Scottish Government – Just Transition Plan for Transport

19 May 2025

About Logistics UK

Logistics UK is one of the country's largest business groups, and the only trade association which represents all of logistics. Our mission is to support, shape and stand up for a safe, sustainable and efficient logistics sector. Our membership of more than 20,000 includes global, national and regional businesses and SMEs spanning road, rail, inland waterways, sea and air as well as the customers of freight services, such as retailers and manufacturers. We deliver services, representation and thought leadership, helping members and policymakers to seize new opportunities for the sector and the economy as a whole.

The logistics sector

Logistics underpins our economy and is fundamental to our way of life. It supplies our hospitals, schools, factories, construction sites, shops and homes with everything they need, everywhere, every day – nothing moves without it.

The efficiency of logistics and the productivity of the economy are completely intertwined. Due to this relationship, Oxford Economics found in 2023 that getting the policy and infrastructure environment right for logistics would unlock up to £8 billion a year in productivity-led growth.

However, we are not currently going in the right direction. The UK fell from 4th to 19th place in the World Bank Logistics Performance Index over the past decade, largely as a result of border friction and underinvestment in transport corridors.

Logistics is a major sector in its own right. It contributes £185 billion to the economy each year (12% of UK non-financial GVA), is one of the UK's largest employers, providing good jobs with strong career progression – 2.7 million people (8% of the UK workforce) are employed in logistics roles, and its key hubs provide a catalyst for further growth and investment, helping places to thrive[1].

Question 1

1A: Do the draft outcomes reflect what the Plan should be aiming to achieve?

1B: Is anything missing from the draft outcomes in the Plan?

Overall, the draft outcomes are generally reflective of a just transition for transport. However, with a significant focus on public transport, there is less focus on the role of logistics and fleets. There is also little focus on infrastructure, both of charging/refuelling infrastructure for zero tailpipe emission vehicles, as well as improvements to existing infrastructure, such as road improvements to reduce travel time, rail decarbonisation and capacity, or new facilities for intermodal movements to support movement of goods by non-road modes. These are significant omissions that would need to be included for Logistics UK to support the draft outcomes. The consultation document makes reference to these issues, but the outcomes do not.

"Outcome 3: Business currently relying on fossil fuel vehicles are supported to transition to zero emissions alternatives."

This should be expanded to include public sector organisations, for example, local authorities and the NHS. The wording could perhaps refer to 'business and other organisations operating fleet vehicles'.

[1] Logistics Report 2024, Logistics UK

“Outcome 5: Communities (including in rural and suburban areas) are well connected, having better digital connectivity and shared transport options that meet their local needs.”

Does the term communities include businesses and other organisations? The word community does not seem to be defined in the draft plan, but infers residents as opposed to those operating in and through the local area.

It is important that businesses and organisations in an area are also included when ensuring strong connectivity, including infrastructure connectivity that supports efficient access to rural and remote areas. The wording of this outcome should be amended to reflect this.

“Outcome 6: Transport and the planning systems give communities access to the local services and amenities they need.”

As above, the reference to communities is vague and implies this refers only to residents as opposed to those operating in and through the local area.

“Outcome 16: Scotland’s supply chain has minimised and mitigated embedded carbon and the wider environmental impacts associated with vehicle production, use and disposal.”

This is one of only two references to the supply chain in the outcomes. The outcomes fail to appreciate that the supply chain is integral to Scotland, servicing and supporting jobs, communities and the economy. However, for Scotland to meet its net zero commitments, much of the onus will fall on the supply chain. The outcomes do not reflect the effort that will be required by the supply chain and the organisations that keep Scotland running every day**.**

Question 5: Which of the following priorities we have set out in the draft Plan do you think would be most helpful for people like you to reduce how often, or how far, they drive in a private car? You do not need to own or drive a car to answer the question, because reliance on private cars impacts everyone.

Whilst acknowledging that the target to reduce car usage by 20% has now been dropped, it is still important to note that such a policy and any new target in the future will likely have consequences on how people rely on the logistics sector to meet their needs. For example, this could include increases in doorstep deliveries. Government policy must recognise and consider this.

Last mile deliveries must also be accessible, so place making and planning must consider the needs of the logistics sector when responding to any reduction in car usage or ownership.

Question 8: Which of the following principles do you think should be the most important to guide the development of a fair system of payment, to deliver a just transition to net zero in Scotland?

