

## Written evidence submitted by Transform Scotland (CRG0013)

### *Transform Scotland submission to the Scottish Affairs Committee City Region and Growth Deals Inquiry*

**To what degree do City Region Deals and Regional Growth Deals address the right priorities for Scotland? Is there sufficient flexibility in the schemes to tailor the offer to regional needs?**

Scotland's priorities are not being sufficiently addressed by the investment decisions proposed in the City Region Deals. Specifically, national ambitions to tackle inequalities and cut climate emissions are being undermined by the transport components of the CRDs.

[New data](#) uncovered by Transform Scotland (Scotland's alliance for sustainable transport) has found more than 70% of transport infrastructure investment in Scotland's City Region Deals – equivalent to nearly **£1 billion** – is **funding high carbon road projects which directly undermine Scotland's 2045 net zero strategy, increase congestion and damage public health.**

Collectively, the Deals incorporate £4.6 billion of spending, including £1.3 billion allocated to transport infrastructure. These transport projects were developed with **no carbon assessments or reference to Scotland's climate targets**, and uncovered a lack of transparency and data around the carbon impact of spending.

The report 'Dirty Deals' highlights that **Scotland's anti-poverty and net-zero priorities are not being adequately addressed by proposed projects in the City Region Deals.** That is, investment in road-building will inevitably generate more traffic and higher emissions, and benefit the more affluent.

Building new roads, particularly motorways and dual carriageways, **benefits the better off** who have access to cars. Between 51%–60% of Scottish households in the lowest income levels have no access to a car, with Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Dundee worse than the Scottish average.

Conversely, prioritising funding for active travel and public transport improvements would help tackle emissions and tackle poverty by improving services disproportionately relied upon by lower-income households.

High carbon projects in the City Region Deals include: the £151 million Cross Tay Link Road near Perth; a new £107 million roundabout at Sheriffhall, Edinburgh; large road building projects to accommodate more cars and lorries on the A9 and A96 in the north of Scotland; a £25 new road access to Aberdeen South Harbour; and a 10m Dundee Airport investment.

#### **Additional information**

The latest research by Transform Scotland, which required extensive Freedom of Information requests due to a lack of public information, found that:

- £900 million of the £1.3 billion of Scottish City Region Deal spending on transport infrastructure is being spent on high carbon infrastructure that will lock people into unsustainable transport for decades to come
- Only £382 million (29% of the total) is being spent on sustainable and low carbon transport, with only the Stirling Deal committing all of its spending to low carbon projects
- All other Deals spend the vast majority of their transport funds on high carbon transport, with those covering Aberdeen City, Inverness and Highland committing all transport spending to unsustainable projects
- Just five local authorities (North Lanarkshire Council, Perth & Kinross Council, Highland Council, South Lanarkshire Council, and Midlothian Council) account for almost 80% of the high carbon spending
- Only six of the 16 local authorities involved in the Deals are committing over one-third of their transport spending to low carbon projects

To read the report in full please see:

<https://transform.scot/2024/03/19/new-report-finds-scotlands-dirty-deals-fuelling-climate-and-poverty-failures/>

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