

Agenda Item	16
Report No	CP/32/25

The Highland Council

Committee: Communities and Place

Date: 6 November 2025

Report Title: Sustainable Business Travel - Update on progress 2024/25

Report By: Assistant Chief Executive Place

1 Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report updates Members on progress made with the Approach to Sustainable Business Travel during 2024/25.
- 1.2 The timescale of the plan is over a 7-year period and reflects the time it will take to see investment in infrastructure, changes in fleet type and meaningful change in behaviour. The plan is subject to funding being identified.
- 1.3 The Pathfinder 2 project, a collaborative approach with Aberdeen City and Shire Councils and Moray Council has been tendered and the contract awarded to EZO and this will allow the migration of existing EV chargers and the installation of new chargers to commence.
- 1.4 This work contributes directly to delivery of the Council's Net Zero Strategy and supports the 'Our Future Highland: Delivery Plan 2024–2027', particularly within the Net Zero, Energy Investment and Innovation Portfolio. The transition to sustainable business travel is a key enabler for reducing corporate emissions, modernising fleet operations, and improving long-term cost efficiency across Council services.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:-
 - i. **Note** progress to date on reducing fleet, miles and emissions;
 - ii. **Note** progress with Pathfinder 2 and indicative timescale for implementation in Highland;
 - iii. **Note** the updates to the action plan detailed within Appendix 1; and
 - iv. **Note** that future reports will continue to align progress monitoring with the Net Zero, Energy Investment and Innovation Portfolio to ensure consistency in reporting and performance management.

3 Implications

- 3.1 **Resource** - The most significant challenge to transitioning the fleet is securing funding. The Scottish Government has indicated that it expects Councils to enter partnership arrangements with the private sector to fund infrastructure requirements. The Pathfinder 2 project was developed to secure private funding in a way that combines public and Council electric fleet charging requirements. The challenge for Highland is low demand areas for public charging, so using the Council fleet requirements in those areas should make this more attractive to the private sector investor.

Additional to the refuelling infrastructure needed to transition to low/no emission vehicles, an increase in budget will be necessary for the transition of all fleet types.

While Pathfinder 2 provides the mechanism to unlock significant private-sector investment in charging infrastructure, delivery is dependent on final business-case approval and subsequent phasing. The Council will need to maintain flexibility in its fleet-replacement programme to align with infrastructure readiness and to ensure that fleet rationalisation and decarbonisation remain affordable and deliverable.

- 3.2 **Legal** - The Council has several requirements in respect of reporting against its climate change obligations, in addition to being required to directly support Scotland's target to end its contribution to climate change no later than 2045. The outcomes of this report will contribute to effective monitoring and reporting. Each year, data is collected in respect of emissions and costs arising from the Council's use of fleet.
- 3.3 **Risk** - The actions in the report will assist the Council with supporting its ambitions to meet its climate and ecological targets.
- 3.4 **Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)** - Training will be provided for relevant staff including mechanics and drivers of new types of vehicles and technology.
- 3.5 **Gaelic** - There are no Gaelic implications arising from this report.

4 Impacts

- 4.1 In Highland, all policies, strategies or service changes are subject to an integrated screening for impact for Equalities, Poverty and Human Rights, Children's Rights and Wellbeing, Climate Change, Islands and Mainland Rural Communities, and Data Protection. Where identified as required, a full impact assessment will be undertaken.
- 4.2 Considering impacts is a core part of the decision-making process and needs to inform the decision-making process. When taking any decision, Members must give due regard to the findings of any assessment.
- 4.3 This is an update report and therefore an impact assessment is not required.

5 Background

- 5.1 The Approach to Sustainable Business Travel was approved in August 2023 and supports the Council's Net Zero Strategy, approved by Highland Council on 29 June 2023. It sets out the approach to sustainable business travel and how the changes to behaviour and practice will contribute to the Council's overall Net Zero targets. It brings together a number of strands of work already underway and provides a comprehensive statement of intent and action plan to facilitate meeting Highland Council and Scottish Government ambitions.
- 5.2 Business travel covers all the different ways staff and Members travel to undertake their roles on behalf of the Council. This can be in vehicles provided by the Council such as refuse collection vehicles, gritters, vans and car club cars, public transport, or their own vehicles, known as grey fleet. Travel is a necessary part of the way we work; however, we must continue to challenge ourselves on why and how we travel.
- 5.3 The approach sets out the national and local context, and the four themes that will underpin delivery:-
- Theme 1 – Reduce through behaviour change;
 - Theme 2 – Rationalise and renew the light fleet;
 - Theme 3 – Investigate and develop low emission approach for the heavy fleet; and
 - Theme 4 – Building Resilience into the Council's travel projects, guidance and policies.
- 5.4 The action plan sets out how these ambitions will be delivered through the following activities:-
- Downsizing the fleet and driving fewer miles;
 - Fuel-efficient driving;
 - Replacing vehicles with low emission alternatives; and
 - Reducing the use of grey fleet/using private vehicles for work purpose

6 Strategic Alignment

- 6.1 Our Future Highland: Delivery Plan 2024-2027 states a commitment to Reconfigure our Asset Base through the development of a Highland Investment Plan and the configuration of a single public estate with partners. This will enable sharing of infrastructure, and ultimately vehicles where appropriate, at hub sites where partners share a building.

The Net Zero, Energy Investment and Innovation theme of the Plan includes a workstream for Investment and Innovation which references the expansion and reliability of EV infrastructure, for both public and fleet use. For fleet, it is expected that delivery of this will be through the Pathfinder 2 project.

The delivery of fleet decarbonisation and the associated charging infrastructure is recognised as a core component of the Highland Investment Plan. By aligning fleet transformation projects with asset rationalisation and shared-depot development, the Council can maximise co-investment opportunities and ensure that infrastructure is delivered strategically across the region.

