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WWF for a living planet

Roisin Kelly
Room 406,
Parliament Buildings,
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Reference: Regional Development Committee Inquiry into Sustainable Transport

2 September 2009

Dear Roisin,

WWF Northern Ireland welcomes the Regional Development Committee's inquiry into Sustainable Transport and appreciates the opportunity to comment on this very important piece of work.

WWF Northern Ireland is part of the largest independent conservation organisation in the world which operates in over 90 countries. WWF is a challenging, constructive, science-based organisation that addresses issues from the survival of species and habitats to climate change, sustainable business and environmental education. WWF has some five million supporters worldwide and approximately 90% of our income derives from voluntary sources such as people and the business community.

WWF works to

- conserve endangered species - such as tigers, great apes and whales;
- protect endangered spaces - such as forests, savannahs, wetlands and seas;
- address global threats to the planet - such as climate change and toxic chemicals

for the benefit of people and nature.

If you have a further queries on this submission please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Malachy Campbell
Policy Officer WWF Northern Ireland

a. The social, environmental and economic aspects of sustainable transport.

It is important to point out that there will be some overlap between the different aspects highlighted (social, environmental and economic) of sustainable transport, and WWF Northern Ireland regards it as important that the additional benefits of moving to a much more sustainable transport system be fully considered, in the round, as they will likely be felt by more than one department. In this context a narrow approach, limited in terms of departmental responsibilities, is not the best way of looking at this issue.

Energy Consumption

If everyone in the world consumed natural resources and generated Carbon Dioxide (CO_2) at the rate we do in Europe/UK/Ireland/Northern Ireland, we would need three planets to support us. The impacts of this unsustainable consumption, which include climate change, deforestation and biodiversity loss, will have potentially devastating consequences on both humans and the natural world. WWF has a vision for a One Planet Future - a world in which people and nature thrive within their fair share of the Earth's natural resources. In order to achieve this, amongst other things, we need to reduce our consumption of fossil fuels through a combination of reducing demand, greater energy efficiency and ensuring greater use of renewable energy sources.

The trend of declining reserves coupled with increasing demand for oil, and all the economic, social and environmental implications that result, should ensure this shift is achieved as a matter of urgency, though there is little sign of it yet, even though the International Energy Agency(1) have said

"*The world's energy system is at a crossroads. Current global trends in energy supply and consumption are patently unsustainable – environmentally, economically and socially. But that can – and must – be altered; there's still time to change the road were on*"

Transport and oil

In the EU, transport is the sector with the largest demand for energy, accounting for 31% of total final energy consumption, of which road transport accounts for 85% (2). Emissions from road transport represented 29.4% of Northern Ireland's CO_2 emissions in 2006, an increase of 49.5% since 1990, and second only to energy production (35%)(3). By contrast, road transport represents only 21% of the UK's total CO_2 emissions and grew by only 10% since 1990, so there is clearly a disproportionate problem in Northern Ireland.(3) Passenger cars account for around half of all transport-related carbon emissions and at both a UK level and a Northern Ireland level, around 15% of an individual's ecological footprint is attributable to personal transport (4). Clearly we need to change our travel patterns, if we are to achieve a One Planet Future(5).

Generally, Northern Ireland's current system of energy production and consumption is wholly unsustainable, not least because of the volatility in oil prices, but also because of our over reliance on imported fossil fuels - with approximately 99% of our primary energy needs met from imports (6) - and the issues surrounding peak oil, diminishing oil resources and increasing demand. This is particularly the case in the transport sector, where liquid hydrocarbon fuels derived from crude oil provide 95% of the primary energy consumed in the transport sector worldwide(7). There is no other sector which is so utterly reliant on a single source of primary energy. Accounting for the volatility in the price of oil, as illustrated by the variation in oil price in 2008 from $147 a barrel in July to approximately $40 a barrel by the end of 2008, as well as the issues surrounding peak oil, most notable the trend for increasing demand and decreasing availability, this position is clearly unsustainable.

