

Presidential Roundtable Summary: *A plan to decarbonise transport: what needs to be in it?*

April 2021

There is no plausible path to net zero without major transport emissions reductions – reductions that need to start being delivered soon. The Committee on Climate Change has called for a 98% reduction in transport emissions by 2050.

The Department for Transport (DfT's) 'Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge' paper published last year set out their six strategic priorities to deliver a vision of a net-zero transport system - including decarbonisation of road vehicles, accelerating modal shift to public and active transport, place-based solutions and ensuring the UK is a hub for green transport technology and innovation. It also included a plea to work with industry to create a vision for how a net zero transport system will benefit us all. The next step is DfT's Transport Decarbonisation Plan, which will be published this spring and a final plan expected in the autumn.

We were delighted to have Rachel Maclean MP, the Minister responsible for transport decarbonisation and the future of transport, who set out DfT's work in this area, exploring questions around electrification of transport, the shift to lower-emission transport modes and how to encourage place-based solutions.

Our discussion highlighted a real appetite across the board to greening transport. Businesses want to innovate and help support workers make greener journeys, and local areas want to play their part and drive a shift.

It was also agreed that the forthcoming Transport Decarbonisation Plan (TDP) will need to be holistic, make clear choices and assign responsibilities. We can go further and faster on the pace and scale of greening transport if we take the opportunity to use the capacity, capability, and innovation found both in Whitehall and 'places' across the country.

The main points are summarised below:

- The TDP needs to recognise the significant role local authorities and sub-national leaders will have to play, with the Government setting the framework, providing capability support and funding, this will unleash local areas to determine what happens on the ground that works for them. We heard of real energy and commitment at a regional level to support the forthcoming Plan.
- The Plan will also need to unlock new business models for transport, as part of our discussion, we heard about the new future transport zone in the West Midlands. ICE's long-established position on the need to move towards 'pay as you go' system for roads funding was also raised. Not only are existing fuel duty revenues declining, but a business model shift to mobility as a service will require a rethink in Vehicle Excise Duty.
- Agility will be key between now and 2050, particularly for the Department for Transport. The TDP will not be able to provide answers to everything and there may be new technologies and approaches that come to light on the way to 2050. Fostering a spirit of agility to capitalise on opportunities as they pop up will be necessary.
- There will also be a role for employers; businesses now have a greater picture and influence on how staff travel to work, this provides valuable insight to make sure the recovery isn't a 'car-based recovery'. Could Government and businesses work together to embed new commuting behaviours?
- And lastly, whatever we do will need to be resilient in the face of climate shocks. Sensible use of the planning system will be essential to ensure new assets integral to driving decarbonisation are planned in tandem with climate change adaptation requirements. Otherwise, we run the risk of these assets being washed away in the face of climate change.