

**Just Transition  
Commission of Ireland  
Coimisiún na hÉireann  
um Aistriú Cóir**

# **Just Transition Commission**

*Towards a Just Transition in Transport:  
How can Ireland create a transport system that is fair,  
accessible, and sustainable for all?*



# Contents

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Key Reflections   | 1  |
| Key Recommendations   | 2  |
| Towards a just transition in transport                        | 4  |
| Commission’s approach to information gathering and engagement | 6  |
| The Just Transition Framework                                 | 7  |
| Strategic direction and evidence base                         | 7  |
| Skills for a just transition                                  | 11 |
| Shared costs and equity                                       | 13 |
| Social dialogue and participation                             | 17 |
| Delivering a Just Transition in Transport                     | 19 |
| About the Just Transition Commission                          | 20 |
| Secretariat Support   | 20 |
| Just Transition Commission Membership                         | 21 |
| List of Stakeholders Consulted                                | 22 |
| Glossary  | 23 |
| Appendix 1 – Just Transition Commission’s Terms of Reference  | 25 |

# Key Reflections

A just transition in transport must place fairness at its core and put people at the centre of change. It is about ensuring that climate action improves, rather than limits, people's access to opportunity, services and quality of life.

Done well, a just transition in transport can support healthier communities, reduce inequality, improve air quality, and create safer, more inclusive public spaces.

The Just Transition Commission's engagements highlight that people want a transport system that works for them, one that is dependable, affordable and reflects the realities of daily life. This includes recognising the importance of local journeys, care-related travel, and the needs of those who are currently underserved, including rural communities, people with disabilities, women, young people and lower-income households.

Ireland's transport transformation is therefore not just about reducing emissions or decarbonising vehicles. It is an opportunity to create a system that is fairer, more inclusive, and more resilient. By embedding fairness in decision-making, prioritising sustainable modes, and ensuring more people have genuine choices beyond private car use, the transition can deliver lasting social and economic benefits alongside climate action.

## Assessing transport through a Just Transition lens: The Commission's approach

As part of its review of transport in the context of the climate transition, the Just Transition Commission engaged with Government officials, experts and representatives of vulnerable or impacted groups to better understand how just transition considerations are being integrated into policy. The Just Transition Principles Framework provided a lens for this work, guiding the Commission's assessment across four key areas: strategic direction and evidence base; skills for a just transition; shared costs and equity; and social dialogue and participation.



Integrated, Structured  
& Evidence Based



The Right Skills



Shared Costs



Social Dialogue

Pillars of the Just Transition Framework Principles

# Key Recommendations

## 1. Prioritise sustainable transport modes

**The Commission recommends that public transport, shared mobility, walking and cycling be prioritised to reduce car dependence.**

This should include accelerating the delivery of major public transport projects and sustaining investment in services such as Connecting Ireland, with particular attention to hard-to-reach communities and real mobility needs, including care journeys.

## 2. Improve accessibility and safety in public transport

**The Commission recommends sustained investment in public transport accessibility and safety.**

**Continued support for accessibility retrofit programmes and wider safety and efficiency improvements will be essential to ensure that public transport is inclusive, reliable and suitable for all users.**

Accessibility to bus and rail is a significant issue for people of all ages and ability. Noting that the National Transport Authority are tackling legacy issues through the Public Transport Accessibility Retrofit Programme, and that the Programme has received increased funding over the last number of years due to the significant legacy issues of Ireland's bus and rail transport, the Commission believe that sustained funding for the Public Transport Accessibility Retrofit Programme should be provided.

## 3. Embed gender and care related mobility in transport policy

**The Commission recommends that gender and care related mobility should be systematically integrated into transport planning and delivery.**

This should better reflect diverse travel patterns, and include recognising care-related journeys, improving safety, and ensuring that transport systems are designed to reflect this reality of mobility.

## 4. Integrate equity into electric vehicle policy

**The Commission recommends that Government integrate equity into electric vehicle and charging policy through more targeted supports.**

This should include reforming universal subsidies for electric vehicles to prioritise supports for low-income, high-mileage and car-dependent households, greater support for second-hand electric vehicle access, and prioritisation of charging infrastructure and grid upgrades in rural and disadvantaged areas.

## 5. Plan for skills and workforce transition

**The Commission recommends early and structured engagement with workers, trade unions and education providers as part of skills planning and just transition governance.**

Skills development should be evidence-based and designed to ensure that workers and communities most affected by the transition can access and benefit from emerging employment opportunities.

Recognising that new skills are required of mechanics, planners, engineers and design professionals, opportunities for accredited training and upskilling in sustainable mobility must be developed across regional education bodies and through Education and Training Boards.

## 6. Strengthen transport appraisal and evidence

**The Commission recommends strengthening the application and evidence base of wider impacts in transport appraisal.**

Appraisal should continue to evolve beyond time savings and more clearly demonstrate how health, wellbeing, air quality, accessibility, affordability, safety, equal treatment and social equity are being considered in decision-making. Improved data collection, particularly in relation to vulnerable groups, will be important to support this.

## 7. Review transport taxation for fairness

**The Commission recommends that the role of weight-based car taxation be examined as part of a broader review of transport taxation.**

A review of car taxation presents an opportunity to ensure that the costs of the transition are shared more equitably, particularly by reflecting the wider societal impacts of larger and heavier vehicles.

## 8. Enhance social dialogue and participation

**The Commission recommends strengthening social dialogue and participation through ongoing, structured engagement.**

Such engagements should bring people's lived experience to the fore, and should include communities, representative organisations, and young people, and support the wider use of place-based, participatory approaches to address transport disadvantage.

The Commission believes that projects such as the CONUNDRUM project in Enniscorthy provide a structured process to developing co-created community mobility strategies, which could be replicated across communities in Ireland and should be actively pursued by the Department of Transport.



*Photo: Just Transition Commission visit to the Wayfinding Centre, Dublin*

# Towards a just transition in transport

Transport is the lifeblood of Ireland's society and economy, connecting people to work, education, healthcare, services and one another. Access to transport shapes opportunity, wellbeing and social inclusion and is an essential element in supporting people and communities to thrive.

A just transition in transport must ensure actions to reduce transport emissions also improve equality of access and affordability across communities, urban and rural. The shift to sustainable mobility is not simply about cleaner vehicles or new infrastructure, it must ensure freedom of movement and participation in a transport system that works for everyone. Access to walking and cycling facilities such as greenways must also be recognised as important recreational amenities connecting communities with greenspace and opportunities for informal community interactions.

Ireland's transport sector is one of our most carbon intensive sectors. Emissions have increased by a dramatic 130% over the past 35 years as a result of a high reliance on private cars and the dominance of road-based freight.<sup>1</sup> The dominance of cars has in many places been designed in, and has had the effect of squeezing out space for other forms of travel.<sup>2</sup> Walking for everyday journeys within many of our cities, towns and villages is no longer considered safe or comfortable for many. Captive car users, inaccessible public transport, transport poverty and rural isolation are all terms commonly associated with transport in Ireland and reflect the lived reality of many people.

Government plans to halve climate emissions from the transport sector by 2030 are based on the

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<sup>1</sup> Government of Ireland (2025) Climate Action Plan 2025 [https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/c491032e/DECC\\_Climate\\_Action\\_Plan\\_2025\\_Main\\_Report\\_-\\_Final\\_Web.pdf](https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/c491032e/DECC_Climate_Action_Plan_2025_Main_Report_-_Final_Web.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> OECD (2022), Redesigning Ireland's Transport for Net Zero – Towards Systems that work for people and the planet [https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/redesigning-ireland-s-transport-for-net-zero\\_b798a4c1-en.html](https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/redesigning-ireland-s-transport-for-net-zero_b798a4c1-en.html)

achievement of key sustainable mobility targets. As outlined in the Climate Action Plan,<sup>3</sup> these include:

- a 50% increase in daily active travel journeys;
- a 130% increase in daily public transport journeys; and
- a 20% reduction in total vehicle kilometres travelled by 2030.

To achieve these targets national policy relies on the Avoid – Shift – Improve model:<sup>4</sup>

- Avoid: Reduce overall need for travel by supporting compact growth, mixed use and transport-orientated development; as well as remote working and digitalisation of services.
- Shift: Improve the relative attractiveness and accessibility of walking, cycling and public transport through improved infrastructure and better public realm.
- Improve: Reduce emissions from the transport fleet by improving vehicle efficiency and energy sources.

