

## Transport

### **Ruth White, Placemaking and Mobility Strategy and Development Manager, City of Edinburgh Council**

The City of Edinburgh Council is committed to eradicating poverty. After housing, transport costs are the single biggest household expenditure in the UK according to the [2021 Census](#). Between April 2021-March 2022 most of the money spent on transport was on the purchase and operation of private vehicles.

For people living in poverty, owning a car can often be an unaffordable luxury. The good news is that cities like Edinburgh have adopted ambitious targets for reducing car kilometres (km) as part of their commitment to tackle climate change, improve road safety and air quality, and create more liveable, welcoming places.

Edinburgh's target is to reduce car kms by 30% by 2030 – higher than the Scottish Government's 20%. As an already very accessible city we can meet this target, but only if everyone pitches in. Providing the right conditions for people to walk, wheel, cycle, and use public transport will be critical.

Edinburgh's transport policy to 2030 is set out in the [City Mobility Plan](#) (CMP). CMP acknowledges that because public transport moves more people around the city than any other mode, it has the biggest potential to support everyone in accessing services, employment, education and leisure without having to own a car.

Maintaining affordable fares and delivering an increased range of simplified, flexible public transport ticketing options are key commitments in CMP.

Edinburgh is fortunate to have an award-winning bus and tram service where fares remain some of the lowest in Scotland. Since July 2019 Lothian Buses has been running [Tap Tap Cap](#), allowing passengers to benefit from capped daily fares for multiple trips. This will be extended to trams soon.

Nationally, if you are under 22 years old and living in Scotland, you are eligible for [free bus travel](#). If you are 60+ year old, you could also be eligible for free nationwide bus travel via the [National Entitlement Card](#).

Over the summer the Council ran a [citywide consultation](#) to gain views on emerging CMP action plans and a 'Future Streets Framework' (aka 'Circulation Plan'). The consultation received almost 4,000 responses.

People living in poverty tend to be one of several under-represented groups in the city. The consultation therefore included two focus groups – one for 22-45 year olds and the other for 45 year olds+ living in poverty. These groups enabled discussion on proposed measures to support people to walk, wheel, cycle and use public transport.

Feedback strongly confirmed the need for affordable, accessible, and reliable public transport. Thoughts were also shared on the impact of high parking costs, with some reflecting that parking should be reduced in the city and town centres to support easier access by bus.

Concerns were raised about the impacts of the [Low Emission Zone \(LEZ\)](#) due to costs associated with upgrading vehicles. Further information on LEZ support funding for people on low incomes can be accessed [here](#).

We face many challenges in delivering such ambitious commitments, the meeting of which will involve inevitable compromise as there are so many different needs to consider. Fundamentally - changes must ensure that no one is excluded from accessing opportunities to thrive.