The infrastructure required to support fleet transition will be developed through a blended funding model — combining private-sector investment via the Pathfinder 2 partnership with targeted capital and estate improvements delivered through the Highland Investment Plan. This approach ensures the Council can leverage external investment while maintaining control of depot and asset development within its wider Net Zero and corporate estate frameworks.

The Sustainable Business Travel programme will be delivered collaboratively across services and with public-sector partners to maximise efficiency. Integration with the single-estate approach will enable shared infrastructure and fleet hubs, ensuring that investment in charging infrastructure delivers maximum value for the wider Highland public sector.

7 Finance

7.1 No budget was allocated in the Capital Programme Review – General Fund paper that was presented to Council on 14 September 2023. Appendix C of that paper “Capital Programme Review 2024/25 - 2028/29 New Projects and Additional Requests for Existing Projects” - No Recommendation at this time – included reference to budget for fleet transition:-

- Heavy Fleet Decarbonisation £8.8m;
- Decarb Fleet - Depot Alterations £3m; and
- EV infrastructure £5.7m

It is therefore critical that the Pathfinder 2 project is successful in delivering its objective of appointing a commercial partner to deliver the electric vehicle charging infrastructure needed for the fleet to transition.

The transition of heavy vehicles remains more challenging, in terms of vehicle availability and cost. Heavy fleet is generally procured using Capital funding, however given the increase in costs of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) heavy fleet this may have to be reviewed.

7.2 Transitioning the fleet to ULEVs presents significant financial challenges. On average, the procurement cost for an electric light fleet vehicle is 20–30% higher than that of a conventionally powered internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicle. The table below highlights key areas where budget pressures are expected.

When leasing ULEV light fleet vehicles, the cost difference is often more pronounced. Lease pricing is primarily determined by the gap between the vehicle’s purchase price and its residual value at the end of the lease, which is influenced by mileage and condition. However, recent trends show that government grants for electric and hybrid vehicles have helped narrow this cost gap. In many cases, lease costs for electric vehicles are now comparable to ICE vehicles - and in some instances, even lower - depending on the level of grant support available.

These financial incentives, combined with ongoing technological improvements and future plans for depot-based EV charging infrastructure, are making the transition to electric vehicles increasingly viable.

Table 1: Cost Comparison Between ICE and ULEV Vehicles

Table 1 provides an indicative comparison of current market costs for internal-combustion-engine (ICE) and ultra-low-emission-vehicle (ULEV) replacements across key vehicle categories. It highlights the differential capital and lease costs that influence the timing and affordability of fleet transition.

Vehicle Type	ICE (Annual Lease/Capital Cost)	ULEV (Annual Lease/Capital Cost)	% Cost Difference
Car (leased over 60 months)	£4,200	£3,600 (Electric)	14% cheaper
Small Van (leased over 60 months)	£5,000	£6,100 (Electric) £4,700 (Plug-in Hybrid)	22% increase 6% cheaper
Large Van (Building Maintenance spec, leased over 60 months)	£6,800	£9,500 (Electric)	40% increase
Small 5T Street Sweeper (Capital Purchase)	£80,000	£235,000 (Electric)	194% increase
18T HGV with Hooklift for Skips (Capital Purchase)	£115,000	£244,000 (Electric)	112% increase
Refuse Collection Vehicle (26T, Capital Purchase)	£220,000	£400,000 (Electric) £700,000 (Hydrogen)	82% increase 218% increase

These figures represent average market estimates and are indicative only. Actual costs will vary according to specification, supplier availability, and grant support at the time of procurement. While capital costs remain higher for larger vehicles, the narrowing lease differential for light fleet demonstrates that the transition to electric vehicles is becoming increasingly viable.

8 Progress to Date

8.1 Business Miles Travelled

8.1.2 Grey Fleet and Car Club

In Financial Year 2024/25, Grey Fleet cost the Council £948,779 with 2,199,094 miles claimed (average of 43p/mile). Mileage does not include passenger miles claimed to avoid double counting; however, this is included within cost.

During 2024/25 Car Club was utilised for 802,923 miles shown in graph below. Cost to the Council (Enterprise Billing, was £518,174 (65p/mile)).

Again, passenger miles are not accounted for within mileage for Car Club (to avoid double counting).