To cater for the expected increases in travel demand in Ireland, within the context of the growing population, the *National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland* notes significant investment must be made in sustainable mobility – major public transport schemes in the cities, improved access to sustainable mobility in the towns and rural areas and major investment in cycling and walking. The investment framework

<sup>3</sup> Government of Ireland (2023) Climate Action Plan 2023 <https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/climate-action-plan-2023-8b7dba92-f397-4163-8293-3aea656f6b5f.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> The Avoid-Shift-Improve model is detailed across government policy including, The National Development Plan 2021-2030; The National Planning Framework: Project Ireland 2040; Moving Together – A Collaborative Approach to Systems Change in Transport 2026-2030; Sustainable Mobility Policy 2022-2030; Climate Action Plans.

further points to purchasing electric public transport vehicles and supporting the rollout of electric vehicle charging infrastructure. The *Modal Hierarchy* for prioritisation of investment in the transport sector is prescribed as (1) active travel, (2) public transport, (3) private transport.<sup>5</sup>

**The result of delayed action in transport is increasingly evident. Without action, traffic on our roads will lead to continued dependence on fossil fuels and dangerous levels of congestion that has both economic and health consequences for the country.** Studies commissioned by the Department of Transport show that the economic cost of congestion is predicted to rise significantly and consistently in Dublin, Cork, Galway and Waterford, with the cost of congestion in the Greater Dublin Area projected to rise to €1.5 billion by 2040.<sup>6</sup> In addition to contributing to roughly 20% of greenhouse gas emissions, the transport sector contributes more than 35% nitrogen oxide emissions and more than 10% of fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) emissions.<sup>7</sup> Such emissions from transport activities exacerbate chronic health conditions, with children, the elderly, and low-income families often disproportionately impacted.

While support for public transport has been re-affirmed in the revised *National Development Plan*, the Commission notes that the delivery of many major public transport infrastructure projects is delayed. Additionally, despite the modal hierarchy, the active travel budget allocation within the Plan is set to decrease relatively over time from 10% of the 2026 budget to 7% of the budget by 2030.<sup>8</sup>

A modal shift to sustainable transport options can bring significant benefits such as:

- Healthier, more active populations;
- Affordable and accessible mobility;
- Lower emissions and cleaner air;
- Reduced inequality in access to work, education, and services;
- Reduced rural isolation and transport poverty;
- Safer, more inclusive public spaces; and
- Economic savings for both households and the healthcare system.

In considering the need for action and the daily implications the transition will bring to individuals, families and communities, a just transition in transport must be seen as not only an environmental necessity but a social opportunity to support healthier communities, fairer access to opportunity, and a better everyday experience of place.

The Commission believes that creating a transport system that supports wellbeing and enhances quality of life will be achieved by making walking, cycling and public transport the easiest, safest and most accessible choice for everyday travel. To ensure a just transition in transport these benefits must be embedded in how transport initiatives are planned, evaluated, and funded.

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<sup>5</sup> Department of Transport (2021) The National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland  
<https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-transport/publications/national-investment-framework-for-transport-in-ireland-nifti/>

<sup>6</sup> Department of Transport, Strategic Research and Analysis Division (2025) The Economic Cost of Congestion in the Regional Cities 2022-2040  
[https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/Cost\\_of\\_Congestion\\_Regional\\_Cities\\_FINAL.pdf](https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/Cost_of_Congestion_Regional_Cities_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment (2023), Clean Air Strategy  
<https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-climate-energy-and-the-environment/publications/clean-air-strategy/>

<sup>8</sup> Government of Ireland (2025) National Development Plan Review 2025. Securing Ireland's Future: Sectoral Investment Plan: Transport  
[https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/df0ce05f/NDP\\_Review\\_2025\\_Sectoral\\_Investment\\_Plan\\_for\\_Transport.pdf](https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/df0ce05f/NDP_Review_2025_Sectoral_Investment_Plan_for_Transport.pdf)

## Commission's approach to information gathering and engagement

To gain an understanding of transport experiences and issues from various perspectives, the Commission held several engagements.

The Commission engaged with representatives from the Department of Transport; National Transport Authority (NTA); Bus Éireann; and Zero Emissions Vehicle Ireland (ZEVl). During these engagements, the Commission explored the strategic policies which shape Ireland's transition in transport; how *Connecting Ireland* is supporting the provision of rural public transport, and how ZEVl is supporting the national rollout of electric vehicles and the relevant electric vehicle infrastructure.

The Commission also heard from academics whose research is focused on just transition in the transport sector and the integration of mobility considerations into the design of Ireland's road and urban spaces.

As part of its engagements, the Commission visited the WayFinding Centre<sup>9</sup> in Glasnevin to engage with people and groups impacted by changes in the transport system, with a particular focus on accessibility and mobility challenges. The WayFinding Centre acts as a multifunctional centre which replicates the real-world experience of people with disabilities using public transport. As part of its visit, the Commission were led by Access Ambassadors who discussed their daily experiences of using public transport.



Roundtable discussions with representatives from a variety of backgrounds were also held. The representatives, including people with disabilities, women, youth, older people, rural communities, commuters and active mobility groups, discussed what a just transition in transport could look like; the common barriers they face in utilising public transport; and the opportunities and gaps in delivering a more sustainable and accessible transport system.

To share the Commission's reflections on the transport sector, the rest of this report is divided into four sections using the Just Transition Framework. The four sections are:

- Strategic direction and evidence base;
- Skills for a just transition;
- Shared costs and equity; and
- Social dialogue and participation.

<sup>9</sup> The WayFinding Centre. Botanic Road, Glasnevin, Dublin 9  
<https://thewayfindingcentre.ie/>

# The Just Transition Framework

## Strategic direction and evidence base

Ireland's transport transition must be guided by strong evidence, clear priorities, and a long-term vision that puts people at the centre of transport planning. Achieving climate goals in transport is not only about decarbonisation; it is about creating a system where walking, cycling, and public transport become the easiest, safest, and most accessible choices for everyday travel.

### Investing in public transport

Investing in public transport provides a dual benefit to society of increasing accessibility for the public and supporting Ireland's climate ambitions. When high-quality public transport projects are delivered, evidence shows that people will use them. Investment is needed for new infrastructure, for new services, and to ensure our current services and facilities are comfortable, safe and accessible so that they can be enjoyed by everyone, especially those with additional needs, disabilities and mobility challenges.

The recent *National Development Plan Sectoral Investment Plan for Transport* outlined capital investment for several public transport initiatives including the Cork Area Commuter Rail, BusConnects Cork, Dublin, Galway, Limerick and Waterford, the DART+ initiatives, Luas Finglas and the Western Rail Corridor.<sup>10</sup>

While this funding is welcome the *Sustainable Mobility Plan Year 3 Progress Report* noted that delays are expected across several of these projects.<sup>11</sup> Construction of only two of the eight rail stations for

Cork will begin next year,<sup>12</sup> and the 4km stretch for Luas Finglas is not expected until after 2030. Other major public transport projects, including Luas Cork, Luas Dublin extensions and regional rail upgrades are being planned over a 20-25 year timeframe.

With an additional half million people expected within the five main cities by 2040,<sup>13</sup> the slow roll out of major public transport projects hinders both emission reductions and the urgent need for accessible and affordable public transport options. **Capital investment in public transport infrastructure is essential to ensure Ireland's transport system is efficient and capable of providing a viable alternative to private car use.**

Outside of cities and towns public transport services that connect rural communities are vital to address issues of rural isolation and transport disadvantage. In addition to increasing capital investment, commitments to fund services, and an increasing the number and frequency of services all over Ireland is essential.