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(1) International Energy Agency, World Energy Outlook 2008

(2) Eurostat 2007:Panorama of Transport, Eurostat Statistical Books, Eurostat/Ec Luxembourg

(3) AEA Greenhouse Gas Inventories for England, Scotland Wales and Northern Ireland 1990-2006

(4) Counting Consumption WWF 2006

(5) One Planet Mobility WWF, CSCP and C4S www.wwf.org.uk/oneplanetmobilty

(6) DETI Executive Summary of a report on the assessment of the potential for bioenergy development in Northern Ireland 2008

(7) World Energy Outlook 2006

Economic implications

The Department of Finance and Personnel has a very important role, particularly in relation to the strategic investment plans for Northern Ireland's transport system which are exacerbating rather than ameliorating the existing problems. The draft Investment Strategy says (page 12) that there will be £195.3 million spent on public transport 2008-11 and £611.8 million spent on roads 2008-11. According to the indicative budgets for the period 2011/12-2017/18 a total of £3,095 million will be spent on roads and £725 million on public transport. WWF Northern Ireland views this balance, whereby approximately three quarters of all of money is allocated for road building and approximately one third allocated for public transport as, at best, inappropriate as it compounds an existing problem, namely the inadequate provision of alternatives to car use, and is likely to make the achievement of Northern Ireland's target to reduce GHG emissions by 25% by 2025 much more difficult to achieve.

This contrasts with the higher priority given to public transport in the Republic of Ireland which in the 2007-2013 National Development Plan (NDP) pledged just under €13 billion for public transport out of a total of €33 billion on infrastructure. There is an even sharper contrast with the plans announced by the Danish government in December 2008 of a "*green traffic initiative*" featuring infrastructure investments and transport measures costing DKr150bn (€20bn) over the next decade. According to the Danish plan, about two-thirds of the total will be spent on "*renovating, improving and developing the railway network*" with the aim of converting motorists to public transport. High emissions charges, road pricing, and financial incentives for fuel-efficiency are among a raft of additional measures. Similar strategic thinking and investment in greater public transport would be welcome in Northern Ireland.

WWF Northern Ireland recommends that at least 50% of future transport budgets be spent on public transport. This increased spending needs to be accounted for not only in the next Programme For Government but also the Regional Transportation Strategy (RTS) and the Regional Development Strategy (RDS). With the upcoming review of the RTS and RDS and the continued implementation of the Programme for Government 2009-2012 there is a clear and urgent need for more integrated decision making and co-operation as decisions likely to be made in the coming year will have a significant influence on Northern Ireland's transport system for many years to come.

It is important to note that the shortcomings in our transport system also cost us money, as was illustrated by PA Consulting, who claimed that congestion costs the Northern Ireland economy over £250 million a year[8].

It seems clear therefore that avoiding and/or reducing some of the costs of unsustainable transport (including congestion, pollution and negative health impacts) while also saving money, and creating jobs by investing in the move to a more sustainable transport system, offers a number of potential win-win opportunities.

The need for and benefits of greater investment in public transport was also highlighted by the PricewaterhouseCoopers report "*Bridging the Gap*" [9] which found that the £80 million investment in new rolling stock and station refurbishment for Northern Ireland Railways

"*helped to drive a 60% increase in usage since 2002*"

and that the change to Metro was

"*the catalyst for a 15% increase in bus ridership in Greater Belfast*".

It seems clear, therefore, that increasing investment in public transport works - a very significant point given that the report also found that

"*On a per capita basis, England, Scotland, Wales and the Republic of Ireland have been investing at least twice as much as Northern Ireland in public transport (and in the case of Scotland five times as much).*"

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(8) PA Consulting "Northern Ireland economy burns £250 million a year in roads slow lane" (2008)

(9) PricewaterhouseCoopers Bridging the Gap Transforming Public Transport in Northern Ireland June 2009

Environmental

Climate change has often been described as the greatest threat we face. The Secretary General of the United Nations Ban Ki-moon said [(10)]

"*Climate change threatens the entire human family. Yet it also provides an economic opportunity to come together and forge a collective response to a global problem*."

In introducing the legislative consent motion dealing with Northern Ireland's involvement in the UK Climate Change Bill in the Assembly on Monday 10th December 2007 the former Environment Minister Arlene Foster said

"it is now accepted that climate change is the greatest environmental challenge faced by the world today."

Some of the most compelling evidence of climate change has come from the work of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The IPCC Fourth Assessment Report in 2007 which involved over 3,800 scientists and six years of work found that

"*Warming of the climate is unequivocal*"

and that

"*Most of the observed increase in global average temperatures since the mid-20th century is very likely due to the observed increase in anthropogenic GHG concentrations"*. *

Many scientific umbrella bodies have accepted the IPCC's position (that most of the observed warming in the last 50 years is likely to have been due to the increase in GHG emissions) including the Science Academies of Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom and USA, as well as the US National Academy of Sciences, the American Meteorological Society, the American Geophysical Union and the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS).