Graph excludes HLH Grey Fleet

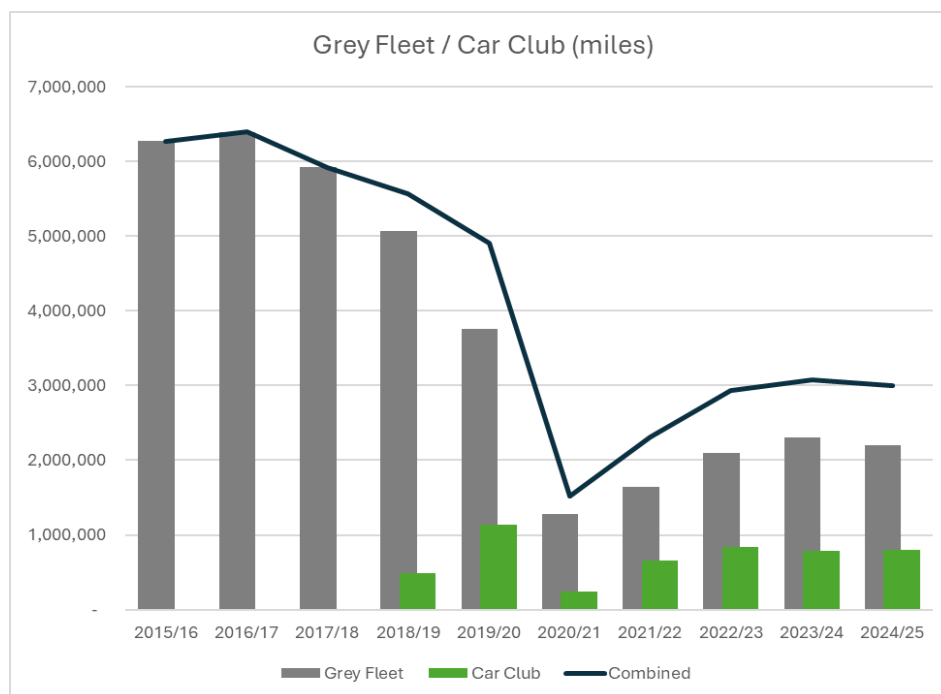


Figure 1 Grey fleet/Car Club Miles Travelled

Car club usage has increased slightly, limited by the size of the fleet. Analysis is underway to determine how to increase the usage and thus, the efficiency of the Car Club scheme. The fleet of Car Club vehicles consists of 25 No. Hybrid, 24 Petrol and 3 Diesel vehicles. As vehicles are replaced, they will be electric where the infrastructure can support that change.

Grey fleet miles have decreased by 203,601 miles from 2,302,695 miles in year 2023/24 to 2,199,094 in year 2024/25.

8.1.3 Other Modes of Travel

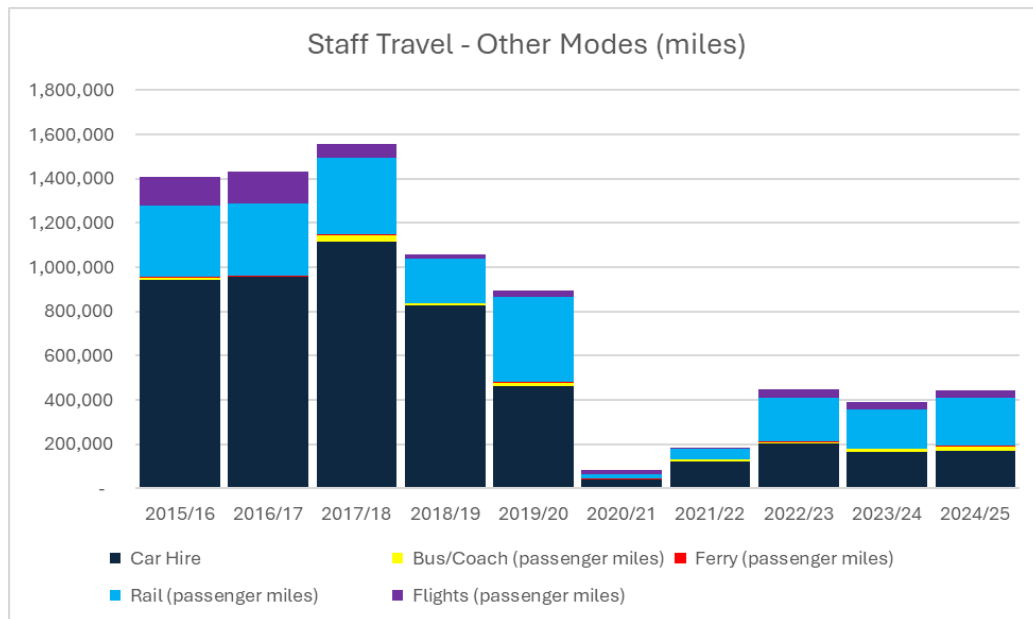


Figure 2: Staff Tavel – Other Modes

Figure 2 shows slight increase in other forms of travel between 2023/24 and 2024/25. This can mainly be attributed to a slight increase in the use of Rail travel and Bus / Coach travel. It also continues to show that, in combination with other factors, new ways of working, such as virtual meetings, have had a positive impact on reducing the overall journey miles undertaken by the Council.

8.2 Composition of the Council Fleet – Fleet Comparison

Vehicle Type	All Fuel Types			of which ULEV (Electric/Hybrid)		
	2024	2025	% Change	2024	2025	% Change
Car	92	87	- 5%	69	73	+ 6%
Heavy Fleet	214	216	+ 1%	0	0	0%
Light Fleet	569	575	+ 1%	18	16	- 11%
Minibus/MPV <14 seats	23	30	+ 30%	2	3	+ 50%
Other Plant / Specialist	133	76	- 43%	0	0	0%
RCVs	84	87	+ 4%	0	0	0%
TOTALS	1115	1071	-4%	89	92	+3%

Table 2: Composition of Highland Council Fleet
Does not include HLH or Bus Ops Project. Excludes hired vehicles

Overall, there has been a slight increase in the number of electric / hybrid cars and vans in the fleet whilst the overall fleet size has decreased by 44 vehicles. Our current holding of 92 ULEV vehicles can be further broken down into 32% Electric (29 vehicles), and 68% of which are Petrol Hybrid (63 vehicles).

A project is also currently underway to further “right size” the fleet which aimed at increasing the utilisation of the existing fleet whilst removing underutilised vehicles across the fleet. Robust procedures are in place to achieve this. An update on the success of this project will be provided in future updates to this committee.