The ongoing roll out of *Connecting Ireland - Rural Mobility Plan* is fundamental in this regard. The plan, which aims to provide 70% of the population with at least three return buses a day includes local buses (*Local Link*), regional buses, and new Smart Demand-Responsive Transport options (*TFI Anseo*).<sup>14</sup>

*Local Link* plays an important role in addressing rural isolation and transport disadvantage, particularly for those without access to a private car. However, through its engagements, the Commission heard of persistent structural challenges with *Local Link* in rural Ireland, including low population density, long travel distances and

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<sup>10</sup> Department of Transport (2025), National Development Plan Review – 2025 Sectoral Investment Plan Transport <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-transport/publications/national-development-plan-review-2025-sectoral-investment-plan/>

<sup>11</sup> Department of Transport (2025), National Sustainable Mobility Policy – Year Three Progress Report <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-transport/publications/national-sustainable-mobility-policy-year-three-progress-report/>

<sup>12</sup> Irish Rail (2026) News 29th April 2026 <https://www.irishrail.ie/en-ie/news/two-new-train-stations-for-cork-set-to-enter-planning-phase>

<sup>13</sup> Government of Ireland (2023) National Planning Framework first revision <https://www.npf.ie/wp-content/uploads/National-Planning-Framework-First-Revision-April-2025-1.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> National Transport Authority (2021) *Connecting Ireland – Rural Mobility Plan* <https://www.nationaltransport.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/NTA-Connecting-Ireland-Report.pdf>

limited service frequency, which constrain the ability of such services to fully replace private car use. Studies also point to a continued gap between transport needs and the provision of reliable public transport, contributing to high levels of car dependency and, in some cases, “forced car ownership,” particularly in disadvantaged areas.<sup>15</sup>

Despite these challenges, 185 enhanced services have been introduced and customer journeys are up 165% since 2022.<sup>16</sup> Initial results from the *TfI Anseo* pilot, which provides a taxi-like service at bus fare prices, show positive trends, with 50,000 journeys recorded in the first 8 months of operation.<sup>17</sup>

In this context, *Local Link* and similar services are best understood as an essential complement to the wider transport system, supporting accessibility and social inclusion rather than acting as a complete substitute for private car use. While ongoing innovations, including demand-responsive services, offer potential to reduce reliance on private cars, a broader and more integrated approach to rural mobility will be required to address underlying dependency.

Noting that some of these public transport services would be financially unviable without State funding, the provision of public transport services must also be recognised as providing an important social function and serve to reduce rural transport deprivation and rural isolation through the provision of services at an affordable rate.<sup>18</sup>

The Commission believes that *Connecting Ireland's* holistic and people-centred approach, which ensures equity, should be mirrored across future transport initiatives. Furthermore, the Commission recommends that sustained investment prioritise hard-to-reach communities, with a particular focus

on expanding flexible and demand-responsive services.

**Easy access to public transport is also essential, in particular for people with disabilities but also for older people, those travelling with young children or anyone with mobility challenges at any stage in their life.**

The National Transport Authority are tackling legacy issues within Ireland’s older infrastructure through the Public Transport Accessibility Retrofit Programme. The programme includes for example, installing and upgrading lifts, ramps and benches within train and bus stations, to ensure public transport services are accessible and comfortable for everyone.<sup>19</sup>

Due to the significant legacy issues of Ireland’s bus and rail transport and to ensure a fair transition with increased accessibility for all, the Commission notes the funding commitments to this retrofit programme and supports its ongoing work and funding.

### *Transport appraisal models*

**The Commission heard concerns through its engagements that current transport appraisal models can place significant emphasis on travel time savings as the primary measure of value, potentially overlooking wider social, environmental and health impacts.**

Across most of Ireland this has led to new and upgraded roads being the preferred infrastructure for travel ahead of public transport or active travel. In many towns and villages street design has prioritised car travel at the expense of space for people walking or cycling, and has led to situations where people feel car travel is now the only viable option. The significant change in children’s journeys

<sup>15</sup> Carroll, P et al. (2021), Identifying hotspots of transport disadvantage and car dependency in rural Ireland <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967070X20309215>

<sup>16</sup> National Transport Authority (2025), Connecting Ireland Phase 3 Implementation Review 2024 <https://www.nationaltransport.ie/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Connecting-Ireland-Phase-3-Implementation-Review.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> Transport for Ireland (2026) News, 15th April 2026 <https://www.transportforireland.ie/news/50000-journeys-and-counting-as-communities-get-on-board-with-tfi-anseo/>

<sup>18</sup> National Transport Authority (2025), Connecting Ireland Phase 3 Implementation Review 2024 <https://www.nationaltransport.ie/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Connecting-Ireland-Phase-3-Implementation-Review.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> National Transport Authority, Public transport accessibility programme <https://www.nationaltransport.ie/planning-and-investment/transport-investment/public-transport-accessibility-programme/>

to school exemplifies this lived reality. Today 55% of children are driven to school, while in 1986 that number was 24%.<sup>20</sup>

While the *Transport Appraisal Framework*,<sup>21</sup> and government policy has shifted in recent years to recognise the importance of providing infrastructure for sustainable mobility, there are opportunities to improve its application. Strengthening the assessment of air quality, noise pollution, enhanced wellbeing and greater social equity, particularly in areas experiencing higher levels of deprivation, would support more equitable outcomes within future transport appraisals.

Public attitudes in Ireland reflect that many people would prefer to use public transport more, and support greater public investment in sustainable travel over investments for driving. The research also finds that active travel – walking, wheeling and cycling – removes 660,000 car trips from the five main cities in Ireland and delivers almost €3 billion in economic benefits each year.<sup>22</sup>

The Commission also heard that regional variations in how stringently the *Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets*<sup>23</sup> and the *Cycle Design Manual*<sup>24</sup> are applied, has led to substandard designs for active travel in some areas. These guidelines, which place priority on safe and accessible street design for pedestrians and cyclists, would benefit from wider application across all local authorities. More rigorous appraisals of urban and suburban environments to provide better conditions for people walking would likewise be of benefit, in

particular in places where the car is the current dominant mode of transport.

### *National Policy: Moving Together Strategy*

The Commission views the Government's recently published strategy *Moving Together*<sup>25</sup> as a vital framework for normalising sustainable transport options in Ireland and welcomes the inclusion of just transition as a core principle, with the strategy identifying the need to place people and their wellbeing at the centre of Ireland's future transport strategy.

**The Commission welcomes the explicit intention of *Moving Together* to integrate just transition into its monitoring and evaluation processes. This reflects a positive step towards the mainstreaming of just transition within sectoral policy, and is consistent with the Commission's recommendations in its *Introductory Report*.<sup>26</sup>**

The *Moving Together* strategy makes particular references to supporting captive car users, and recognises just transition as a crucial component of this objective.<sup>27</sup> The Commission supports the recommendation to undertake additional analysis and quantification of captive car users to support an evidence-based approach to planning for a just transition. Furthermore, the Strategy notes that to assist in identifying who exactly is a captive car user, the National Transport Authority is developing a definition for just transition. The Commission believes the development of the definition and the analysis undertaken to identify captive car users

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<sup>20</sup> Central Statistics Office (2022) Census of Population 2022 Profile 7 - Employment, Occupations and Commuting <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cpp7/censusofpopulation2022profile7-employmentoccupationsandcommuting/traveltoschoolcollegeandchildcare/>

<sup>21</sup> Department of Transport (2023), Transport Appraisal Framework <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-transport/publications/transport-appraisal-framework-taf/>

<sup>22</sup> National Transport Authority (2025) Walking and Wheeling Index 2025 <https://www.nationaltransport.ie/planning-and-investment/transport-investment/active-travel-investment-programme/walking-and-cycling-index-2025/>

<sup>23</sup> Department of Transport website, The Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets <https://www.roadguidelines.ie/dmurs-4/>

<sup>24</sup> National Transport Authority (2023) Cycle Design Manual <https://www.nationaltransport.ie/publications/cycle-design-manual/>

<sup>25</sup> Department of Transport (2026), Moving Together – A Collaborative Approach to Systems Change in Transport 2026-2030 <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-transport/publications/moving-together-a-collaborative-approach-to-systems-change-in-transport-20262030/>

<sup>26</sup> Just Transition Commission (2025), Introductory Report of the Just Transition Commission: <https://justtransitioncommission.ie/publication/commission-urges-national-just-transition-strategy/>

<sup>27</sup> The Strategy notes captive car users as individuals who rely on their personal vehicles due to limited viable alternatives, often driven by factors such as a lack of suitable public transport options, unsafe walking or cycling options, physical disabilities, various journey types, or specific job requirements.

should be developed in unison, with the Commission supporting the National Transport Authority to develop the just transition definition.