Northern Ireland's per capita greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions of 12.83 tonnes per annum compares badly with the UK average of 10.48 tonnes [(11)]. While the UK as a whole has achieved a greenhouse gas emissions decrease of 15.7% since 1990, Northern Ireland's total has decreased by only 5.8% [(11)], in part it seems because of the high level of emissions in Northern Ireland from transport and agriculture. On average between 2005 and 2007 70% of all journeys in Northern Ireland were made by car, with public transport accounting for only 5.5% of all journeys made in the same period [(11)]

Emissions from road transport represented 29.4% of Northern Ireland's CO_2 emissions in 2006, an increase of 49.5% since 1990, and second only to energy production (35%)[(12)]. By comparison transport emissions in England increased by only 10% since 1990. It therefore seems clear that Northern Ireland has a disproportionate problem in relation to transport which urgently needs to be tackled.

It is worth noting that the Committee on Climate Change's first report, released in December 2008, also includes an analysis of what opportunities exist for making emission reductions in Northern Ireland. It states in Northern Ireland more efficient vehicles and new transport fuels could deliver reductions of up to 1 $MTCO_2e$ (Million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent) in 2020, so there is potential for significant reductions in transport emissions. For example, research by the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change suggests that if we were to enforce the current 70 mph speed limit there would be a 3% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from road transport.

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* The IPCC define very likely as having a probability of greater than 90%

(10) World Development Report 2007/2008 *Fighting Climate Change: Human solidarity in a divided world* United Nations Development programme

(11) Northern Ireland Environmental Statistics Report January 2009 Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency and NIEA

(12) AEA *Greenhouse Gas Inventories for England Scotland Wales and Northern Ireland 1990-2006*

The use of alternative fuel sources, electricity in particular, for vehicles could also help reduce these emissions, especially if the electricity were generated from a renewable source, such as wind power, thereby offering a completely green cycle for the fuel. WWF's book "*Plugged In:The End of the Oil Age*" focuses on solutions to our reliance on oil for transportation needs, in particular the electrification of transport. As electric vehicles make use of up to 75% of electricity taken from the grid, they are up to 4 times more efficient than conventional mechanical vehicles where only 18-23% of the energy contained in the fuel is converted into motion.

Some of the other issues surrounding the greater use of electric cars, including the potential implications for the supply network at a UK level, were highlighted in the WWF UK report "Managing Variability"[(13)]. Amongst other things, the report found that wind power does not need large amounts of extra conventional energy backup to stop the lights going out and that the national grid is able to manage variable input from wind power - the electricity system is already designed to manage fluctuations in supply and demand, as the variations in wind are actually considerably less than the variations in consumer demand for electricity. In both cases, more widespread availability and use of wind actually reduces and smoothes out the problem. The report also found there is a potential added advantage, from the industry's point of view, that greater use of electric cars would enable the more efficient use of electricity as most charging of electric cars is likely to take place during the night when generation generally exceeds demand. Another potential benefit of electric cars is as a form of electrical storage, which can feed back into the grid when needed, though the costs of reversible circuitry would be higher than those of simple 'charging' circuitry. Significantly the report also found that if wind provides around 22% of electricity by 2020 (as modelling for Government suggests) variability costs would increase the domestic electricity price by only about 2%.

The nature of the energy supply system is also an important consideration here as a much higher degree of decentralisation, which is particularly suitable for renewable generation, should enable a more widely distributed renewably powered, recharging network, especially as most of Northern Ireland's wind farms are currently in rural locations.

Support for the electrification of vehicles is growing, for example, the Presidency Conclusions of the Brussels European Council in June 2008 [(14)] supported the greater use of electric cars – see paragraph 39 which said

"*Other measures should be rapidly examined, in particular to promote competition in energy markets, promote modernisation of transport systems including the development of alternative technologies, inter alia electric cars*"

In April 2009, Ireland's Energy Minister, Eamon Ryan, announced the Irish Government had signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Electricity Service Board (ESB) and Renault and Nissan which will help Ireland not only realise, but surpass, the target of having 10% of Irish cars (approximately 230,000) fully electric by 2020. The ESB subsequently announced that up to 3,700 new jobs will be created (600 of them directly as a result of the development of the infrastructure for electric cars) and 1,300 outside the company, sustained by ESB, in Ireland because of this commitment.