8.3 Fuel Consumption per Year (Litres)

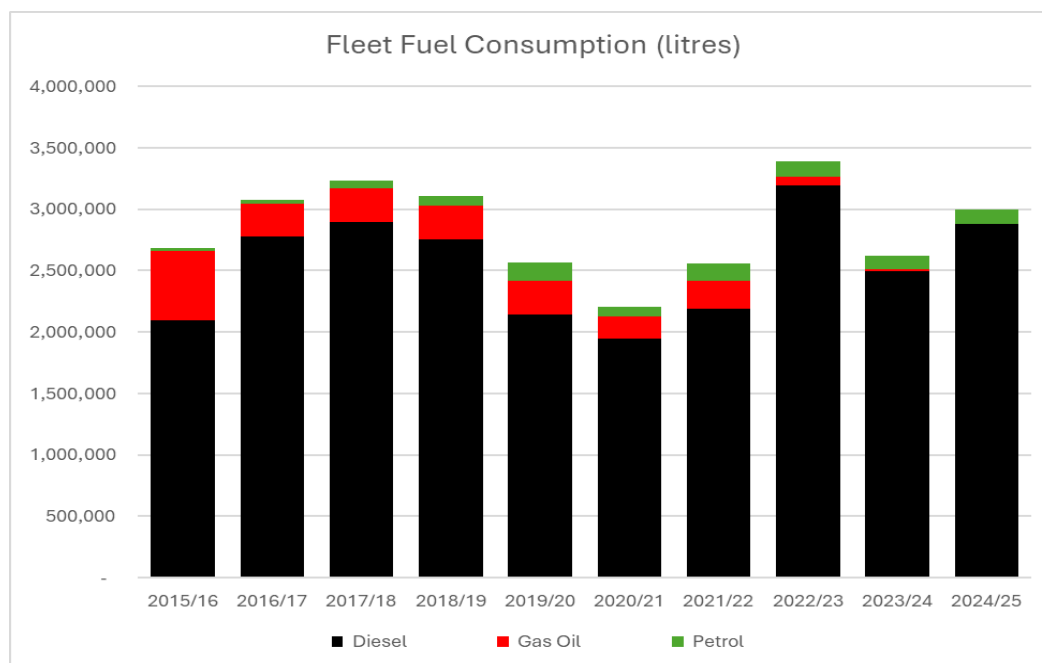


Figure 3: Fleet Fuel Consumption per Year (litres)

Figure 3 shows an increase in the overall number of litres of fuel used by the Council for 2024/25. This can be attributed to several reasons which include the following:-

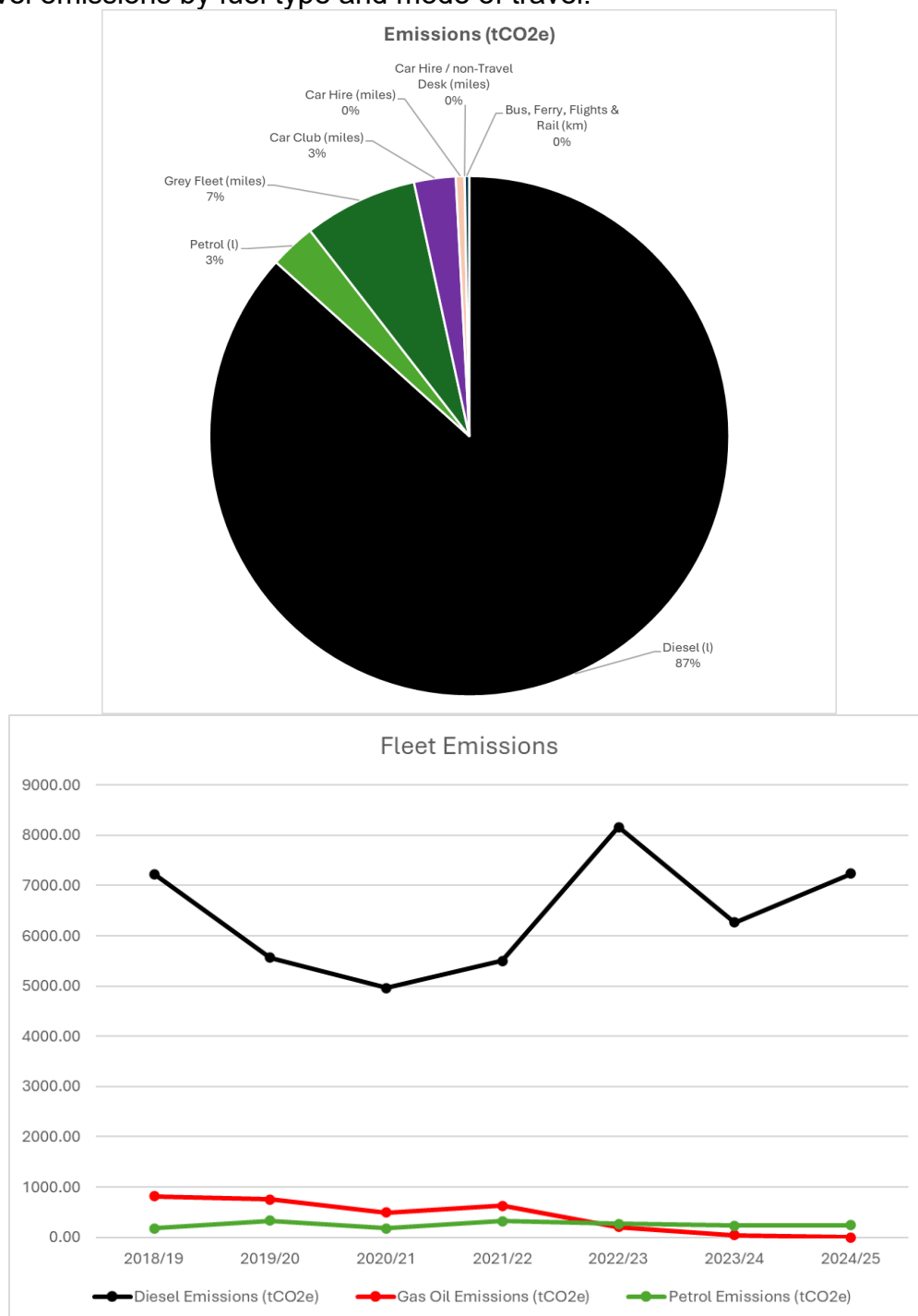
- An increase in the food waste fleet by 7 vehicles and these run routes 5 days a week;
- Waste routes, particularly in urban areas are longer due to increased development;
- Winter 24/25 was mild and as such more Roads works would have taken place than normal;
- More Capital works in Roads, bulk of which is carried out in-house, was carried out;
- Elimination of the use of Gas Oil; and
- An ageing fleet means less fuel efficiency.