*Moving Together* also highlights the need for further work on the practicalities of monitoring the implementation of the Just Transition Principles Framework in transport and wider policy. The establishment of the National Demand Management Steering Group to oversee the monitoring and evaluation of the Strategy is a significant development. The Commission would welcome the opportunity to engage with this Group and notes that the Just Transition Assessment Principles, as outlined in the *Captive Car Users Sub-Group Report*, could provide an initial starting point to evaluate the implementation of the Strategy.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Department of Transport (2024), *Captive Car Users Sub-Group Report*:

<https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/subgroup-report-captive-car-users.pdf>

## Skills for a just transition

Recognising the importance of the workforce in the transition to climate neutrality, the Commission is supporting research to examine the implications for the workforce across all sectors, including transport. This research will examine which sectors of the economy may be most adversely impacted, which sectors may be expected to see significant employment growth in the decades ahead, and the geographic distribution of these impacts. In doing so, it aims to better understand the social and regional dimensions of the transition to climate neutrality, including how to support affected workers and communities, reduce the risk of inequality, and ensure that the benefits of the transition are shared in a fair and inclusive way.

**Within the transport sector, a just transition will depend on a workforce equipped with the skills and capacity to plan and design for integrated transport networks, walking and cycling infrastructure, and to operate and maintain new buses, trains and trams and electric vehicles.**

Workforce participation, retraining, and ongoing dialogue are key to ensuring that the transition is not only technically successful but also socially acceptable. Engaging with trade unions, transport workers, and skills providers early and consistently can help anticipate change, manage impacts, and design fair pathways for reskilling and recruitment. The Commission heard, for example, that early engagement by Bus Éireann with workers and unions in relation to electrification pilots in Athlone and Limerick has helped to build trust and support for change.<sup>29</sup>

Targeted regional training pathways, accessible apprenticeships, and collaboration between Education and Training Boards (ETB), education bodies and relevant Departments will be important to ensure that the benefits of new employment opportunities are widely shared, including among groups and communities that have traditionally

<sup>29</sup> Department of Transport (2023), Minister Ryan launches Ireland's first all-electric town bus service in Athlone <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-transport/press-releases/minister-ryan-launches-irelands-first-all-electric-town-bus-service-in-athlone/>

<sup>30</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2020), The Gender Dimension of the Transport Workforce

faced barriers to participation. The Commission notes that the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) is overseeing the redevelopment of Senior Cycle following a comprehensive review process. In the context of a just transition in transport, these reforms offer a significant opportunity to strengthen and expand pathways into apprenticeships, technical skills, and trades that will support the transition to a low-carbon transport system. This transition also presents an opportunity to improve gender balance across the transport and mobility sectors, where women remain underrepresented,<sup>30</sup> through inclusive training pathways and targeted outreach.

### *Public transport operation and maintenance*

As investment in public transport infrastructure and services increases, there is a corresponding opportunity to build a skilled, diverse and future-ready workforce across planning, engineering, operations and maintenance. Attracting, developing and planning for a workforce of sufficient scale and capability to deliver and sustain Ireland's public transport ambition will be essential.

Aligning with Objective 2 of the Sustainable Mobility Action Plan "*Work to enhance and support a skilled workforce to maintain and operate public transport vehicles*",<sup>31</sup> will require coordinated workforce planning, strengthened training pathways, and proactive engagement across education providers, industry and government. Ensuring that these opportunities are accessible to a broad range of groups, including those who have traditionally faced barriers to participation, will be critical to supporting both the delivery of transport objectives and a just transition.

### *Unlocking skills for designing public transport, walking and cycling*

Planning and implementing the integrated and sustainable transport system that the just transition in transport necessitates requires new skills that go

[https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/the-gender-dimension-of-the-transport-workforce\\_0610184a-en.html](https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/the-gender-dimension-of-the-transport-workforce_0610184a-en.html)

<sup>31</sup> Department of Transport (2026) Sustainability Mobility Policy: Action Plan 2026-2030 [https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/7da21a41/Sustainable\\_Mobility\\_Policy\\_Action\\_Plan\\_2026-2030.pdf](https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/7da21a41/Sustainable_Mobility_Policy_Action_Plan_2026-2030.pdf)

beyond traditional engineering or transport planning.

Multi-disciplinary teams combining expertise in urban design, land use planning, engineering and behavioural science are required to effectively implement transport solutions that work with public and active transport networks. For both new developments and existing settlements this will require design solutions that align with the modal hierarchy, to create environments where the youngest, oldest and least mobile can get around safely and comfortably.

There are currently limited opportunities in Ireland to access training and develop skills with a focus on sustainable mobility and integrated transport planning, although Technological University of Dublin stands out as an important provider.

The provision of accredited qualifications offered through regional Universities and Colleges will be important to ensure those working all over the country in local authorities, planning authorities and private practice, are equipped to design and build Ireland's transport networks and public spaces over the coming years and decades.

### *Electric vehicle maintenance*

Climate Action Plan 2021 sets an ambition of 945,000 electric vehicles on the road by 2030.<sup>32</sup> Based on these targets, modelling completed by the *Expert Group on Future Skills Needs* estimates that by 2030 approximately 2,900 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) mechanics with electric vehicle skills will be required, representing an average annual re-skilling requirement of just under 300 mechanics per year.<sup>33</sup>

The analysis indicates that there appears to be sufficient supply of electric vehicle mechanics to meet medium-term demand. However, over the longer term, it highlights the importance of integrating electric vehicle training into existing vehicle mechanic apprenticeships. Additionally, based on the assumption that electric vehicles require significantly less vehicle maintenance than traditional fossil-fuelled vehicles, the overall labour demand for mechanics is likely to fall by approximately 1,200 FTE by 2030. Due to the expected fall in labour demand for mechanics, the report notes there may be opportunities to develop retraining pathways for mechanics into occupations which support the transition to climate neutrality.

Recently, SOLAS's *Green Skills for 2030* strategy<sup>34</sup> identified repairing electric vehicles as a skills gap, with stakeholders noting that mechanics need more training in electrics and diagnostics, particularly as they expect demand for this service to grow. The strategy noted part-time courses in electric/ hybrid vehicle maintenance are available but recommended that vehicle related apprenticeships and courses should be developed and updated to provide practical training in the maintenance of electric vehicles.

In this context, the proposed development of a National eMobility Capability Centre, hosted by Longford-Westmeath Education and Training Board, represents a positive step.<sup>35</sup> The Commission would welcome progress towards the establishment of the Centre, recognising its potential role in supporting coordinated skills development for electric vehicles.

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<sup>32</sup> Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment (2022), Climate Action Plan 2021  
<https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-climate-energy-and-the-environment/publications/climate-action-plan-2021/>

<sup>33</sup> Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (2021), Skills for Zero Carbon  
<https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-enterprise-tourism-and-employment/publications/skills-for-zero-carbon/>

<sup>34</sup> SOLAS (2024), Green Skills 2030:  
<https://www.solas.ie/f/70398/x/135e0f3789/solas-green-skills-strategy-2030.pdf>

<sup>35</sup> Department of Further and Higher Education, Research Innovation and Science (2023), Minister Harris announces the development of a dedicated national centre for electric vehicle skills:  
<https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-further-and-higher-education-research-innovation-and-science/press-releases/minister-harris-announces-the-development-of-a-dedicated-national-centre-for-electric-vehicle-skills/>

## Shared costs and equity

Delivering a just transition in transport requires a clear focus on fairness, ensuring that the costs and benefits of change are shared equitably across society. Central to this is sustained State leadership that prioritises public transport as the backbone of national mobility, invests early in accessible and affordable alternatives, ensures that the transition is funded fairly, and prevents new inequalities from emerging, especially in rural areas and lower-income households.