- ~~Those who emit the most pay the most, with protections for low-income groups.~~
- ~~Those who earn the most pay the most, without disadvantaging middle-income groups.~~
- **Costs shared through taxation and incentives, such as reduced costs, will support low-carbon choices.**
- ~~None of the above.~~

Question 9: This question relates to all the content in the section on Workers. Are there any gaps in our priority action to supporting workers in the transition of the transport sector? It would be helpful if you could say whether your answer relates to all workers or transport workers.

Most support measures are tailored to transport-specific roles (e.g. bus drivers, logistics workers, engineers). Workers in adjacent sectors (e.g. vehicle manufacturing, fuel supply, or digital tech) may benefit from equally clearly defined support pathways.

In a similar vein, whilst training is a focus, more detailed, sector-specific retraining strategies, especially for those in carbon-intensive transport roles, would be beneficial.

Further discussions around at-risk workers considering job retention or transition protections may be warranted, if possible.

Logistics sites are often based in areas that do not have good public transport links such as industrial estates and remote freight facilities. Logistics workers typically work on a shift basis. Both of these issues mean utilising public transport is not usually an option.

NTS2 set a priority to reduce inequalities but ensuring sustainable public travel access to employment. The Just Transition Plan is an opportunity to refocus that and consider the locations and accessibility of a significant proportion of the workforce who cannot access their workplace using public transport.

Question 10: We have set out some actions in the draft Plan which we hope will address Transport workforce challenges. How important are the following actions to make transport jobs more attractive to people who are not as likely to work in the sector, such as women and younger people?

- **Programmes which encourage women and girls to enter science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) courses at school and college or university.**
- **Actions to promote diversity and inclusion within the industry, including workplace culture changes.**
- **Actions that address existing pay gaps for certain groups.**
- **Actions to increase access to childcare.**
- ~~Other – please specify.~~

Logistics UK welcome the focus within the Draft Transition Plan on making transport sector careers more inclusive and accessible, particularly for groups currently underrepresented in the workforce, such as women, younger and disabled people.

Programmes: We strongly support initiatives that encourage early engagement in STEM. Given the technical nature of many transport careers, these programmes can play a critical role in addressing gender disparities by helping to overcome ingrained stereotypes and equipping young women with the necessary skills and confidence to pursue opportunities in the sector. We recommend these efforts include mentorship schemes, work placements, and visible female role models from within the sector.

Promotion: Promoting diversity and fostering inclusive workplace cultures is essential, not only to attract, but also to retain talent from diverse backgrounds. A focus on leadership accountability, inclusive recruitment practices, training on unconscious bias, and mechanisms to support inclusive behaviours can help reshape sector norms. A culture where all employees feel respected, valued, and able to thrive will critically enhance the appeal of the sector.

Pay: Tackling pay inequality is crucial to building a fair and attractive sector. Transparent pay structures and regular audits can help ensure that individuals are compensated equitably, regardless of gender, ethnicity, or background. Addressing these disparities demonstrates a strong commitment to fairness and can enhance trust and interest from underrepresented groups.

Childcare: Access to affordable and flexible childcare is a key enabler for many, particularly women with young children, to enter or remain in employment. This is especially relevant in transport roles that involve shift work or non-traditional hours. Supporting childcare provision or introducing flexible working policies can significantly improve workforce participation.

Logistics UK would also recommend considering the promotion of flexible working options within the sector, highlighting clear progression pathways, including through apprenticeships and structured training programmes, and amplifying public-facing campaigns that challenge stereotypes and highlight diverse role models (see below).

Question 11: Actions to improve diversity in the transport sector would be most effective if they were mostly led by (choose one):

- **Public sector.**
- ~~Third sector.~~
- ~~Individuals.~~
- ~~None of the above.~~
- ~~Don't know.~~

Actions to improve diversity in the transport sector would be most effective if mostly led by the public sector, supported by collaboration with industry partners, third sector organisations, and individuals. This approach of coordinated action is essential to ensure that the transition is both fair and inclusive.

The Plan acknowledges that achieving a just transition requires more than technological shifts; it demands workforce development, inclusive growth, and fairer opportunities across society. The public sector is well-placed to provide the strategic oversight needed to meet these ambitions, by setting equality standards, leading on inclusive policy frameworks, and ensuring that diversity commitments are embedded in public procurement and funding criteria.

Moreover, the Plan refers to existing initiatives and partnerships as evidence of progress to date. One such successful example is Generation Logistics, which demonstrates the power of cross-sector collaboration. By working with government, industry leaders, and educational institutions, Generation Logistics is actively promoting careers in logistics and raising awareness among young people, women, and other underrepresented groups. It provides a model of how public sector leadership, matched with private sector engagement, can create sustainable and inclusive pathways into logistics careers.