It is anticipated that the fuel figures will decrease in future years as the fleet “right sizing” project continues and more hybrid and EV vehicles are used to replace ICE vehicles.

It should be noted that there is no usage of Gas oil (red diesel) in 2024/25. This is due to changes in legislation which prohibits most of the Council vehicles and plant from using Gas Oil. The increased use of petrol hybrid cars and vans also accounts for the increase in petrol usage between 2023/24 and 2024/25.

8.4 Summary of Emissions

Figures 4 and 5 show the trends in the estimated travel emissions by fuel type used in the Council fleet and the use of Car club and Grey Fleet. Table 3 shows the total travel emissions by fuel type and mode of travel.



Figures 4 & 5 Emissions Trend Graphs

The data shows that, despite operational factors influencing fuel use, overall business-travel emissions continue to fall. Reduced grey-fleet mileage and improved utilisation of shared-use vehicles remain the most significant contributors to this trend.

9 Update to Fleet Replacement Programme

- 9.1 Table 4 sets out the provisional programme for fleet replacement and decarbonisation through 2035, aligned with the Council's Net Zero and fleet-rationalisation objectives.

	<2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035
Car	4	5	11	9	36	21	1	0	0	0	0	0
Heavy Fleet	25	25	21	26	24	31	26	32	5	0	0	1
Light Fleet	84	137	121	50	83	85	14	0	1	0	0	0
Minibus/MP V <14 seats	10	4	3	3	2	5	2	0	0	0	0	0
Other Plant / Specialist	30	6	2	1	12	7	9	5	4	0	0	0
RCVs	10	15	12	16	21	6	0	8	1	0	0	0
Grand Total	163	173	157	67	176	155	52	45	11	0	0	1

Table 4: Provisional fleet replacement programme

The programme will be refreshed annually to reflect updated cost data, vehicle availability and depot-charging readiness. Delivery will be phased in line with the Pathfinder 2 (Fleet and Public EV Charging Infrastructure Partnership) rollout to ensure that infrastructure and fleet transition remain synchronised.

- 9.2 The Pathfinder 2 project will be the route to funding the fleet electric charging infrastructure. It is expected that following a successful bidding exercise, Highland will see the phasing in of significant numbers of installations from 2028.

Now that contracts have been signed with EZO this will allow plans to be developed to accelerate the inclusion of electric vehicles into the fleet as depot plans progress.

10 Enablers to Transformation

10.1 Pathfinder 2 project

Highland Council is a key partner in the Pathfinder 2 collaboration with Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, and Moray Councils. The programme seeks to deliver a region-wide charging infrastructure network for both public and fleet use through a commercial partnership with EZO.

The project will enable the Council to progress fleet decarbonisation without direct capital investment by aligning fleet charging needs with wider public infrastructure deployment. Highland's participation also ensures a rural perspective is embedded in the design of the national model for fleet transition.

A joint governance structure is being established across the four Councils, with the Assistant Chief Executive – Place (Highland) chairing the strategic group.

Implementation plans will be confirmed following approval of the Business Case, with phased installation anticipated from 2028.

Pathfinder 2 will complement the Highland Investment Plan by identifying depot and site upgrades where co-investment in charging and energy infrastructure can be achieved. This blended approach ensures that private-sector delivery through Pathfinder is supported by Council-led investment in depot capacity, grid reinforcement and shared public-estate assets.

- 10.2 Governance arrangements will be set up to manage all aspects of the programme over the 4 Councils. The Assistant Chief Executive - Place, Highland will be the Chair of the steering group. The terms of reference are to be defined, with the first meeting planned for October 2025.

10.3 Current EV installations

Twenty-six EV charging units have been commissioned (52 charge points total) across 5 Council depots during 2024/25 - Alness; Craig Road (Dingwall), Lotland St (Inverness), Diriebught Road (Inverness) and Carr's Corner (Fort William). Both 22kW and 7kW units have been deployed based on fleet demand.

These installations were externally funded through the Switched On Fleets programme and serve as early enablers for the Pathfinder 2 infrastructure rollout. They provide valuable operational data on depot usage, charging patterns and power capacity, which will inform the wider regional implementation plan. Usage during 2023/24 was 2,214 kWh across 104 charging sessions, with growth expected as additional EVs are introduced.

Future installations will be prioritised in line with the Pathfinder 2 phasing plan to ensure a consistent and scalable approach across all Highland Council depots.

10.4 Hydrogen

The Highland Council's Climate Change and Energy Team continue to work with developers on the development of green hydrogen at the Longman former landfill site in Inverness, as part of their Cromarty Hydrogen project. The project aims to supply local industry could in future provide a regional source of Hydrogen for council and commercial fleets.

The UK Government's forthcoming Hydrogen Strategy and the next Hydrogen Allocation Round (HAR 3) are expected to define national direction for hydrogen deployment across the public sector. The Highland Council intends to develop its own Hydrogen Strategy following publication of the UK framework, supported by the Scottish Government Hydrogen Support Unit.

Hydrogen is anticipated to form one component of a diversified approach to fleet and infrastructure decarbonisation. The Council will assess use cases on an application-by-application basis, recognising that some operations will be better served by direct electrification or battery technologies, while others may benefit from hydrogen or other alternative fuels.

10.5 Trial of E-Cargo Bikes

Highland Council continues to participate in a pilot scheme offering staff access to e-cargo bikes for business travel, supporting sustainable options for short local journeys. Participating teams have undertaken Cycling Scotland accredited training, supported by the Council's behavioural-change officers.

