

Our key messages for the government's Transport Decarbonisation Plan

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1. The government must set a legally-binding upper limit on transport greenhouse gas emissions (a carbon budget) and set a clear plan for how much we need to reduce transport emissions each year to meet this target (a carbon reduction pathway) which the transport decarbonisation plan must be measured against. All future transport decisions must fit this pathway. Local councils should use this national blueprint to guide their own decisions.
2. All future transport investments by the government must follow a hierarchy that puts healthy low carbon travel first. This hierarchy should prioritise active travel – walking and cycling including e-bikes, followed by provision of public transport, and deprioritise spending on private car travel, reflecting the carbon footprint of the different modes of transport. An immediate first step must be to cancel the £27.4 billion RIS2 road-building programme and redirect this funding towards low carbon local transport alternatives.
3. The electrification of transport, whilst extremely important, is no longer sufficient to achieve the necessary scale and pace of cutting transport carbon emissions. Therefore, it is essential that the transport decarbonisation plan pursues radical reductions in the need to travel. This will require high quality broadband for everyone, and bringing key services like schools, GP's and post offices back to rural communities so that people can easily reach health and social care, educational opportunities and other facilities by walking or cycling.
4. Where it is not possible to remove the need to travel, more and higher-quality public transport options need to be provided to encourage a shift away from private car travel. This means substantially increasing the availability, reliability and affordability of bus and rail services across the countryside. The government should commit to investing in a rural transport fund to support high-quality public transport connections for every rural community.
5. Once active travel and public transport opportunities have been established as a comprehensive alternative to private car travel, the government should introduce a new system of road user charging designed to reflect the true environmental and social cost of car travel. Drivers should be charged on a per mile basis with the rate varying depending on the distance travelled, the vehicle's emissions, local levels of congestion and the ready availability of public transport alternatives.
6. New housing and communities must be designed to minimise the need for residents to travel to reach all essential services and facilities. Separate footpaths and cycleways should become standard practice, and public transport options for all new housing must be in place from day one.
7. The emissions from international flights must be incorporated in the transport carbon budget adopted by the government and it is essential that demand for air travel is constrained and reduced. There should be a moratorium on airport expansion, internal flights within the UK should be phased out, and higher rates of taxation should be charged on frequent fliers.
8. In order to reduce the carbon emissions from the transportation of goods and services the government should promote local produce, and freight should be shifted from road haulage and HGVs to electrified rail services, supplemented by canal and coastal shipping.