

Westminster Hall debate on the Transport Decarbonisation Plan

June 2021



Key points

- The Transport Decarbonisation Plan is due to be published by the Department for Transport (DfT) shortly. It will set out what the government, businesses and society need to do to decarbonise all modes of transport.
- Transport is the UK's largest emitting sector. As we recover from the pandemic, it is crucial that DfT plays its part in getting the UK on track to meet its climate targets.
- Therefore the Transport Decarbonisation Plan must set out: **new policies** (including a Zero Emissions Vehicle mandate – 'ZEV mandate'), **new funding** (£8.7 billion annually over the course of this Parliament) and **decarbonisation targets and pathways** to deliver emissions cuts across all modes of transport this decade.

Context: the government's progress to date

The transport sector accounts for [31%](#) of the UK's emissions (2019 figures) and has made no significant progress towards decarbonisation: surface transport emissions have [remained flat](#) since 1990 while aviation emissions have [doubled](#).

The government has taken several positive steps to decarbonise transport. The most significant was bringing forward the [phase out date](#) for new petrol and diesel cars and vans to 2030. It has also published a [National Bus Strategy](#), which includes £3 billion investment to promote bus use. DfT plans to publish consultations and strategies on decarbonising freight and aviation in 2021.

However, the UK still lacks a comprehensive plan to get transport on track to net zero. The Transport Decarbonisation Plan was due to be published in November 2020 and was then pushed back to Spring 2021. **We urge you to seek assurances from the Minister that the Transport Decarbonisation Plan will be published in the coming weeks.**

An ambitious Transport Decarbonisation Plan is needed to provide a solid foundation for the government's net zero strategy. Expected in Autumn 2021, the net zero strategy will set out the policies needed across our economy – including transport – to achieve the government's climate ambitions.

The need for new policies

New policies are needed to boost private investment and speed up the delivery of a low carbon transport system across the country. Green Alliance's [new report](#) highlights the benefits of a fast transition away from petrol and diesel cars and

towards battery electric vehicles. These include cutting carbon emissions faster; making electric cars cheaper for lower income households by boosting the second hand electric vehicle market; and helping to establish the UK as a global leader in electric car manufacturing. To speed up the transition, the government should introduce a 'Zero Emissions Vehicle mandate' ('ZEV mandate') placed on car companies to sell more electric vehicles, similar to one already in place in California. A ZEV mandate would ensure an adequate supply of electric vehicles, boost competition and accelerate cost reductions for consumers buying electric vehicles.

We encourage you to voice your support for a ZEV mandate during the debate.

New policies are also needed to roll out more electric vehicle charge points, increase cycling and walking, decarbonise and expand public transport, reduce car use, electrify railways and buses, develop zero emission trucks, and reduce emissions from aviation.

Moreover, the government should review its plan for road expansions, which as it stands would increase car journeys and emissions. Finally, the planning system should be designed so that it prioritises the transition to a low carbon future, including by integrating low carbon transport in new housing projects.

Funding the transition

An extra £8.7 billion is [needed](#) every year to deliver low a carbon transport system and boost growth in new industries across the country. This could help create 240,000 jobs by 2030, including in electric vehicle and battery manufacturing, low carbon public transport, active travel infrastructure, the electric vehicle charging network and electrification of railways and buses.

We encourage you to raise the need for new funding to deliver the transition towards a low carbon transport system and support low carbon industries across the country.

Climate targets and decarbonisation pathways

The transport sector is made up of complex networks comprising cars, buses, vans, trains, ships, planes, and more. The Transport Decarbonisation Plan must deliver emissions cuts in each of these modes to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and meet the government's pledge under the Paris climate agreement to reduce emissions by 68% by 2030 compared to 1990 levels.

To this end, the Transport Decarbonisation Plan must set out quantified decarbonisation pathways and interim targets for all parts of the transport sector. The Climate Change Committee recommends that emissions from surface transport (which exclude aviation and shipping) should fall by at least 48% by 2030 and 70% by 2035. For aviation and shipping emissions, which make up [32% of transport emissions](#), it recommends a 17.5% decrease by 2030 and 25% by 2035. Including these targets and pathways in the Transport Decarbonisation Plan will help set out clear expectations and drive action in the near term.

For more information contact

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