A range of benefits have been reported, including reduced vehicle use, lower travel times and improved wellbeing. Feedback indicates that standard e-bikes may be more suitable for certain services, and the Council has expanded its small e-bike fleet accordingly.

Next steps include expanding access to e-bikes within selected services and installing externally funded charging lockers at HQ by March 2026. Lessons learned from the pilot will inform a wider review of short-distance travel options across the organisation.

10.6 Review of Travel and Subsistence Policy

The Travel and Subsistence policy has been updated to include the travel hierarchy diagram, and reference to sustainable business travel and the climate change ambitions of the Council, as well as statutory reporting on emissions.

The rates applied to travel and subsistence were not reviewed.

11 Action Plan Update

- 11.1 Progress during 2024/25 demonstrates continued commitment to embedding the Sustainable Travel Hierarchy, rationalising fleet assets, and aligning operational change with the Council's broader Net Zero objectives.

Appendix 1 sets out the action plan as approved by Community and Place Committee in August 2023, progress made through 2024/25 and review/completion dates going forward.

Designation:	Assistant Chief Executive, Place
Date:	5 October 2024
Author:	Andrew Hunter, Service Lead - Transport and Logistics Andrew Morgan, Climate Change Co-Ordinator
Background Papers:	Approach to Sustainable Business Travel Report
Appendices:	Appendix 1 - Update to Action Plan to 2023-2030

Update to Action Plan to 2023 - 2030

No	Objectives	Responsible	Due/Review Date	November 2025 Update	Status / Next Review
Theme 1: Reduce through behaviour change					
1.1	Employee Modal Shift - Reduce miles travelled and need for transport by providing training, communications, and ongoing engagement with the Sustainable Travel Hierarchy.				
	Continue the New Ways of Working (NWOW) approach and promote remote working technologies.	All Services with CCET/ Fleet support	Annual report to strategic committees	An increase in overall Travel has been evidenced during 2024/25. The Approach to Sustainable Business Travel has been integrated throughout the review of the Travel and Subsistence policy. The travel hierarchy structure has also been included. It is expected that claimants and authorisers must demonstrate that the principles of the travel hierarchy have been applied in relation to booking of travel. The message regarding sustainable travel options will continue to be reinforced through both wider Council communications and through the work of the quarterly Fleet Operational user group.	September 2026
	Encourage staff to choose the most sustainable travel option by providing incentives such as pool Ebike / bikes.			The trial of e-cargo bikes continues and has highlighted some issues that need to be resolved. We have one e-cargo bike left with the Council and work will continue in trialling this. Feedback has suggested that in some locations e-bikes are preferable to e-cargo bikes.	Ongoing
	Continue cycle to work scheme.			The promotion of active travel whilst carrying out Council business continues. It is expected that a survey planned for 2025/26 on active travel for commuting to work can be expanded to include active travel at work.	March 2026

No	Objectives	Responsible	Due/Review Date	November 2025 Update	Status / Next Review
1.2	Driver Behaviours				
	Reduce mileage and emissions by providing policies, procedures, and training opportunities to ensure drivers understand their responsibilities in relation to their vehicles and driving behaviours.	All Services with CCET/Fleet support	January 2026	The driver handbook and fleet policy document are being reviewed and updated. The Approach to Sustainable Business Travel will be integrated throughout the policy document.	March 2026
	Quarterly telematics reports to Service managers highlighting areas for improvement.			Managers have access to telematic system and reports are issued especially in relation to driver behaviour, harsh braking and acceleration, and speeding for example. Driver assessment is carried out where appropriate.	Ongoing
1.3	Service Level Targets				
	Support Services with setting and monitoring carbon budget and annual targets to reduce travel, fuel consumption and emissions by all methods.	All Services with NZWG and fleet support	April 2024	Embedded in the Net Zero, Energy and Investment Innovation portfolio, carbon budget and emission reduction targets will be approved for all Services by December 2025.	December 2025
	Agree Service fleet requirements with ECOs	All Services with Fleet support	March 2024	Ongoing	Ongoing
1.4	Communications				
	Ensure Services are aware of their fleet replacement dates and when their vehicles will be rationalised or replaced with ULEV	Fleet Service	Quarterly reporting	Services are made aware of replacement timescales for leased vehicles. Usage reports are produced to enable decision making on the replacement of a vehicle: • mile travelled • usage pattern • range/route travelled • is electric a viable alternative, depending on local charging infrastructure	Quarterly reporting on going

No	Objectives	Responsible	Due/Review Date	November 2025 Update	Status / Next Review
	Develop policy and guidance around use of the charging infrastructure for both Council private network and public network.	CCET/Fleet Service	March 2024	Action carried forward with assistance from Climate Change team.	March 2026
Theme 2: Rationalise and renew the light fleet					
2.1	Fleet Rationalisation - Review Council fleet and rationalise:				
	Rationalise additional vehicles acquired in response to the Covid pandemic.	SLT/NZWG/ Fleet service	2023 Q1	Complete	
	Implement criteria and policy for a further 20% rationalisation or vehicle downsizing (benchmark 2019).		Annually (from 2023)	During 2024/25 the fleet size reduced from 1115 to 1071. Criteria for new or replacement vehicles include: • Usage reports are produced to enable decision making on the replacement of a vehicle: • mile travelled • usage pattern • range/route travelled • is electric a viable alternative, depending on local charging infrastructure	Ongoing
2.2	Fleet ULEV Replacement				
	Continue to implement a prioritised fleet replacement programme to transition the light fleet to ULEV, including full electric EV and hybrid technology.	Fleet Service	Annually (from 2023)	Where the typical journeys undertaken are of a distance suitable for EV and charging facilities are available in the depot the default replacement for a car or small van is EV. Some larger vans fall into this category too.	Ongoing
	Agree standardised vehicles across region. Research the market for ULEV alternatives.		September 2023	We have standard specifications for all the light fleet. The type and manufacturer can depend on availability and cost at the time of procurement.	Complete