### *Ensuring equity in accessing electric vehicles*

Research measuring the equity impacts of current electric vehicles subsidies has found that urban areas across Ireland, already well serviced by public transport, are more likely to see higher concentration of electric vehicle ownership.<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, the paper argues that an income gap exists between those that have adapted to electric vehicles and those that have not, suggesting that lower income households may face financial barriers to shifting to electric vehicles. A separate study, which examines the spatial and socioeconomic determinants of household adoption of sustainable technologies, including electric vehicles, highlights an equity gap in electric vehicle grant uptake. The report finds that the existing grant scheme favours households with disposable income, with electric vehicle adoption rates in affluent electoral divisions seven times higher than in disadvantaged areas.<sup>37</sup> To address these challenges, the report argues that electric vehicle grants should move away from universal rates towards targeted interventions such as means-tested or local based subsidies which could be informed by the deprivation index.

The findings of these reports mirror those of the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development), which found subsidies that uniformly lower the cost of electric vehicles are

more likely to benefit higher-income households who can afford more expensive cars, and urban households with better access to charging infrastructure. The report also noted that without well-targeted policy design, lower-income and rural households may be generally less likely to benefit from subsidies for energy-efficient and low-carbon technologies.<sup>38</sup>

The Climate Change Advisory Council Annual Review of Transport 2025 recommends incentives to increase the share of electric vehicles in Ireland should include targeted additional supports for lower income households, particularly in areas with limited access to public transport.<sup>39</sup>

### **The Commission maintain that cost-sharing and equity must be at the heart of policy-planning, and grants and supports should avoid reinforcing existing inequalities.**

The use of higher targeted grants rather than universal subsidies offers the opportunity to improve conditions for cohorts of the population who cover high mileage, are most at risk from fossil fuel price volatility and are not in the financial position to buy a new car. For example, those working in the community care sector such as home help, carers and public health nurses would realise significant benefits from using electric vehicles, but without additional support would be unlikely to ever be in a position to buy one.

The Commission is clear that existing inequalities should not be exacerbated as we transition to a more sustainable transport system, and that to integrate equity into electric policy, the Commission recommends the government should include reforming its current universal subsidy for new electric vehicles to targeted supports for high-mileage and car-dependent households, particularly those providing community care services.

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<sup>36</sup> Caulfield, B. et al. (2022), Measuring the equity impacts of government subsidies for electric vehicles <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0360544222004911>

<sup>37</sup> Singh A., Caulfield, B. (2026), Affluence, spatial spillovers, and inequality in household energy transitions: Exploring the determinants of sustainable technology adoption in Ireland <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2214629626001088>

<sup>38</sup> OECD (2025), Ensuring a just transition to net-zero emissions [https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/ensuring-a-just-transition-to-net-zero-emissions\\_a3da7080-en.html](https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/ensuring-a-just-transition-to-net-zero-emissions_a3da7080-en.html)

<sup>39</sup> Climate Change Advisory Council (2025) Annual Review 2025 Transport <https://www.climatecouncil.ie/councilpublications/annualreviewandreport/CCAC-AR2025-Transport-final.pdf>

### *Barriers to zero-emission heavy duty vehicles*

Recent evidence further highlights the challenges associated with the current approach to supporting the transition to low-emission vehicles.

The Commission recognises that those sectors reliant on heavy duty vehicles (HDVs) are highly exposed to the transition, and notwithstanding technical progress, significant economic barriers remain to transition the HDV fleet away from fossil fuels and the ongoing challenges associated with volatility of fuel costs.

Noting that the numbers of electric cars and vans have increased significantly in recent years in contrast to electric HDV's points to the need for greater and more targeted support.

Despite a grant scheme being available to support the purchase of zero-emissions HDVs and the associated charging infrastructure, only 1% or less of new HDVs registered in Ireland each year are zero-emissions, and demand for this scheme remains very low.<sup>40</sup>

Low uptake of the current support scheme points to the significant barriers facing operators, including the high upfront cost of electric HDVs, the lack of suitable charging infrastructure, and the limited alignment between available supports and the operational realities of business and workers in these dependent sectors. Compared to wider international trends, where zero-emission HGV adoption is progressing more rapidly, uptake in Ireland remains low.

This example highlights the importance of ensuring that financial supports are appropriately designed and targeted to address real-world barriers, particularly in sectors where transition costs are high and alternatives are not yet fully viable.

### *Mobility of care and gender equality*

Behavioural change cannot be expected before accessible, affordable, and reliable alternatives are in place. This is especially true for those undertaking "mobility of care"; the daily journeys involved in caring for children, older relatives, or people with disabilities.

In contrast to our current public transport system that caters in the main for peak time commutes to and from city and town centres, these trips are often short, complex, and off-peak. **Mobility of care journeys are disproportionately carried out by women and often involve traveling with people who would be considered the most vulnerable pedestrians, or those who would have difficulties accessing traditional public transport.** Recognising and planning for the mobility of care is essential to delivering an equitable transport transition.

## **Mobility of care**

Mobility, the need to move, connect, and access opportunities intertwines our everyday lives.

A just transition must also recognise the mobility of care, the everyday journeys that sustain families and communities, such as taking children to school, supporting older relatives, or accompanying someone with a disability. These trips are often short, frequent, and complex, and are disproportionately undertaken by women. Yet they are rarely prioritised in transport planning or funding models. Investing in local, safe, and affordable transport options such as accessible buses, cycle routes with secure child infrastructure, and reliable off-peak services is vital to reduce the invisible burdens of care mobility and to support gender equality and social participation.

<sup>40</sup> Houses of the Oireachtas (2026) Questions for written answer; 29/04/2026 Question Number(s): 43 Question Reference(s):

31049/26; Question Number(s): 44,45 Question Reference(s): 31050/26, 31051/26

Analysis of the *Safe Routes to School* programme demonstrates the impacts to transport patterns for children and families following local interventions to make streets around schools safer. Following construction works, schools within the programme report a 17% decrease in car use, 36% increase in cycling, 6% increase in walking and a 49% increase in park and stride<sup>41</sup>. Likewise, research undertaken on the profile of those using the '*Coastal Mobility Route*', an entirely segregated cycle way along Dublin's south coast, demonstrates how infrastructure design can enable a diverse range of new users. The route records higher numbers of 'casual' female cyclists, children and older people than are typical across Dublin.<sup>42</sup> Positive examples such as #AndSheCycles<sup>43</sup> show how exploring, understanding and addressing barriers to using sustainable mobility can foster increased participation.

Interventions within urban and suburban spaces such as wider footpaths, safe school zones, segregated cycle ways, efficient and safe road crossings and seating opportunities for resting and waiting deliver tangible wellbeing benefits to the most vulnerable road users and provide a viable alternative to driving.

Accessible buses and trains, bus shelters and the guarantee of a working lift in a train station would facilitate the greater use of public transport for all cohorts of the population.

### *Fairness in the transport transition*

Vehicle tax structures in Ireland already have a strong environmental rationale aligned with the principle of 'user and polluter pays' whereby vehicles with the highest emissions are subject to higher rates of tax. However, as the composition of the vehicle fleet in Ireland changes there are opportunities to amend the taxation of vehicles to ensure the tax base is maintained and aligned with policy objectives to support a just transition in transport.

For its submission to Budget 2026, the *Tax Strategy Group* re-asserted that it considers taxation as a lever for climate action. As part of a suite of taxation measures, it suggested a weight-based tax for vehicles, with heavier vehicles paying more.<sup>44</sup> The proposal is based on the knowledge that vehicles in Ireland have increased in weight by 28% between 2001 and 2022, and that current EU emissions regulations may be unintentionally incentivising the production of heavier electric vehicles.

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<sup>41</sup> Safe Routes to School (2025) Safe Routes to School: Annual Report 2024

<https://saferoutestoschool.ie/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Annual-Report-2024-17.06.pdf>

<sup>42</sup> The Sustainable Transport & Mobility Research Group at the School of Transport Engineering, Environment & Planning, TU Dublin (2022) DLR COVID 19 Mobility Review

[https://www.tudublin.ie/media/Ph1bJul22\\_DLRCovidMobilityUpdate\\_ForIssue.pdf](https://www.tudublin.ie/media/Ph1bJul22_DLRCovidMobilityUpdate_ForIssue.pdf)

<sup>43</sup> An Taisce Green Schools, #andshecycles Campaign <https://greenschoolsireland.org/andshecycles/>

<sup>44</sup> Tax Strategy Group (2025), Energy Environmental and Vehicle Tax – TSG 25/10

[https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/TSG\\_25-10\\_Energy\\_Environmental\\_and\\_Vehicle\\_Tax\\_UPD.pdf](https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/TSG_25-10_Energy_Environmental_and_Vehicle_Tax_UPD.pdf)

Furthermore, evidence from international and European research strongly suggests heavier and larger vehicles pose disproportionate risks to vulnerable road users, causing more severe injuries and more fatalities when involved in collisions, particularly children.<sup>45 46</sup>

A vehicle fleet composed of smaller, lighter, low-emission vehicles has multiple benefits for society in terms of reduced congestion, reduced particulate pollution to air and water, reduced carbon emissions, and reduced noise. Of note, while there are certainly road safety benefits and less wear and tear on roads and tyres from lighter vehicles, driver behaviour and speed limits also play a significant role in these issues.

