



## Bus for Economic Recovery

**The bus industry can contribute to recovery, and help build resilience into the economy in several ways, by:**

- contributing to overall economic efficiency
- providing employment opportunities both directly and through its supply chain
- improving the way in which our towns and cities work and contribute to the economy
- helping to reduce congestion
- providing access to opportunities in employment, education and training, so assisting with strengthening the economy and regeneration
- providing a tool by which future planning can deliver sustainable development.

### The Way We Were

The Scottish bus industry is a vital cog in the Scottish economy – prior to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, providing some 14,000 jobs in operations, maintenance, administration and manufacturing. The industry provided the journey to work for more than a quarter of a million workers, accounting for up to 28% of the workforce in the big cities such as Edinburgh.

The bus is particularly important to low earners and the 29% of all households in Scotland without a car, and especially so in cities like Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow where around 40% of households are without a car.

### Buses were paying their way

Bus companies and their employees generated over £140m worth of income for the UK Treasury every year – *substantially more than the industry received in government support.*

But traffic congestion from cars was costing the Scottish economy over £2 billion a year according to traffic data analysts INRIX - and impacting upon bus services.

And Scotland is behind its target for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and transport is responsible for the biggest chunk - 36% of emissions in 2018, with surface transport emissions were 70% of the total transport emissions. While progress has been achieved in many sectors reducing emissions since 1990, the

emissions from surface transport in 2018 were 10% higher than 1990.<sup>1</sup> Even before coronavirus, we couldn't carry on as we were.

## **Now: Bus must be at heart of a just, green recovery**

### **The Opportunities**

Buses offer a solution to tackling the #ClimateEmergency, to urgently and effectively reduce emissions. Scotland manufactures green buses - low emission buses, and zero emission buses that are exported around the world.

Prioritising and investing in bus should be a focus of a sustainable transport policy, as recognised by the Just Transition Commission in advice to Scottish Government on a Green Recovery, advice recently endorsed by the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee of the Scottish Parliament. This should be an opportunity to increase the number of jobs in bus.

The experience of the lockdown has given us a taste of what life could be like, if more of us walk, cycle and choose bus, with cleaner air and less congestion. If people return to or **switch to** public transport this will:

- Maintain the network and help keep fares lower
- Stimulate more investment in low or zero emission buses
- Reduce traffic congestion, resulting in:
  - improved economic efficiency and higher productivity
  - cut wasted time from people's lives
  - improve local air quality on congested streets
- Less congestion will make buses more efficient, improve reliability, free up resources to expand networks, increase frequency of services.

### **The Challenges**

Public transport operators face major challenges as we come out of the Covid-19 crisis over the next few months and years. With potentially lower overall demand for travel through reduced economic activity and lower employment, fewer people commuting as those who can keep working from home, and fewer people going to shops as they buy goods online.

Through the pandemic some have shifted away from public transport and back towards the car, but this threatens our health and services, further exacerbating inequalities and our climate. **We need to support buses back to recovery.**

**What can you do?** Plan to return to your regular journeys by bus, or even better switch from car to bus. Follow us @loveybus\_ and show your support for key workers in bus and our bus services on social media with #loveybus

**Thank you to Chris Cheek for providing the evidence for this briefing.**

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<sup>1</sup> Climate Change Committee, Progress Report Page 50.