs

Graham Simpson MSP (Convener, chairing)

Mark Ruskell MSP (Deputy Convener)

Fiona Hyslop MSP (Cabinet Secretary for Transport)

### Invited guests

Guest speaker: Dr Margaret Douglas (Public Health Scotland)

Guest speaker: Heather Williams (Scottish Women's Budget Group)

Guest speaker: Lyn Pornaro (Disability Equality Scotland)

Guest speaker: David McGilp (Scottish Youth Parliament)

### Non-MSP Group Members

#### **In-person**

Aaron McHale (individual)

Abigail Fletcher (Graham Simpson MSP office)

Chris Day (Edinburgh Bus Users Group)

Colin Howden (Transform Scotland)

David Jackson (Consumer Scotland)

David McGilp (Scottish Youth Parliament)

Debbie Hammell (Scottish Youth Parliament)

Donald Stirling (Transform Scotland)

Ellie Harrison (Get Glasgow Moving)

Iain MacDonald (Light Rail UK)

Jack Orson (Scottish Canals)

James Harkins (Light Rail UK)

John Lauder (Scotland's Railway)

Kate Lesenger (Sustrans Scotland)

Laura Hyde-White (Transform Scotland)

Patrick Miner (individual)

Robert MacBean (Sustrans Scotland)

Rosiaina Browning (Transform Scotland)  
Rosie Leslie (Transport Scotland)

### **Online**

Andrea Thompson (SPT)  
Craig Laws (Enterprise)  
Dave du Feu (Spokes)  
Emily Davie (Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park)  
Ewan Tait (Scotrail)  
Gaynor Marshall (Lothian Buses)  
Greig Hawke (Lanarkshire Climate Action Hub)  
Iona Brown (Mark Ruskell MSP office)  
Keith Irving (Cycling Scotland)  
Ken Haig (Levenmouth Rail Campaign)  
Mike Harrison (Midlothian Disabled Access Panel)  
Rosie Brown (Community Energy Scotland)

## **Apologies**

John Mason MSP  
Sarah Boyack MSP  
Islay Jackson (Scottish Youth Parliament)  
Lawrence Marshall (CRAG)  
Olivia Carson (ScotRail)  
Douglas Bryce (Disability Equality Scotland)  
Kevin Hobbs (CMAL)  
Robert Samson (Transport Focus)  
Karen O'Hare (individual)  
Allison Cosgrove (Railfuture Scotland)

## **Agenda item 1: Welcome and introductions**

Graham Simpson MSP, Convener of the CPG, opened the meeting at 18:10. He introduced the agenda for the evening including the speakers: Scottish Government Cabinet Secretary for Transport Fiona Hyslop MSP and Laura Hyde-White (Transform Scotland), and panellists Dr Margaret Douglas (Public Health Scotland), Heather Williams (Scottish Women's Budget Group), David McGilp MYSP (Scottish Youth Parliament) and Lyn Pornaro (Disability Equality Scotland).

## **Agenda item 2: Fiona Hyslop MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Transport**

Fiona Hyslop opened by thanking Transform Scotland and Graham Simpson for their work on the CPG series. She acknowledged the progress made in tackling poverty

and inequality through transport policy but emphasised the continued challenges posed by the climate crisis.

Key announcements:

- **Peak rail fares to be abolished** from 1 September 2025.
- **Pilot of free rail travel for companions of blind and partially-sighted passengers** on ScotRail now underway.
- **£3 million allocated** to pilot a **£2 cap on bus fares**, with details forthcoming.

## Agenda item 3: Laura Hyde-White, Transform Scotland

Laura Hyde-White, Public Affairs Manager at Transform Scotland (the CPG Secretariat) and author of the *Mind the Gap* report, presented key findings from the CPG's year-long inquiry into transport inequalities. The inquiry explored how transport affects low-income households, women and girls, children and young people, and disabled people. Common barriers identified included cost, access, safety, and reliability. Two key recommendations were made:

1. **Adopt a national definition of transport poverty**, supported by improved collection of disaggregated data
2. **Embed fairness into transport decisions** through co-design with marginalised groups, equality budgeting, and health impact assessments

## Agenda item 4: Panel discussion and Q&A

Chaired by Graham Simpson MSP. Each panellist gave a one-minute response to the CPG report recommendations.