The UK government has also committed to promoting green cars, as part of a £250 million plan to promote low carbon transport over the next five years. Though Ministers do not expect eligible cars to hit the showrooms until 2011, the strategy includes plans to provide £20 million for charging points and other necessary infrastructure. Gordon Brown has outlined his intention to have all new cars sold in Britain to be electric or hybrid vehicles producing less than 100 g/km of CO_2 by 2020. In light of this push for more electric vehicles and the huge potential that exists in Northern Ireland for wind power, Northern Ireland really needs to grasp the opportunity offered by the electrification of the transport network as a matter of urgency and the development of an appropriate recharging network will be fundamental to any such expansion. Other countries have also set targets for either the number or percentage of electric cars including Spain, which aims to have 1 million electric cars by 2014, and Japan which aims to have 50% of cars electrified by 2020.

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(13) *Managing Variability* David Millibrow June 2009 A report to WWF-UK, RSPB, Greenpeace UK and FoE EWNI

(14) Presidency Conclusions of the Brussels European Council 19/20 June 2008

Hydrogen is another alternative fuel. Though hydrogen powered vehicles that use fuel cells have a lower efficiency (of approximately 40%) they emit only water. Hydrogen buses have been running in Chicago since the mid 1990s.

On top of that, sustainably produced and sourced biofuels offer another potential alternative means of tackling climate change, meeting energy and emissions reduction targets and providing opportunities for the rural and agricultural communities. While WWF Northern Ireland recognises the potential for renewable bioenergy sources to be grown in Northern Ireland it believes the broader impact of their production must be considered and acceptable levels of social and environmental performance in the production of bioenergy among supply chain actors, from growers to end users should all be factored in. For example, there is a risk, especially on a small island, that a biofuel processing plant would create a market demand that cannot be met locally and this would increase pressure for biofuel to be imported.

This risks creating a demand for importing biofuels that may not have been produced sustainably and this could have significant, long term detrimental consequences for people and nature, as exemplified by the biofuels produced from the palm oil plantations that have been planted on former rainforest in Indonesia. The changes in land use for biofuel production in the US and subsequent changes in wheat prices demonstrates how global changes in policy and demand can affect commodity prices.

In WWF's view, the following environmental principles need to be addressed by any standard as a minimum both for crops produced in Northern Ireland and as a requirement for imported fuel sources

- not damage high conservation value habitats and biodiversity
- not degrade soil quality
- not adversely impact the quantity and quality of freshwater resources
- not lead to damaging release of toxic compounds into the environment
- lead to substantially positive lifecycle GHG balances compared to fossil fuel equivalents

The European Union has set a binding target for the average emissions across a producer's range of 130g CO_2/km for new cars sold in the EU to be achieved by 2015. WWF believes fleet-average energy efficiency of new cars sold within the European Union should smoothly increase year-on-year, so as to achieve continuous improvements corresponding to 120g CO_2/km by 2012, 80g CO_2/km by 2020 and 60g CO_2/km by 2025.

While the transport issue is a multi-faceted one, with many problems to be solved, it seems clear that, as a minimum, the potential exists to significantly reduce, if not eliminate, our over-reliance on oil for transport needs, while also addressing some of the other negative impacts including poor air quality, while also helping meet other targets most notably those for emissions reductions, resulting from our current unsustainable system. However, there is still a long way to go to reduce the overall ecological footprint and cost of our currently unsustainable transport system, and the first issue that should be tackled is the need to reduce the need to travel, so the total distance travelled by cars, vans and lorries in Northern Ireland is reduced.

Social

It appears likely that there will be additional impacts and costs from climate change across a range of sectors including, but not limited to public health, biodiversity and loss of ecosystem goods and services, increased cost of extreme weather, including flooding and other associated insurance losses and impacts on agricultural production.

Some of the more serious potential consequences arise from the implication for human health. There are the obvious health implications of air pollution, as illustrated by a European Commission impact assessment which estimated that currently every year 369,000 people die prematurely in Europe due to air pollution and that premature deaths, health care and medication associated with air pollution amount to 3-9% of EU GDP[(15)].

(15) Holland, M. "The co-benefits to health of a strong EU climate change policy" October 2008 HEAL, CAN-E WWF

Similarly a recent report for the Netherlands Environment Agency [16] said that measures to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases to 50% of 2005 levels, by 2050, can reduce the number of premature deaths from the chronic exposure to air pollution by 20 to 40%, estimated by some to entail 100 million early deaths could be prevented in this way.