The programme is now in its third year and between August 2022 and September 2024, it has achieved:

- Over 1.37 million website hits
- Over 6.9 million social engagements
- 1.673 billion opportunities to see created
- Raised awareness of the logistics sector by 37%
- Increased positive sentiment about careers in logistics by 212%

To build on this momentum, the public sector should lead with intent, establishing mechanisms to scale up inclusive workforce programmes, while supporting industry and community partners to deliver meaningful, measurable change.

The Plan appropriately identifies reskilling, skills forecasting, and supporting a diverse workforce as essential to the transition. These are critical areas, especially given the rapid shift to zero-emission vehicles, the rise of

digital technologies, and the growing need for green infrastructure expertise. However, several additional aspects require clearer articulation:

- Sector-specific transition pathways: More detail is needed on tailored upskilling strategies for workers in roles likely to be displaced or fundamentally changed, such as those in vehicle maintenance, fuel supply, or freight operations.

- Stronger collaboration with industry: While the Plan encourages cross-sector work, mechanisms to ensure employer engagement in curriculum design, apprenticeships, and retraining programmes would strengthen its impact. In this context, the success of Generation Logistics is again a helpful model, demonstrating how coordinated efforts can increase awareness and open access to future-ready careers.

- Regional and equity considerations: A just transition must be place-based and equitable. Workforce strategies should reflect the different needs and starting points of rural, urban, and island communities, while also addressing persistent inequalities in access to skills and employment (e.g. for women, young people, disabled people).

- Workforce retention: Alongside recruitment and training, there should be a stronger focus on retaining experienced workers, including through job redesign, mid-career training, and workplace culture improvements.

Question 13: This question relates to all the content in the section on Businesses and Organisations. Are there any gaps in our approach to setting out opportunities and priorities for businesses and other organisations in the transition of the transport sector?

The plan acknowledges the challenges faced by small and independent operators in the Heavy Duty Vehicle (HDV) sector, particularly regarding the high upfront costs of zero emission vehicles and infrastructure. However, more detailed strategies and financial mechanisms to support these businesses in accessing affordable financing and overcoming technological uncertainties are needed. This includes clearer pathways for SMEs to engage with private finance models and more robust support for early adopters.

While the plan highlights the need for technological development and infrastructure for HDVs, there is a lack of specific actions and timelines for the deployment of charging and refuelling infrastructure. More concrete steps and commitments are required to ensure that businesses can plan and invest with confidence. This includes detailed plans for grid connections and land access, as well as collaboration with Distribution Network Operators (DNOs) and the National Energy System Operator (NESO). Another consideration which is missing from the plan is the recognition of the need to adapt charging infrastructure to incorporate size specifications of larger vehicles like large vans and HDVs. Members often highlight the challenges of accessing charging infrastructure in rural areas, but where they are available, they are unsuitable for charging larger commercial vehicles.

There have been initiatives put forward elsewhere in the UK looking at shared charging infrastructure and how to make this more accessible. This discussion was not in the plan, and could be a relevant avenue to explore in Scotland to facilitate the transition, even where commercial operators do not yet have access to depot charging.

The plan recognises the unique challenges faced by rural and island communities but could benefit from more tailored solutions for these areas. This includes specific support for vehicles that are crucial for supplying these communities. Additionally, more emphasis on regional variations in skills demand and infrastructure needs would help ensure that all areas are adequately supported.

The plan mentions the development of a Fleet Decarbonisation Action Plan for the public sector but lacks specific details on how this will be implemented. More information on the steps and timelines for public

sector fleet transition would help businesses understand the opportunities and challenges associated with this process.

The plan outlines a set of indicators to monitor progress but could benefit from more robust data collection and reporting mechanisms. Ensuring that these indicators are regularly updated and accurately reflect the progress towards a just transition will be crucial for businesses to plan and adapt effectively.

Question 15: Which of the following priorities would you consider to be most important to enable you to transition your vehicles to zero emissions alternatives?

- Access to low-cost finance.
- Cost of replacement vehicles needs to come down.
- Technology for replacing vehicles needs to be proven.
- Mechanism to work with other businesses on fleet transition.
- Reliable infrastructure for vehicles (such as fuel or charging networks.
- Certainty about availability of parts and maintenance services.
- Other (please tell us more).

All of the above issues are critical, and different parts of the sector will have differing areas of focus. Logistics UK represents businesses and organisations of all sizes, some operating across one local area, others across the whole of Scotland, the UK, Europe, or the rest of the world. There is no one size fits all solution to decarbonisation.

Contact details:

Alexandra Herdman
Senior Policy Manager
Logistics UK
aherdman@logistics.org.uk