No	Objectives	Responsible	Due/Review Date	November 2025 Update	Status / Next Review
	For each potential procurement, review whole life cost model and lease period, in liaison with Finance Manager to provide a value for money assessment along with an assessment of carbon emissions from ULEV and other fuel type vehicles. Replacements will be subject to adequate budget being available.		Ongoing	Whole life costs are reviewed for replacement or new vehicles whether it be EV or ICE.	Ongoing
2.3	Fleet EV Charging Infrastructure				
	Develop and implement an installation programme for charging infrastructure that corresponds with the fleet transition, at Council depots, offices, public buildings, and home charge points. This will be subject to adequate funding (internal or external) being available. Facilitated by the Pathfinder project.	CCET /Procurement Fleet Service	Ongoing through 2027	26 EV charging units have been commissioned (52 charge points total) across 5 depots in the last 12 months. The depots are: Alness; Craig Road, Dingwall; Lotland St, Inverness; Diriebught Road, Inverness and Carr's Corner, Fort William. Both 22kW and 7kW units have been deployed across these sites. An implementation plan covering Highland, Moray, Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City Councils will be developed. Highland can expect to see significant numbers of installations from 2028. Governance arrangements will be set up to manage all aspects of the programme over the 4 Councils. The Assistant Chief Executive, Place, Highland is Chair of the Strategic group.	Ongoing. Phasing in of significant numbers of installations from 2028
2.4	Establish Infrastructure Funding Model				
	Review current procurement model.	Procurement/Fleet/Finance Service	Ongoing	For each procurement exercise the market is tested for the optimum finance model.	Ongoing
	Identify and utilise external funding opportunities for fleet renewal and associated infrastructure.	Procurement/Fleet/Finance Service/CCET		The Pathfinder 2 project will be the route to funding the fleet electric charging infrastructure. Once the contract implementation is completed Highland will see significant numbers of installations from 2028.	Ongoing

No	Objectives	Responsible	Due/Review Date	November 2025 Update	Status / Next Review
	Investigate private sector funding opportunities for fleet infrastructure, through pathfinder project.	Procurement/Fleet/Finance Service/CCET			
	Electric vehicle charging infrastructure installation	Procurement/Fleet Service/CCET			
2.5	Infrastructure Collaboration				
	Investigate collaborating with other organisations on charging infrastructure, sharing assets where possible. Building partnerships that deliver to help accelerate the wider Highland climate change agenda. Facilitated by the Pathfinder project.	Fleet Service, other partners as appropriate, e.g. NHS etc	Ongoing	Our Future Highland: Delivery Plan 2024-2027 states a commitment to Reconfigure our Asset Base through the development of a Highland Investment Plan and the configuration of a single public estate include partners. As well as sharing office space, this will create an opportunity to review and optimise/share fleets and fleet infrastructure, including EV charging at sites.	Ongoing
2.6	Grey fleet and casual car hire policy				
	Review policy on grey fleet use and casual car vehicle hire.	HR Service / Fleet service	April 2024	Grey fleet, hire vehicles and car club are referenced in the updated Travel and Subsistence policy.	Completed
	Consider whether non ULEV cars can be used for Council business and consider reducing or stopping mileage rates for non ULEV cars from 2025		April 2024	The widespread availability of ULEV and charging network will influence this policy decision. The Pathfinder 2 project will be the route to funding the fleet electric charging infrastructure. It is expected that following a successful bidding exercise, Highland will see the phasing in of significant numbers of installations from 2028.	2028

No	Objectives	Responsible	Due/Review Date	November 2025 Update	Status / Next Review
Theme 3: Investigate and develop low emission approach for the Heavy Fleet					
3.1	Fleet assessment, route optimisation and rationalisation. All LGVs include telematics as part of specification, which provides data allowing for:				
	Analysis of LGV utilisation and requirements.	All Services / NZWG / Fleet Service	Ongoing	Managers have access to telematics to review and monitor vehicle activity.	Ongoing
	Identification of possible vehicles for downsizing or rationalisation.			Vehicle utilisation is reviewed when considering vehicle replacement programme and, in an effort, to “right size” the Council fleet.	Ongoing
	Reduction in mileage and number of vehicles through route optimisation: • Waste – RCV route optimisation reduces mileage and emissions. Optimisation allows for addition future housing to be serviced by current fleet size. • Winter fleet – Reconsider existing route boundaries and multi-use vehicles.			Waste route optimisation determines effective use of their fleet. The roads design project is considering the winter routing.	Ongoing
3.2	Vehicle Improvements				
	Continue to reduce emissions through installation of electric tail lifts on RCVs.	Fleet Service	Ongoing	Electric tail lifts are standard specification of new builds in the RCV fleet.	Ongoing
	Continue to introduce fully electric street sweepers (Green machines).			Wherever possible small street sweepers will be replaced with ULEV variants. 1 of the 11 street sweepers is EV, based in Rose Street car park. Infrastructure and costs are the limiting factor currently.	Ongoing

