

# Scottish ministers urge First Minister to cut costs of public transport

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A goal of reducing the number of miles travelled by car by 20% by 2030 has been set by Scottish ministers at Holyrood – but questions have been asked how achievable this is with the current cost of public transport.

With data from a new report highlighting how fares for public transport have risen “well above inflation,” a cross-party group of MSPs has said that “the cost of public transport needs to be cut in real terms”.

Group convener and Conservative MSP Graham Simpson said: “Cutting car miles by a fifth within just over seven years is a tall order.

“When it still costs a couple times more to travel by train than it would in petrol, then you have to ask how we are ever going to encourage people on to public transport.”

Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has already pledged that fares on the [ScotRail](#) network will remain frozen until March 2023, however MSPs from the cross-party group on Sustainable Transport don’t believe that this is doing enough to drive people out of their cars and onto public transport, stating that the

increasingly expensive fares for trains and buses could make leaving the car at home a less attractive alternative.

-Labour MSP and group deputy convener Sarah Boyack said: “My priorities would be a focus on ensuring that public transport is affordable and accessible, with a reversal of cuts to bus services, continued investment in active travel and political support for a shift to low carbon transport across all sectors.”

The document noted: “Considering the cost-of-living crisis and the cost increases of public transport over the past decades, the cost of public transport needs to be cut in real terms.

“The Scottish Government should review the affordability of bus and rail travel and ensure that Scots are able to afford using public transport.”

A Transport Scotland spokesperson said: “We know that to reduce car use, public transport has to be affordable and accessible.

“We have frozen rail fares until March 2023. ScotRail fares remain on average cheaper than those across the rest of Great Britain – this is because for a decade we have kept fare increases down by ensuring they are in line with no more than RPI as well as supporting various promotional fare offers with lower-still fares.”