- **Margaret Douglas (Public Health Scotland)**: Welcomed the health-focused recommendations, particularly health impact assessments, and stressed the need to shift assumptions away from car-centric travel.
- **Heather Williams (Scottish Women's Budget Group)**: Highlighted the need for disaggregated travel data (e.g., journeys for care or employment) and stressed the importance of gender mainstreaming in funding decisions.
- **David McGilp (Scottish Youth Parliament)**: Stressed the need for accessible and safe transport, referencing the "On Board" campaign. Welcomed the inclusion of young people's voices in the report.
- **Lyn Pornaro (Disability Equality Scotland)**: Noted the intersectionality of disability with other key demographics and emphasised the need for inclusive planning across all themes.

Q: John Lauder (Scotland's Railway) asked about integration of bus and rail services.

A: Laura Hyde-White (Transform Scotland) said this wasn't a main focus, but did come up during the women's evidence session. Fiona Hyslop MSP agreed and stressed the importance of a bottom-up, user-led approach.

Q: Aaron McHale (individual) noted his experience of living with sight loss which means he relies heavily on trains and public transport to make a positive contribution to society (i.e. access to work/social opportunities).

Q: Chris Day (Edinburgh Bus Users Group) asked whether concessionary fares alone address access barriers.

A: Fiona Hyslop MSP responded that while such fares are popular and important, they must be part of a wider strategy.

Q: Graham Simpson MSP asked where the £2 fare cap pilot would be run.

A: Fiona Hyslop MSP said the decision is still pending and involves complex considerations.

Q: Ellie Harrison (Get Glasgow Moving) proposed a national fare model and clearer standards.

A: Laura Hyde-White said this wasn't raised by the witnesses in the inquiry and was therefore not a focus in the current report. Graham Simpson MSP noted that it may nevertheless be worth further consideration.

Q: Iona Brown (Mark Ruskell MSP office) asked if intersectionality had been addressed.

A: Heather Williams said it was a key part of gender budgeting, and that a systemic redesign is needed — particularly in funding and accountability, which currently sits with private operators. More data and outcomes-based planning are crucial.

Q: Dave du Feu (Spokes) raised concerns about infrastructure for walking and cycling, especially for women and children.

A: David McGilp agreed, saying this reflects feedback from young people in rural and island areas.

Q: David Jackson (Consumer Scotland) asked how progress on transport poverty would be tracked.

A: Margaret Douglas said a five-part definition (available, affordable, reliable, accessible, safe) is being developed and there should be measurable progress within six months.

Q: Colin Howden (Transform Scotland) asked for further successful examples of gender-responsive budgeting.

A: Heather Williams cited Vienna and Barcelona as cities embedding feminist and safety-led planning. She said women must be central in shaping policy, not treated as a minority group.

Q: Mark Ruskell asked about reprioritising space and investment.

A: Margaret Douglas called for health impact assessments to be used in planning and for a rethinking of how space is allocated in line with the sustainable transport hierarchy. Lyn Pornaro (Disability Equality Scotland) raised the challenges faced by disabled people in using public transport and active travel. She called for services to be redesigned with inclusion in mind, and for better data — particularly on travel times for disabled users.

Q: Jim Harkins (Light Rail UK) referenced a Liverpool study showing older car use among low-income groups, contributing to both financial strain and pollution, as reinforcing the importance of accessible alternatives to car dependency.

Q: Iona Brown asked whether disaggregated data efforts would reflect intersectionality.

A: Margaret Douglas said the current work is limited to routine data due to resource constraints, but further disaggregation is a goal.

Q: Robert MacBean (Sustrans) asked how to prioritise co-design.

A: Lyn Pornaro stressed starting with local lived experience — particularly safety concerns like lighting at bus stops — and avoiding one-size-fits-all planning.

Graham Simpson closed the meeting at 19:15, thanking the Cab Sec & panellists for their presentations to the meeting, Transform Scotland for its work on the inquiry, and the delegates for their thoughtful questions.

## Minutes

Draft minutes prepared by Ros Browning (Transform Scotland) on 11.06.25.