No	Objectives	Responsible	Due/Review Date	November 2025 Update	Status / Next Review
	Invest in vehicle technology improvements e.g. GPS technology to optimise gritting requirements on winter fleet offering cost and carbon savings.			Route optimisation is already in place within the waste team and has allowed routes to become more efficient. Route optimisation and the use of GPS controlled salt spreaders have been trialled in the Roads winter maintenance operation and is being included within the scope of the roads redesign project.	Ongoing
3.3	Vehicle Trials				
	Identify possible funding streams or partners to support ULEV LGV trials.	NZWG / Fleet service	Ongoing	A monthly review of possible funding source using My Grant Finder website, is undertaken. Nothing has been identified as suitable for this work. Trials are arranged directly with manufacturers these have included trials of fully electric refuse vehicles, electric mini excavators, small electric road sweepers, electric salt spreader.	Ongoing
	Trial low emission LGVs in urban areas, including: • Low emission RCV. Gain confidence and assess the feasible range and possible routes. • Other urban area vehicles e.g. electric excavator and dumper, E-transits, electric pavement gritter.		Ongoing	We have completed a demonstration of a fully EV Refuse Collection vehicle in Inverness. We will continue to trail these technologies with the assistance of the manufacturers and suppliers. Each trail will have a feedback process and this will be used in formulating future plans. Various other electric items of plant such as mini excavators have been trailed with varying results.	Ongoing
	Engage with suppliers/partners to investigate and trial alternative fuel LGVs (HVO, hydrogen). This is dependent on vehicle availability and fuel supply. With support from Aberdeen City Council, investigate retrofit of hydrogen fuel tanks to Highland Council vehicles.		Ongoing	We will engage with suppliers and partners to trial alternative fuel LGVs going forward. Regarding the use of hydrogen this is some way off as at present there is no fuel supply available and none of the workshops are equipped to deal with Hydrogen powered vehicles. This would mean all Hydrogen vehicles would have to be maintained and inspected using external contractors which will incur additional costs.	Ongoing

No	Objectives	Responsible	Due/Review Date	November 2025 Update	Status / Next Review
3.4	Identify preferred alternative fuel type and refuelling infrastructure requirements				
	Research the market and identify preferred ULEV alternatives for each vehicle type. Due to geographical and supply constraints of the Highland region, in many cases electric or hydrogen may not be possible and ICE vehicles may be required in the long term.	NZWG / Fleet Service	Ongoing	Market research is ongoing as is information gathering at fleet forums.	Ongoing
	Assess hydrogen demand and refuelling requirements and potential supply and/or generation.		December 2023	Ongoing – revised target date to be determined.	Ongoing
	Assess number, size, and type of charge points. Investigate renewable sources of energy for EV charging.		December 2023	Data gathering on requirements has been carried out as part of the Pathfinder 2 project. This will be reviewed regularly as vehicle types are assessed ahead of each procurement exercise.	Ongoing
3.5	Heavy Fleet ULEV Replacement				
	Agree standardised vehicles across region.	Fleet service	March 2024	Base specification for all types of heavy fleet established. It will need revising as technology progresses in ULEV heavy fleet availability.	Ongoing
	Develop and implement a replacement programme for replacement or conversion of LGV to ULEV.		September 2023	Programme developed based on current knowledge of the timescale of the Pathfinder 2 project.	Ongoing

No	Objectives	Responsible	Due/Review Date	November 2025 Update	Status / Next Review
	For each potential procurement, review whole life cost model and lease period, in liaison with Finance Manager to provide a value for money assessment along with an assessment of carbon emissions from ULEV and other fuel type vehicles.		Ongoing	Each procurement is market tested to demonstrate best value for money in product type as well as finance model.	Ongoing
3.6	Establish Infrastructure Funding Model				
	Investigate private sector funding opportunities for fleet infrastructure, through the fleet pathfinder project.	Procurement/NZWG / Fleet service	April 2024	Pathfinder 2 is the model that will deliver the expansion of the EV infrastructure. Monthly review of My Grant Finder website to identify any funding opportunities that could be available to decarbonise fleet.	Ongoing
	Council budget for infrastructure installation will be confirmed.	Resource & Finance Service	September 2023	No budget was allocated in the Capital Programme Review – General Fund paper that was presented to Council on 14 September 2023. Appendix C Capital Programme Review 2024/25 - 2028/29 New Projects and Additional Requests for Existing Projects - No Recommendation at this time – included reference to budget for fleet transition: Heavy Fleet Decarbonisation £8.8m Decarb Fleet - Depot Alterations £3m EV infrastructure 5.7m It is therefore critical that the Pathfinder 2 project is successful in delivering its objective of appointing a commercial partner to deliver the infrastructure needed for the fleet to transition.	Closed

3.7	Infrastructure Collaboration				
	Continue to investigate and develop partnerships with other local authorities, commercial operators, and fuel providers. This includes taking a joint approach to procurement with partner organisations through our shared procurement service with Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils	Fleet Service, other partners as appropriate, i.e. NHS etc	Ongoing	Pathfinder 2 is the model that will deliver the expansion of the EV infrastructure in collaboration with other Council partners.	Ongoing
	Investigate collaborating with other organisations on charging infrastructure, sharing assets where possible. Building partnerships that deliver to help accelerate the wider Highland climate change agenda.		Ongoing	Our Future Highland: Delivery Plan 2024-2027 states a commitment to Reconfigure our Asset Base through the development of a Highland Investment Plan and the configuration of a single public estate include partners. As well as sharing office space, this will create an opportunity to review and optimise/share fleets and fleet infrastructure, including EV charging at sites.	Ongoing
Theme 4: Building Resilience into the Council’s travel projects, guidance, and policies.					
4.1	Assist with the development of the Council’s Local Climate Impact Profile. a) Provide data and information on how the service has been impacted by weather events.	Climate Change Coordinator (Adaptation) / Fleet Service	December 2023	This work is now carried out with several individuals embedded within the Climate Change team	March 2026
4.2	Review guidance for officers a) Winter Travel Policy b) Adverse Weather c) Management of Occupational Road Risk d) Adverse Weather Guidance	Fleet Service / Occupational Health and Safety.	December 2023	Ongoing in conjunction with the Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing team.	March 2026