



# Sustainable Transport in Scotland

## the key to unlocking the benefits of new housing

Monday 12 November 2018

10.00-14.00, KMPG, 319 St Vincent Plaza, Glasgow

### NOTE OF EVENT

Event Chair **Gerard Whelan, Director of Corporate Finance, Government and Infrastructure at KMPG** welcomed the attendees to the event. He noted how important the discussions about housing and transport are and said that KMPG were delighted to support Transport Knowledge Hub on sustainable transport, and particularly its link with housing. Gerard said this was the first of several events that KMPG were hosting around the UK on this topic. In addition, Gerard said that the link between transport and housing is well known, and although there are often mistakes made, these events were about how to make better decisions.

**Claire Haigh, Executive Director of Transport Knowledge Hub** thanked everyone for attending and stated that the event was the first in a series of Transport Knowledge Hub events that will look at the role that sustainable transport can play in unlocking the benefits of new housing. Claire said that the Transport Knowledge Hub uniquely brings together central government, local government and industry specialists to bring socio-economic change. Claire said that the UK as a whole is facing major infrastructure challenges and climate change, and it is more important than ever that the investment being made brings about the best outcomes. She added that the hub is a forum for sharing ideas, discussing best practice and reflecting on major challenges facing the country, of which housing is constantly top of the list. Claire stated that the KMPG research has found that investment in sustainable transport will be key to the delivery of new housing and that it was absolutely crucial that these new homes are served by sustainable modes of transport. Claire said that sustainable transport is essential to unlocking growth, most notably investment in buses can bring about £8 worth in every one pound that is spent.

**Gerard Whelan** then introduced **Chelsea Dosad, Associate Director in Deal Advisory, Government and Infrastructure at KMPG** who delivered a presentation on KMPG's emerging findings into sustainable transport and new housing. Speaking about the importance of the link between sustainable transport and new housing, Chelsea said that given the constrained fiscal environment that exists in the UK at the moment, there is a real need to maximise the economic returns of current funding, as well as identify new ways of increasing overall levels of investment. Chelsea said that the integration of housing and transport was so important because it increases affordability, enables greater density and more efficient planning, provides connected, inclusive and prosperous communities with increased economic activity, and reduces congestion on the road and car dependency. Chelsea said that there is evidence which has shown that the integration of transport and housing is not happening as much as it should do. Chelsea said that this was how KMPG's research came about: trying to identify the practical barriers that were preventing this integration and simultaneously putting forward solutions and then recommendations that the government can take forward. Chelsea said that KMPG had consulted with a variety of different stakeholders, including central and local government, transport operators, private developers, think-tanks and industry bodies and had identified the following barriers to the integration of housing and transport:



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- Lack of committed, long term funding for local authorities discourages strategic infrastructure planning, which leads to short-termism. Chelsea said that the government's new city deal and devolution agenda was a step in the right direction in terms of delivering integrated transport and housing as it took a more holistic, longer-term approach to funding.
- Current developer contribution mechanisms are insufficient to fund sustainable transport.
- Local authority teams responsible for housing and transport often have been siloed in the decision-making processes, and having these teams separated means that there are often gaps in decision-making, as well as tensions between the planning and transport authority.
- Increasing pressures on local government resource funding results in limited capacity to plan strategically.
- Appraisers often do not have the strategic context to capture the holistic benefits of new housing together with sustainable transport.
- National Planning Policy Framework does not go far enough to promote effective planning for sustainable transport alongside new housing. As a result sustainable transport is often deprioritised in relation to other development mitigations due to the lack of definitive support that the NPPF provides to local planners. The Government's forthcoming National Planning Policy Guidance presents a real opportunity to clarify the importance of sustainable transport in the plan-making process.
- Sustainable transport is not typically prioritised in development plans that come forward from the private sector.
- The designs and patterns of new housing development lead to unviable sustainable transport services.

Chelsea went on to say that the next step for KMPG was to explore these barriers in more detail, develop potential solutions to these barriers and then identify the potential roles for local government, central government and industry to take them forward. Chelsea said that these were only emerging findings and that she was interested to know the audience's thoughts in case the research had missed anything important.

**Gerard Whelan** said the importance of this topic was brought home to him when KMPG conducted research with the University of Leeds which showed that when people are cut off from economic and social activity because of a lack of transport, it has an impact on every area of their lives. He said there was a real need to locate housing in areas that are best served by public transport. He echoed Chelsea's sentiments, asking the audience their thoughts on the research.