The Commission notes that the recently published *Moving Together* strategy from the Department of Transport does not include an action to review a weight-based approach to car taxation, despite this being recommended in earlier drafts.<sup>47</sup> To support the 'user polluter pays principle' and ensure that the costs of the transition are shared equitably, the Commission supports a review of a weight-based approach to car taxation for both electric and fossil fuelled vehicles and strongly encourages the Department of Transport to include it as part of its broader examination of transport taxation.

**Furthermore, as households and communities are asked to make significant changes, the same principle of shared responsibility must apply to all sectors, including those with the greatest environmental impact. Ensuring that high-emitting industries contribute proportionately to the costs of the transition is therefore a matter of both fairness and public credibility.**

In this context, sectors such as aviation and shipping remain significant sources of emissions and are not yet fully integrated into national decarbonisation and cost-sharing frameworks. Recent policy developments continue to highlight the ongoing tension between the expansion of carbon-intensive transport activity and the need to achieve emissions reductions. Addressing this gap will be important to ensure that the transition is perceived as fair, balanced, and credible.

### *Opportunities through the Social Climate Plan*

The forthcoming *Social Climate Plan*, funded through the EU Social Climate Fund,<sup>48</sup> presents a critical opportunity to turn the Just Transition Principles into practice. To be credible, it must target those most affected by transport poverty, directly supporting low-income and impacted rural households to access affordable, low-carbon mobility. This includes addressing the needs of those who are currently underserved by public transport and may also face barriers to accessing private car alternatives, ensuring that no group is left without viable mobility options.

There is also an opportunity to support community-led solutions, including local transport initiatives and shared mobility services, which can play a critical role in reaching these groups. Embedding social dialogue in the design and delivery of measures will be important to ensure that solutions reflect lived experience. Ensuring that the Plan delivers clear, measurable benefits for people will be critical to building confidence in the transition.

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<sup>45</sup> Robinson, E *et al* (2026) Do sports utility vehicles (SUVs) and light truck vehicles (LTVs) cause more severe injuries to pedestrians and cyclists than passenger cars in the case of a crash? A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Injury Prevention* 2026;32:16-24  
<https://injuryprevention.bmj.com/content/32/1/16.citation-tools>

<sup>46</sup> Edwards, M Leonard, D (2022) Effects of large vehicles on pedestrian and pedalcyclist injury severity. *Journal of Safety Research*. Vol. 82, P 275-282  
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0022437522000810?via%3Dihub>

<sup>47</sup> Department of Transport (2024), *Moving Together: A Strategic Approach to the Improved Efficiency of the Transport System in Ireland*  
<https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/moving-together-draft-strategy.pdf>

<sup>48</sup> Regulation EU 2023/955 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10<sup>th</sup> May 2023 establishing a Social Climate Fund and amending Regulation (EU) 2021/1060  
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32023R0955>

## Social dialogue and participation

A people-centred transport transition relies upon open dialogue, shared decision-making, and public trust. Social dialogue must move beyond consultation as a procedural step to become a continuous process of co-creation, where communities, workers, and those most affected by change actively shape policy and implementation.<sup>49</sup>

### *A continuous process of co-creation*

As part of its review of a just transition in transport, the Commission held a workshop with representatives of vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities, women, youth, the elderly, rural communities, and commuters.

Stakeholders emphasised that a just transition in transport requires a transport system that is accessible, reliable, affordable, safe and accounts for the whole-journey approach. The group praised actions and initiatives such as *Local Link*, *JAM Cards*, the *Free Travel Companion Scheme*, fare subsidies provided to young adults, and the *Free Transport Scheme* provided to the elderly and people with disabilities - the groups emphasised that such initiatives, which support vulnerable groups to use public transport, must be sustained into the future particularly as public transport is promoted as the preferred mode of transport. During the workshop, frustration was repeatedly expressed over tokenistic consultation, with many feeling their voices were not acted upon.

**Numerous groups emphasised the need to create meaningful, ongoing conversations with existing community groups and organisations, with feedback and transparency built into the process.**

The Commission believes that projects such as the CONUNDRUM project in Enniscorthy<sup>50</sup> provide a structured process to developing co-created

community mobility strategies, which could be replicated across communities in Ireland and should be further examined by the Department of Transport. The project focused on Enniscorthy, an area identified as being at high risk of forced car ownership, and utilised a participative decision-making model to identify actions to address the socio-economic needs and challenges facing the community, with mobility being identified as a significant concern. As the Department of Transport and relevant stakeholders tackle the issue of captive car users, the Commission believes that place-based models such as that developed by the CONUNDRUM project should be utilised.

Furthermore, structured forums such as Iarnród Éireann's Disability Users Group demonstrate how ongoing dialogue between transport operators and users with lived experience can directly shape investment decisions and accessibility standards. Recently, with insights provided by their Disability Users Group, the advance notice for assistance across 15 train stations reduced from 12 hours to one hour.<sup>51</sup> Such models of partnership should be replicated across the transport sector, ensuring that inclusion is built in from design to delivery.

Similarly, initiatives such as the National Youth Assembly on Transport highlight the value of structured engagement with younger cohorts, providing a platform for young people to contribute to transport policy and articulate their priorities for a more sustainable and inclusive system. Expanding such forums can help ensure that a wider range of perspectives, including those of future users of the transport system, are meaningfully incorporated into decision-making processes.

### *Accessibility, equality proofing and safety for public transport*

As greater use of public transport is encouraged, a variety of stakeholders highlighted concerns over safety on public transport and its accessibility.

<sup>49</sup> Think-tank for Action on Social Change (2020), *The People's Transition: Community-led development for Climate Justice* [https://www.tasc.ie/assets/files/pdf/feps-tasc\\_the\\_peoples\\_transition\\_-\\_2020f.pdf](https://www.tasc.ie/assets/files/pdf/feps-tasc_the_peoples_transition_-_2020f.pdf)

<sup>50</sup> CONUNDRUM (2024) *A community mobility strategy for Enniscorthy*. Dublin: University College Dublin [https://citiesgovernancesustainability.eu/wp-](https://citiesgovernancesustainability.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Conundrum-Strategy-Master-FA-Digital.pdf)

[content/uploads/2024/11/Conundrum-Strategy-Master-FA-Digital.pdf](https://www.facebook.com/iarnrodeireann/posts/minister-for-transport-darragh-obrien-td-today-joined-with-iarnr%C3%B3d-%C3%A9ireann-chief/1116269327206146/)

<sup>51</sup> Iarnród Éireann (2025), Minister O'Brien welcomes reduced notice at major Iarnród Éireann stations for accessibility assistance: <https://www.facebook.com/iarnrodeireann/posts/minister-for-transport-darragh-obrien-td-today-joined-with-iarnr%C3%B3d-%C3%A9ireann-chief/1116269327206146/>

The Commission heard many challenges associated with the use of public transport, with many highlighting long journey times, lack of real time information, scheduled services not turning up, and journey experiences that are not comfortable for anyone with mobility challenges at any stage of life.

For some simply getting to the bus stop or train station is very challenging due to unsafe walking conditions or bus stops with no shelter and nowhere safe to wait. This is particularly acute for many Traveller accommodation sites. Equality proofing access to public transport is essential to ensure services really are accessible to all, and further supports ensuring transport orientated development and access to public transport are essential considerations for all housing development.