At a more local level, according to Northern Ireland's Chief Medical Officer Michael McBride,

"*Current predictions on climate change suggest greater long-term impacts on health than any current public health priority*" [17]

Reducing the impact of extreme weather events and pollution could also help save lives. The European heatwave of 2003 was responsible for 35,000 extra deaths across Europe as a result of heat stress, bad air quality, and high levels of air pollutants such as ozone. A report commissioned by the Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL), Climate Action Network Europe (CAN-E) and WWF claims that health savings of up to €25 billion could be achieved every year in Europe if the EU raised its 2020 target for domestic greenhouse gas emissions from 20 to 30%, based on economic evaluations of loss of life and health, working days lots and hospital costs: they show reductions in hospital admissions of 8,000 per year and 2 million fewer work days lost per year by raising the target to 30%.[15]

There are also potentially positive implications for general health and fitness if people drove less and walked and/or cycled more instead. For example, currently over half of all women and two-thirds of men are either overweight or obese. Lower life expectancy, from obesity, results in approximately 450 deaths per year in Northern Ireland and can lead to other associated health conditions such as heart disease, cancer and type-2 diabetes. There are also costs associated with physical inactivity and obesity, estimated to exceed £500 million to the Northern Ireland economy in 2010.

Travelwise reports that a 10% increase in the number of frequent cyclists would result in a cost saving of £200 million per year for the NHS. Moreover, a frequent cyclist is expected to be as fit as a non-cyclist who is 10 years younger.

There are important social equity issues around transport. There are now 900,000 vehicles registered in Northern Ireland for a population of 1.7 million yet 50% of households in areas of Belfast and 20.5% of rural residents do not have access to a motor vehicle. Thirty-nine percent of women in Northern Ireland do not have a full driving licence.

Urban areas are affected by vehicle related air pollution which can contribute to respiratory disease especially amongst vulnerable groups such as the elderly. Disadvantaged urban areas tend to be characterised by high traffic volume, with residents at increased risk of road traffic accidents.

b. The policies, attitudes and technologies likely to underpin a move to more sustainable transport in Northern Ireland.

Climate Change should now be considered as a key consideration when determining transport policy. The externalities of transport e.g. health and pollution costs should also be fully considered and accounted for i.e. become internalised, so that the real 'cost' of unsustainable transport is made much clearer.

The Stern Review calculated that the dangers of unabated climate change would be equivalent to at least 5% of GDP each year. However, when more recent scientific evidence is included in the models, the Review estimates that the dangers could be equivalent to 20% of GDP or more. In contrast, the costs of action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to avoid the worst impacts of climate change can be limited to around 1% of global GDP each year. The central message is that reducing emissions today will make us better off in the future: one model predicts benefits of up to $2.5 trillion each year if the world shifts to a low carbon path.

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(16) Bollen, J.C., Brink. C.J., Eerens, H.C., Manders, A.J.G. *Co-benefits of climate policy* Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency

(17) Department of Health press release http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/news/news-dhssps/news-dhssps-april-2008/news-dhssps-070408-protecting-health-from.htm

The people of Northern Ireland are asking for leadership from the Assembly. A survey conducted in 2008 by Sustainable Northern Ireland for the Northern Ireland Climate Change Impacts Programme revealed that,

"92% of respondents were willing to make changes to their lifestyles, especially if encouraged to do so by strong government leadership."

According to the Northern Ireland Environmental Statistics Report of 2009 [(11)] in a Northern Ireland survey in 2007/08, the top environmental concern for Northern Ireland residents was climate change (39%), followed by waste (34%) and traffic fumes and urban smog (31%). This high level of concern suggests that the public already wants this issue tackled.

The SNIFFER report on the impacts of climate change on Northern Ireland identified a number of direct effects, mostly negative, on human health, the economy, natural habitats and water resources, for example, the extent of flood risk to existing infrastructure (including transport infrastructure) remains unquantified compared with the situation in Great Britain.

A Strategic Energy Framework target to match the target set for the UK in the EU Climate and Energy Package to source 15% of all our energy (electricity, transport and heat) from renewable sources by 2020 should act as a strong driving force towards a low carbon society.

Research by the Consumer Council suggests that only three in ten people here use bus services regularly, and less than one in ten uses train services. The Survey suggested that cost, frequency, choice, safety and reliability should be the priorities for public transport here.

Spatial planning plays a particularly important role in shaping individuals' behaviour with regard to travel and transport. It is, therefore, imperative that a co-ordinated approach be taken when considering land-use and transport. Planners should only make decisions after they have considered how the development will contribute to mitigation efforts and whether the site and design is appropriate given the predicted impacts of climate change in Northern Ireland. Provision of public transport links should be made mandatory with new connections and stops provided before any new residential developments are completed/opened, as has been the case in Vienna and Frieburg in Germany for example.