**Mic Ralph, Transport Planning Manager at Glasgow City Council** asked how much of KMPG's research was based in Scotland as he said that a lot of what had been noted by Chelsea was already being implemented in Glasgow.



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**Chelsea Dosad** said that the research was primarily from an English context but that the barriers were still applicable. **Gerard Whelan** then asked Mic what the biggest challenge in Glasgow had been. Mic said getting people on to buses was the big challenge which Glasgow City Council still has to overcome.

**Cllr Robin Currie, Policy Lead for Housing at Argyll & Bute Council** noted that there is a huge problem within his own council area to build housing where public transport already exists precisely because there is already very limited public transport.

**Robert Samson, Senior Stakeholder Manager at Transport Focus** said that a barrier that was not identified by KMPG was the need to attract passengers on to public transport. Robert said that there were plans for 1000 houses to be built near Motherwell in Central Scotland with a park and ride scheme. He said that all the houses have been built but the park and ride scheme was still not operational. He said that this example shows that public transport is not top of the agenda, and more has to be done to put it there.

**Chelsea Dosad** agreed, she said that we can try and force people out of private vehicles but more has to be done to present motorists with a viable alternative.

**Sarah Boyack, Head of Public Affairs at the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations** noted that public and private sectors must be equally weighted to bring about further integration of transport and housing and noted the need for better walking and cycling access.

**Clare Daly, Policy & Communications Manager at Sustrans** said that more active travel infrastructure must be provided from the offset of development. She also said that Sustrans have an investment fund specifically aimed at housing associations.

Gerard thanked Chelsea and the audience for their contributions. Gerard then welcomed **Martin Griffiths, Chief Executive of Stagecoach; Craig Sanderson, Chief Executive of Link Housing; Cllr Susan Aitken, Leader of Glasgow City Council; and Cllr Lesley Macinnes, Transport and Environment Committee Convenor at Edinburgh City Council** to participate in a panel discussion about how important transport and wider connectivity is helping to address the housing crisis.

Martin Griffiths opened the panel discussion saying he was pleased to support Transport Knowledge Hub and KMPG research, noting that it was a good time for independent parties to look at these issues. He said that Chelsea's presentation was all about the barriers to further integration between transport and housing, and he would like to turn this on its head and focus on what steps need to be taken to overcome these barriers. He said the barriers can be summarised into four areas: money, incentives, planning and communication. He added that public transport must play a significant role in the future and the biggest thing that must be solved is congestion of the roads. Martin continued that if we solve congestion, then we can release funding which can be put towards public transport in order to see it thrive. He concluded his speech by saying there was a need for practical approaches and solutions to these barriers.

**Craig Sanderson, Chief Executive of Link Housing** opened his contribution by noting that his organisation is very different from private developers, because they are in housing development for the long-term. He said that when his organisation develops housing, they



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develop sustainable housing that is going to last. He spoke about the need for sustainable transport to be integrated with housing development, noting that for his own tenants who are on social rent, and with some being disabled, sustainable transport was a priority. Responding to Chelsea's point about the need for joined up thinking, Craig said it was not just about transport, but also health and social care. When looking at investment and funding, Craig called for decision and policy makers to not only look at the price but also the social benefits.

**Cllr Susan Aitken, Leader of Glasgow City Council** said it was a pleasure to be at the event. Susan opened by stating that transport must be viewed through the prism of being an enabler. She said that Glasgow City Council's Connectivity Commission is going to publish its recommendations in two weeks as to what Glasgow and the wider city region can do to build a sustainable future for public transport, and without pre-empting the commission's recommendation, she would like to discuss the policy recommendations it will make. She said that bus and active travel are the most important modes of transport in the future and because of this there is a real need to rewire Glasgow's transport system.

Susan then spoke about the importance of buses, noting that all major bus operators in the city have entered in to formal negotiations about how to improve bus travel in Glasgow. These proposals are currently being worked up, particularly in to how to reduce bus journey times to demonstrate that bus is a credible alternative to the private vehicle. Susan spoke about other initiatives that were being implemented by Glasgow City Council, namely the Low Emission Zone which is to come into effect at the end of the year; increasing and improving services in areas that are bus deserts; and the £6.7 million investment in Sauchiehall Street which grants more space to pedestrians, bike and buses and less space for cars in Glasgow City Centre.

Moving on, Cllr Aitken spoke about the need to build development in places where there is already a good level of connectivity, noting that this will be a big focus for Glasgow City Council's housing plans in the upcoming years and will be crucial in making sure the council reaches its target of building 8500 homes over the next five years. Glasgow City Council have already been applying this placemaking approach with new developments in Sighthill and Govan. Both these developments have active travel bridges to help integrate these areas back into the city. Susan said that this shows that sustainable transport is at the forefront of the planning process.