**Continuous investment in safety is also needed to ensure public transport is suitable for everyone at all times.** Transport Infrastructure Ireland's 2020 report *Travelling in a Woman's Shoes*<sup>52</sup> outlined that safety is a top priority for women when travelling, with women remaining vigilant at all times, particularly at night or when alone. Addressing this issue requires investment and engagement as a culture of safety and respect is as important as the physical design of the system.

The Commission notes the proposal to establish a national public transport security force within the recent *Sustainable Mobility Policy; Action Plan 2026-2030*.<sup>53</sup>

## The CONUNDRUM project

CONUNDRUM is an action research project that engages stakeholders in co-creating mobility solutions that support rapid progress towards national climate goals, enhance liveability, and address community needs.

Aware that communities need to be listened to in order for policy and infrastructure interventions to enable behaviour change, the project team developed a co-creation process with community stakeholders. Consultation uncovered 132 perceived challenges in the town of Enniscorthy to the development and use of more sustainable and shared mobility. With the support of researchers, stakeholders identified six priority solutions for the town, including

- a sheltered transportation hub to replace the existing bus stop;
- pedestrian crossings, ramps and general improvement to walking routes around the town specifically catering for wheelchair users;
- a new shuttle bus to operate on a loop connecting housing estates with the town;
- accessible bus stops with real time information;
- a new multi-stakeholder community forum in conjunction with Wexford County Council; and
- Additional public transport for Enniscorthy East and Templeshannon.

Actions are now underway to implement many of the solutions that were co-created with the community to support active mobility around the town. On a physical level this has included installing traffic calming measures across the town to reduce speeding; building out new and wider footpaths; new pedestrian crossings; and three safe access routes for schools. Local bus services have been amended and improved with extended operating hours, and proposals are being developed for new bus routes and bus shelters for the town. New opportunities for ongoing dialogue have been established with a new multi stakeholder forum any many of the identified barriers to active mobility within the town are now being actively pursued.

<sup>52</sup> Transport Infrastructure Ireland (2020), *Travelling in a Woman's Shoes*:  
[https://www.tii.ie/media/m0nj2o5o/tii-travelling-in-a-womans-shoes-report\\_issue.pdf](https://www.tii.ie/media/m0nj2o5o/tii-travelling-in-a-womans-shoes-report_issue.pdf)

<sup>53</sup> Department of Transport (2026) *Sustainability Mobility Policy: Action Plan 2026-2030*  
[https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/7da21a41/Sustainable\\_Mobility\\_Policy\\_Action\\_Plan\\_2026-2030.pdf](https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/7da21a41/Sustainable_Mobility_Policy_Action_Plan_2026-2030.pdf)

# Delivering a Just Transition in Transport

Ireland's transport transition represents a significant opportunity to reshape how people move, connect and access opportunity. While the challenge of reducing emissions is urgent, the transition also offers the potential to create a system that is fairer, healthier and more inclusive for all.

Delivering this vision will require sustained leadership, long-term investment and a continued focus on people. Ensuring that public transport and shared mobility are accessible, affordable and reliable will be central to reducing inequality and supporting participation in everyday life. At the same time, policies must be designed and implemented in a way that reflects the diverse needs and experiences of communities across Ireland.

A just transition is not achieved through policy alone. It requires ongoing dialogue, meaningful participation, and a willingness to adapt based on evidence and lived experience. By strengthening engagement, improving the evidence base for decision-making, and ensuring that the impacts of change are understood and addressed, the transition can be delivered in a way that builds trust and confidence.

Ultimately, the success of Ireland's transport transformation will be measured not only by emissions reductions, but by how well it improves people's daily lives. By embedding equity, accessibility and inclusion at the heart of transport policy and investment, Ireland can create a system that supports both climate ambition and social wellbeing, ensuring that no one is left behind.

# Supporting Information

## About the Commission

The Just Transition Commission was established in late 2024 as an advisory body to Government. Commissioners were appointed by Government for a three-year term (2024-2027). The Commission is composed of representatives nominated through the five recognised pillars of social dialogue:

- Environmental
- Agriculture
- Community and Voluntary
- Trade Union
- Employer

In addition, independent experts are appointed to provide specialist expertise in areas including climate policy, labour markets, governance, economics, and social inclusion.

This composition is intended to ensure that a range of perspectives are reflected in the Commission's advice and that the public voice is represented in the development of just transition policy.

## Secretariat Support

The Commission would like to thank the Secretariat of the Just Transition Commission for their ongoing support and contributions. The Secretariat is provided by the Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment by Colm O' Conaill, Greta Szabo, Michael Keegan, Rónán Stokes and Conor Reynolds.

The Commission extends its sincere appreciation to all those who engage with its work. The Commission is grateful for the input, expertise, insights and first-hand experience shared, as well as the support of those who help facilitate this engagement.

## Just Transition Commission Membership



**Ali Sheridan, Chair**

Independent Expert – appointed October 2024



**Oisín Coghlan**

Environment Pillar Representative – appointed October 2024



**Conor Minogue**

Business Pillar Representative – appointed October 2024



**Ryan McKinney**

Trade Union Pillar Representative – appointed October 2024



**Dr. Diarmuid Torney**

Independent Expert – appointed October 2024



**Suresh Kumar**

Independent Expert – appointed October 2024



**Dr. Evan Boyle**

Independent Expert – appointed October 2024



**Tanya Ward**

Independent Expert – appointed October 2024



**Michelle Murphy**

Community and Voluntary Pillar Representative – appointed October 2024



**Vanessa Kiely O'Connor**

Agriculture Pillar Representative – appointed October 2024



**Brian Flynn**

Independent Expert – appointed March 2026

## List of Stakeholders Consulted

### *Policy & Academic*

- Department of Transport
- National Transport Authority
- Bus Éireann
- Zero Emission Vehicles Ireland
- Brian Caulfield – Trinity College Dublin
- Lorraine D’Arcy – Technology University Dublin
- Orla Dingley - University College Dublin

### *Representative Groups*

- Age Friendly Ireland
- An Taisce
- Community Work Ireland
- Dublin Commuter Coalition
- Inclusion Ireland
- Irish Wheelchair Association
- National Disability Authority
- National Network of Older People’s Council
- National Youth Council of Ireland
- Vision Ireland

## Glossary

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### Climate Action Plan (CAP)

The CAP aims to provide a decarbonisation pathway to 2030 consistent with Carbon Budgets and an overall aim to achieve climate neutrality in Ireland by 2050.

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### Climate Neutrality

A sustainable economy and society where greenhouse gas emissions are balanced or exceeded by the removal of greenhouse gases. Achieving climate neutrality by 2050 is Ireland's National Climate Objective.

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### Electric Vehicles

An electric vehicle is a motorised vehicle propelled mostly by electric power.

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### Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Greenhouse gases are a group of gases that prevent heat escaping into space, raising the surface temperature of the planet. Human-induced increase in their presence in the atmosphere contribute to anthropogenic climate change and global warming.

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### Just Transition Principles Framework

The Just Transition Principles Framework is made up of four principles:

- An integrated, structured, and evidence-based approach to identify and plan our response to just transition requirements;
  - People are equipped with the right skills to be able to participate in and benefit from the future net zero economy;
  - The costs are shared so that the impact is equitable and existing inequalities are not exacerbated; and
  - Social dialogue to ensure impacted citizens and communities are empowered and are core to the transition process.
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### Nitrogen Oxide and Particle Matter<sub>2.5</sub>

Both are gases that play significant roles in air pollution.

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### Smart Demand Responsive Transport

Smart Demand Responsive Transport is a flexible transportation model that adjusts routes and schedules based on real-time passenger demand, providing efficient and accessible mobility solutions.

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### Social Climate Fund

The Social Climate Fund is a new EU fund that will help make the green transition fair and inclusive. It is the first EU Fund with the explicit purpose of alleviating energy and transport poverty by supporting those who are most affected by rising energy and transport costs as Europe moves towards climate neutrality. The fund aims to ensure that no one is left behind in the transition to a low-carbon economy.

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**Social Climate Plan 2026-2032**

Ireland is required by EU law to develop a national Social Climate Plan. This mandatory plan, co-funded from the Social Climate Fund, will set out measures to cushion the impact, on those who may struggle the most, of rising energy and transport costs as Europe and Ireland moves towards climate neutrality.