A review of the planning system in Northern Ireland is currently being conducted while a revised policy for development in rural areas was recently released. Better, more integrated planning which concentrates future rural development in established settlements to reduce individuals' need to travel by car is needed.

There are now numerous examples of policies aimed at improving travel choice and reducing car use. Invariably these include a mixture of 'carrots' (public transport improvements, park and ride, and improvements to pedestrian and cycling networks), and 'sticks' (parking policy, re-allocation of road space and controls on vehicle access). Nottingham (-1.8%), Perth (Australia) (-4%) and Rome (-7%) are examples of cities where car use has been reduced. Each of these cities have implemented traffic restraint policies including those aimed at reducing urban sprawl and invested in new public transport and service enhancements with transit orientated development, including the focusing of new development around suburban stations. Perth has also implemented a work-place parking levy while Nottingham and Rome have implemented travel plans. In addition Rome has reduced city parking and re-allocated these spaces at park and ride sites in combination with access controls.

A well planned transport system can facilitate social connections which are important for mental health. Neighbourhood designs most likely to promote social networks are those that are mixed use and pedestrian orientated, enabling residents to perform daily activities without the use of a car. As traffic volumes increase, people's sense of neighbourliness decreases.

A new rural transport policy is needed which ensures that the problems of the immobile socially excluded are not analysed or tackled in isolation from the mobile included within a wider canvass of growing sustainable rural communities that balances environmental, social and economic sustainability and which encourages rural dwellers to use viable alternatives to the car.

c. ***To make recommendations arising out of the above investigations, and report to the Assembly.***

WWF Northern Ireland see the development of a more sustainable transport system in Northern Ireland as a key component of a move to a much more sustainable lifestyle as part of an overall low carbon economy.

WWF Northern Ireland believes that the policy priorities for developing a more sustainable transport system should include the following:

- The indicative spend figures for transport modes should be revised to ensure that at least 50% of Government investment goes to sustainable transport measures from the next budget onwards.
- A Northern Ireland Climate Bill with a Northern Ireland specific legally binding reduction target of at least 3% per annum ensuring a 40% reduction in greenhouses gases by 2020 and an 80% reduction by 2050, should be introduced.
- The UK target, as part of the 2008 EU energy package, that 15% of all energy (electricity, heat and transport) needs come from renewable sources by 2020 should be adopted as a Northern Ireland specific target.
- The new Regional Development Strategy (RDS) should provide the spatial framework for planning in Northern Ireland.
- There must be a switch away from fossil fuels to alternative, sustainable sources of zero or low carbon fuel for vehicles, primarily renewably generated electricity (most likely to be derived from wind power) for electric vehicles, accompanied by the development of an appropriate recharging infrastructure. There is also a potential role for some sustainable biofuels. Non renewable electricity and non sustainable biofuels should not be used.
- There needs to be leadership from the Northern Ireland Executive to ensure existing targets such as target number 36 in the Sustainable Development Implementation Plan (2006), to make the Government estate to be carbon neutral by 2015, are met. Reducing the impact of official government travel should be an important part of achieving this. A sub target was for DFP to reduce the carbon footprint of the wider Public Estate by a minimum of 5% per annum from 2007 levels. Developing a more sustainable transport system for all government representatives and employees should be a key component of this target. In this context, the recent announcement that Aer Lingus had won a two year, £500,000 a year contract to fly civil servants from Belfast to London for meetings, flies in the face of the spirit of such targets and should not be viewed as good news. Apparently excessive spending such as this could be significantly reduced by reducing the need to travel for example by video conferencing. The Northern Ireland Executive, and each Government department, in turn needs to amend its purchasing policy to ensure the overall carbon footprint of elected representatives and civil servants is reduced. WWF Northern Ireland regards a reduction of 50% by 2025 to be an appropriate but ambitious target for reducing the carbon footprint of the Northern Ireland administration, at all levels.
- More integrated cross departmental work on providing more sustainable transport choices for more people.

If adopted, these strategic priorities will enable more specific actions to be delivered. Northern Ireland's transport policy requires revolution not evolution if we are to meet the challenges of the 21st Century. The Assembly must show leadership, reconsider their investment priorities, embrace new technology and promote and achieve widespread behaviour change if Northern Ireland's transport system is to become more sustainable.

-ENDS-