

CoMoUK
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Murdo Fraser MSP
Convener, Covid-19 Committee
Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

28th of April 2020

Dear Mr Fraser

I am writing to you as the Scotland Director of CoMoUK. We are a charity that promotes the environmental, economic, health and social benefits of shared transport for the public good. We are partly funded by Transport Scotland to support the development of shared modes, with a focus on car clubs and bike share schemes. Our membership in Scotland includes all sizeable bike share schemes, large car club operators and we have engagement with many community-run schemes.

I am contacting you in relation to your role as Convenor of the Covid-19 Committee, to inform both you and the Committee of what the shared transport sector is doing to help key workers leading the fight against coronavirus, and highlight the potential role the sector can play in retaining and enhancing some of the environmental gains that have come about as unanticipated by-products of the current lockdown.

In response to the Covid-19 outbreak, shared transport operators have been providing an essential service and keeping our key workers moving. Below is an update on the activity that is taking place on the ground to support the Covid-19 response.

Car clubs: Covid-19 response

There are two main national car club operators in Scotland, Enterprise and Co-Wheels, as well as several community-run schemes.

- Enterprise has provided more than 350 long term vehicles (for a period greater than 28 days) for local authorities, Police Scotland, NHS Services and other essential travellers; including pharmacies, and distribution and the movement of employees within the oil industry. These vehicles have varied from small cars (through Rent-a-Car and Car Club to ensure social distancing), to HGV and Fridge vehicles for distribution of food supplies. Enterprise Car Club (ECC) has offered free membership and heavily discounted hourly rates to NHS staff and other key workers. This month to date (24th April) in Scotland, ECC has provided mobility to NHS workers, council employees, key government departments, charities, and the Police over 840 times for over 13,500 hours and over 34,000 miles. ECC vehicles have remained open for essential travel, with full deep cleans after each hire to ensure that critical travel can still be completed; this has been especially important given the reduction in public transport services.
- Co-wheels is helping key workers leading the fight against coronavirus by providing free memberships and 50% off all bookings for all NHS staff including front line carers, such as home helps and staff in care homes, as well as NHS volunteers. They have introduced an enhanced

cleaning regime with alcohol-based materials on all key touchpoints and surfaces in the cars, and all customers have been contacted to advise them to take action in line with national advice.

- Smaller scale community run car clubs are facing extremely challenging circumstances as a result of the current travel restrictions. However, community organisations like South Ayrshire Community Transport (SACT) are continuing to run scheduled bus services to ensure key workers can get to work, and help people get to pharmacies and hospital appointments. The SACT car club have also offered cars and volunteer drivers for hospital runs and trips for Ayrshire Cancer Support and Troon Cancer Care.

Bike share: Covid-19 response

Cycling has proved to be a safe way to move around and take physical exercise (vitaly important for mental as well as physical health) whilst observing social distancing. For people who do not have access to their own bike, bike share is providing a crucial role in helping key workers to get to work.

- Nextbike, which operates in Glasgow and Stirling, is providing free membership and e-bike rides to NHS workers to help them get to and from work. 3,000 memberships have been made available in Glasgow alone, providing free unlimited 30-minute rides on the standard pedal bikes, in addition to a £2.50 e-bike credit. The scheme is being jointly funded by Nextbike, Glasgow City Council and Scottish Power. A further 100 free memberships have been made available for key workers in Stirling.
- Just Eat Cycles' fleet of pedal and e-bikes are playing a crucial role as part of Edinburgh's public transport network. They are being used by key workers, including workers at the city's two largest NHS hospital sites, to get around the city; with a daily average of 150 trips starting or finishing at key worker or NHS locations over the past two weeks.

The post-Covid transport landscape

The Committee will rightly be focused on the immediate impact and response to Covid-19. However, the lockdown is revealing potential solutions that could have far-reaching benefits beyond this crisis, which could help create a cleaner, more sustainable future for our country. Therefore, it is vital that the Committee considers what life might be like after this crisis subsides and leads the debate on what business as usual could look like.

The dramatic fall in road traffic as a result of the lockdown, has led to an astonishing drop in air pollution in Scotland's cities. In Glasgow's Hope Street, Scotland's most polluted street, there has been 73% drop in Nitrogen Dioxide levels according to analysis by Air Quality Scotland.

It is crucial that we do not go back to a climate damaging normal. Shared transport is a vital weapon in the fight to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions, reduce congestion and improve air quality. Our research consistently finds that car clubs lead to a reduction in private car ownership and use, as well as providing a much cleaner fleet than the UK average. Emissions from car club vehicles in Scotland are, on average, 43% lower than the average UK car, and 98% of car club cars are compliant with low emission zones.

The Covid-19 pandemic and our response to it is likely to have many deep and lasting consequences, changing the way that we live, work and travel. Post Covid-19 we are likely to see significant changes in commuting patterns, as more people work from home. In turn, this will almost certainly lead to a reduction

in commutes made in single occupancy private cars. Consequently, car clubs will become a more practical, cost-efficient and attractive option for more people.

Cycling Scotland reports that there has been a dramatic rise in the number of cyclists, and in some areas the number of cyclists has more than doubled since the lockdown was introduced.

The package of support for local authorities to increase cycling capacity and safety, announced today by the Cabinet Secretary for Transport, is welcome. However, given the significant environmental and health benefits of cycling we strongly believe that bike share schemes should be viewed as a fundamental part of Scotland's public transport system, and should be given more Scottish Government support as we rebuild after the current crisis.

The shared transport sector is playing a vital role during this current crisis, and the potential contribution it could make to our society has been thrown into sharp relief by the behavioral changes which have been necessitated by the current extraordinary circumstances, but which are likely to have impacts well beyond the coronavirus outbreak. We therefore strongly urge the Committee to consider an inquiry into climate change mitigation plans, with a particular focus on sustainable transport, at the earliest opportunity.

I would welcome the opportunity to further contribute to the work of the Committee, along with our members who can describe the measures being taken to support the efforts to fight coronavirus and key workers and how shared transport can support Scotland's future sustainable travel needs.

Your sincerely



Lorna Finlayson
Scotland Director
CoMoUK