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**Transport Poverty**

For the purposes of the Social Climate Fund, transport poverty is defined as individuals' and households' inability or difficulty to meet the costs of private or public transport, or their lack of or limited access to transport needed for their access to essential socioeconomic services and activities, taking into account the national and spatial context.

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## Appendix 1 – Just Transition Commission’s Terms of Reference

### 1. Establishment

- 1.1 The Just Transition Commission (Commission) is established on an administrative basis by Government Decision 30 April 2024.
- 1.2 The mission of the Just Transition Commission is to support the Government in its responsibility to provide that Ireland’s transition to the National Climate Objective has regard to the requirement for a just transition to a climate neutral economy, which endeavours, in so far as practicable, to maximise employment opportunities, and to support people and communities that may be negatively affected by the transition. The Commission will be a public voice on planning for just transition, leading in developing a shared understanding, and identifying the challenges, solutions and opportunities for Ireland.

### 2. Functions of the Just Transition Commission

- 2.1 The functions of the Just Transition Commission are:
  - To prepare and analyse strategic evidence-based research in relation to just transition: to anticipate and inform long-term climate policy and investment planning, including focusing on the potential impacts, risks and opportunities arising from the climate transition for different sectors of both the economy and society, including the social, economic and employment impacts of this change and the policy responses required.
  - To evaluate, advise, and comment on policy planning and implementation and progress on the application of Ireland’s just transition principles into national and sectoral climate policies, based on high-quality, evidence-based analysis.
  - To provide strategic advice and engagement on just transition: the Commission will support the National Dialogue on Climate Action, as well as any

dialogues on climate/just transition matters within individual sectors, in engagement on the implementation of climate programmes agreed by Government.

- Sectoral or regional engagement and road-mapping: the Commission may, on its own initiative, or at the request of the Government, undertake proactive engagement with particular communities, sectors or regions facing specific acute or long-term challenges arising from the transition, and advise Government on strategic co-ordination by the agencies of the State, on any interventions or targeted supports which may be helpful to address the challenges being faced by that community, sector or region.

### 3. Work Programme

- 3.1 The work programme for the first term of the Commission shall include, but may not be limited to:
  - An analysis of the potential impacts on Ireland’s workforce, and policy implications, of achieving the statutory 2050 climate neutrality objective; including examining the potential overall employment implications, which sectors of the economy may be most adversely impacted, which sectors may be expected to see significant employment growth in the decades ahead; and an examination of the geographic distribution of these impacts.
  - An assessment of the degree to which climate action policies already reflect the principles of Ireland’s Just Transition Framework, taking account of the policy framework and sectoral emissions ceilings set out in the Climate Action Plan, and advice on any opportunities for strengthening both the principles themselves and the application of the principles into sectoral policies.
  - Advice on the strengthening of the local and community dimensions of just

transition and strengthening engagement with vulnerable cohorts into Ireland's climate engagement activities, in particular the National Dialogue on Climate Action, as well as sectoral dialogues.

- Recommendations on a set of just transition indicators to support measurement of progress, over time, in achieving a just transition.

#### **4. Membership and Chairperson**

- 4.1 The number of Members, appointed on a part time basis only, shall be comprised of not fewer than eight and not more than ten ordinary Members (excluding the Chair). Appointments to the Commission may be for a term of up to three years, renewable once.
- 4.2 The Minister who holds responsibility for climate policy shall make appointments to the Commission based on objective criteria, with due regard for the benefits of diversity, including on the basis of gender. The composition of the Commission should be balanced, so that the views of members represent a diverse group of stakeholders.
- 4.3 The Minister may appoint one member each from the five pillars of social dialogue, comprised of the Agriculture pillar, the Community and Voluntary pillar, the Employer pillar, the Environment pillar and the Trade Union pillar.
- 4.4 The remaining members shall be recruited through a competitive process to supplement delegated members and to represent a range of expertise and perspectives including human rights and equality, skills development, rural and community development, social inclusion, the green economic transition, and youth perspectives.
- 4.5 The Chair shall be appointed by the Minister either from amongst the appointed members or through a separate competitive recruitment process.

- 4.6 The Chair shall be independent of the Government and is responsible for determining the work programme of the Commission, in consultation with the Members, and for the discharge of this work programme, in conjunction with the secretariat.

- 4.7 The Minister may decide to appoint one or more deputy chairs from amongst the Members as required, subject to ultimate accountability remaining with the Chair.

- 4.8 Members and the Chair shall be suitably qualified persons, (for example, but not limited to individuals who have a direct experience of policy issues from a business or societal perspective or in academia).

- 4.9 All appointments to the Commission shall be approved by the Government.

- 4.10 Commission Members shall receive a fee and expenses.

#### **5. Independence of Commission**

- 5.1 The Commission is an independent body and shall perform its duties in an objective, neutral and fully independent manner, free of any expressed ideology or political position.

- 5.2 The Commission shall have functional autonomy and shall be responsible for the management and direction of its own work programme, save where requested by Government to undertake proactive engagement with particular communities, sectors or regions facing specific acute or long-term challenges arising from the transition. The work programme will be shaped by the Chair, in consultation with Members and with the assistance of its Secretariat.

- 5.3 The Commission shall develop a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government, through the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications, outlining the operational relationship

between the Commission and the Government, including the provision of secretariat, financial and operational resources to the Commission.

- 5.4 The Commission shall produce independent high-quality, evidence-based analysis on just transition challenges and opportunities and shall report to the Government through the Minister with responsibility for climate policy and make this analysis available to the public to inform policy development across government.

## 6. Advisory Representatives

- 6.1 The following Departments may attend Commission meetings in an advisory capacity:
- Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine
  - Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications
  - Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
  - Department of Finance
  - Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science
  - Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
  - Department of Public Expenditure, National Development Plan Delivery and Reform
  - Department of Rural and Community Development
  - Department of Social Protection
  - Department of Taoiseach
  - Department of Transport
- 6.2 The Commission may invite additional Government Departments and Agencies to attend Commission meetings in an advisory capacity where appropriate.

- 6.3 When necessary, alternates may attend on behalf of advisory representatives, with the prior agreement of the Chair.

## 7. Relationship with other bodies

- 7.1 The relationship between the Commission and Climate Change Advisory Council will be subject to a Memorandum of Understanding between the two bodies.
- 7.2 The Commission may coordinate its work programme with other advisory bodies to ensure appropriate complementarity, taking account of the Commission's work programme set out in section 3.

## 8. Meetings and Procedure

- 8.1 Subject to the requirements of this Section, the Commission shall regulate its own procedures.
- 8.2 The quorum for a meeting of the Commission shall be not less than six members at the meeting.
- 8.3 The Commission will seek to reach decisions by consensus. Where this is not possible, decisions shall be determined by a simple majority of votes of the members present and, if voting is equally divided, the Chairperson shall have a casting vote.
- 8.4 The Chairperson may at any time call a meeting of the Commission or shall call a meeting of the Commission at any time when requested to do so in writing by any five members of the Commission.
- 8.5 Views expressed by the Commission in publications or by any Member of the Commission speaking on its behalf, shall not be understood as representing the views of the Minister who holds responsibility for climate policy or any Member of the Government.
- 8.6 The disclosure of information, except in the exercise of their duties, obtained by any member of the Commission or any

committee or consultative group appointed by it, shall be prohibited.

- 8.7 The Commission shall keep the Minister who holds responsibility for climate policy informed of its activities on a regular basis and the Chairperson shall be afforded the opportunity to present the key findings and recommendations of its work to the Minister, at minimum on an annual basis.

## **9. Secretariat**

- 9.1 The secretariat to the Commission shall be provided by the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications.
- 9.2 Communication between the Government, Ministers, Government officials and the Commission, save for when the Chair directly engages with such parties, shall be conducted through the Secretariat.

April 2024

## **Get in touch!**

The Commission is keen to hear from people, communities, organisations and wider societal actors working towards a just transition. We are eager to hear about both the challenges being faced and positive examples of how social and climate goals can be integrated to support action, inclusion, justice and equality. To share your insights or stories, please email us at:

[info@justtransitioncommission.ie](mailto:info@justtransitioncommission.ie)

[www.justtransitioncommission.ie](http://www.justtransitioncommission.ie)