The final speaker, **Cllr Lesley Macinnes, Transport and Environment Committee Convenor at Edinburgh City Council** then went on to speak about the barriers and solutions in Edinburgh. Lesley said Edinburgh is one of the fastest growing cities in the UK, and this represents a significant challenge. There is a need to ensure that Edinburgh's transport network and housing developments can accommodate these extra people. Lesley endorsed the extension of the tram network, noting that passenger numbers, which currently stand at 6.6 million, will double and will unlock housing development and regeneration in the north of the city. She also said that there was a real need to address short journeys within the city and the need to improve active travel.

Lesley added that she would like to see more discussion and policy around Mobility as a Service (MaaS) and the introduction and roll out of bike-hire schemes. Edinburgh has recently introduced a bike-hire scheme, which was performing well, and Lesley said she



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would like to see this scheme expanded into areas that are suffering from transport poverty. In summary, Lesley concluded by saying there was a need to factor in transport connectivity when creating places for people to live and a need to provide a real alternative for shorter journeys.

Opening the question and answer session, **Derek Halden, Director of DHC Loop Connections** said that Martin Griffiths's summary of the barriers into four categories: money, incentives, planning and communication are very welcomed, and called for more discussion around finance and incentives. Derek said it is important to remember that Scotland's biggest road builder over the past few years has been private house builders, and that this money is not being spent on sustainable transport like car clubs and bus provision.

**Martin Griffiths** agreed with Derek's point. He said there is money in the system, and there is a need to make better and more long-term decisions which produce better outcomes. Martin continued that he thinks big urban centres like Glasgow, Aberdeen and Edinburgh will achieve the successful integration of housing and sustainable transport, but said he is more worried about provincial towns. These towns have a lot of the same issues but do not have the same funds or investment to tackle the problem.

**Cllr Susan Aitken** spoke about how Glasgow City Council was remodelling the relationship between private developers and what the Council are looking for.

**Mic Ralph** asked the panel about what steps can be taken to improve the attractiveness of using the bus. **Martin Griffiths** responded saying that buses are not attractive to people because they have been stigmatised for sixty years. He added that more had to be done to promote bus as a viable alternative to the private vehicle, especially in Scotland.

Martin explained that what changed people's perception about buses in England was the frequency of service and journey times. He said that the transport and bus industry had a big job to do to explain the benefits of the bus network. He concluded by saying that bus is the future.

**Cllr Susan Aitken** agreed, saying that cleanliness and convenience are essential in changing people's perception of buses. She said the fact that buses are now contactless will make a big difference. She added that within the next decade, Glasgow City Centre will give priority to public and sustainable transport and the Council will be bringing forward plans to make it harder for people to bring private vehicles into the centre.

**Cllr Lesley Macinnes** said that Lothian Buses in Edinburgh is a well-established bus network because they have taken advantage of Scottish Government funding and have made the investment. She said that to ensure real structural change, there is a need to go out and tell people that bus is how you need to travel around the city. She said that if people do not make changes then cities like Edinburgh will experience grid lock in the next few years. She concluded by noting that all the facts are available, and people just need to go out and explain them.

**Sam Greer, UK Bus Engineering Director at Scotland Stagecoach** said that tackling congestion had to be a priority. Cllr Aitken agreed, saying that people in the room need to contact the new Scottish Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Michael Matheson in order to bring this to his attention and ask him to make this a priority.



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**Jenny Stewart, Partner at KMPG** said she was really encouraged from what she had heard at today's meeting. She then asked the panel if they could each change one thing about transport what would it be?

**Martin Griffiths** said it would be congestion on the roads because it would unlock investment and that the single biggest barrier to the uptake in bus usage is the private car.

**Cllr Lesley Maciness** also said congestion, noting that this would help both air quality and health. She said that workplace parking levy was essential to creating behavioural change with regards to private vehicles and that Edinburgh City Council was looking in to the levy. She also said that she recently had visited Oslo and was amazed to see the reduction in private car usage when a toll ring was implemented around Oslo City Centre and people had to pay.

Cllr Aitken said that she agreed with everything that had been said. She added that she would like to see the UK Government stop putting barriers up like closing down job centres and rolling-out universal credit which diverted the council's attention away from important things like sustainable transport and housing.

**Gerard Whelan** concluded the event noting that he is encouraged by today's conversations. He said there is a sense of optimism about meeting the challenges. He thanked the panel for an interesting and lively discussion.

**END OF NOTE**