

DfT Transport Decarbonisation Plan call for ideas

August 2020

What do you think government should be doing to reduce the greenhouse gases that are produced from:

- cars?
- buses and coaches?
- vans and lorries?
- passenger rail?
- aviation?
- freight?
- maritime?
- other transport?

The Government has not yet produced policy to address the growing climate problem presented by aviation, this must be address as soon as possible. The Government should include international aviation emissions in the UK's carbon budgets immediately.

In order to meet Net Zero targets there will need to be a robust framework from Government with strict targets and incentives to help boost investment and innovation. Therefore, it is vital that aviation is included in the DfT's decarbonisation plan.

Government should make it a requirement for airlines to adopt short-term emissions reductions targets which are in line with the Paris Agreement. These must also explain how those targets will be met, without relying on offsets, or other measures which do not sufficiently reduce climate impacts.

The government should use its review of tax arrangements in the aviation sector to ensure that all companies make a fair contribution to the reduction of emissions.

Higher taxes, equitably levied, on flights from the UK would help both to reduce demand and to put the sector on a trajectory compatible with net zero. There are numerous taxes which could be combined to achieve this including:

- A frequent flier or air miles levy, which would be the most equitable instrument;
- VAT on plane tickets;
- Introducing excise duty on aviation kerosene;

- Raising Air Passenger Duty to allow part of such duty/levy to be “ringfenced”, to fund independent expert research and investments to assist and compensate overflowed communities to minimise any adverse effects. The system at Vienna airport is a world leading practice which has significantly helped to redress the current unequal balance of communities/environment and the commercial interests of the aviation sector.

Government should not encourage unrealistic optimism by the aviation industry about its ability to deliver low carbon aircraft, particularly given its poor track record. Electric flight is not going to be a reality for transport of large numbers of people, over long distances. Hybrid planes will make only a negligible difference to aviation's carbon emissions, if the overall number of flights and air passengers increase. Biofuels are also generally recognised to be an inappropriate technology for aviation.

Consequently, Government should produce an assessment of how other appropriate technology solutions for aviation will be delivered between now and 2050, and what policy interventions will be needed in order to ensure that these are delivered.

The UK Renewable Transport Fuels Obligation should include a requirement for airlines to purchase genuinely sustainable aviation fuels (e-kerosene). This would help to provide an incentive for investment and innovation.

The Government should drop the ‘growth everywhere’ mantra and set out robust plans for demand management options, incentives and penalties to ensure promised technological improvements are delivered and a framework of mechanisms to ensure that the industry pays for non-CO2 emission.

This could include:

- More robust noise proposals that close the existing regulatory gaps, including a process to ensure airports are accountable for their noise commitments.
- Meaningful, measurable targets are still required to protect the public from the impacts of aircraft noise on health and quality of life.
- A national level assessment for air pollution monitoring.
- A call for objective research into the impact of highly concentrated flight paths.
- Development of a reliable evidence base to assess impacts of airport operations on health and the environment.

Local journeys

What, if any, changes to reduce the greenhouse gases produced by your local transport, would you like to see made?

What, if any, examples of good transport initiatives in your local area do you have (with a particular focus on low or zero emission initiatives)?

Investment in surface access links to airports is vital, particularly around Heathrow where typically, there are 235,000 daily trips to/from the airport with 60% of these using private car or taxi services.

The modal share of public transport of these journeys is 40%, which has increased by just 1% since 2009. This rate of progress is clearly insufficient, particularly given Heathrow Airport has failed to meet their own 2018 target.

It is not sufficient and is not sustainable to simply 'encourage' or 'improve' public transport. There must be credible and concrete plans to actually meet the aspirations of modal shift, to prevent extra congestion and pollution.

Longer journeys

What changes would you like to see that will help to reduce the greenhouse gases produced from longer journeys?

N/A

Purchasing goods

What action do you think government should take to reduce the greenhouse gases produced from the:

- distribution of goods across the country?
- delivery of goods to shops or residences?

N/A

Travel choices

Do you find it:

- easy to make informed travel choices in relation to the emissions produced?
- difficult to make informed travel choices in relation to the emissions produced?

N/A

Information to inform travel choices

What information would you find helpful in making those choices?

- The approximate measurement of greenhouse gases emitted as a result of your journey.
- A comparison of the greenhouse gases emitted as a result of your journey relative to other forms of transport

- A comparison of the greenhouse gases emitted as a result of your journey relative to other lifestyle choices
- Don't know?
- Other:

N/A

Final comments

What other views do you have on how to decarbonise the UK transport network?

Any other comments?

Government policy should focus on rebalancing the economy and this should seek to focus any growth in aviation (not airport expansion) in the regions across the UK, within existing planning constraints and ensure that this is compatible with net zero climate targets.

Reducing the dependence of airlines on a hub airport helps minimise the risk an airline faces if a route fails. Thus, point-to-point airports offer greater flexibility to the system that is more easily able to respond to changes to society and shocks to the economy.

A dispersed network of point to point airports delivers more effective competition, drives prices down and produces other benefits, such as product differentiation to meet the demand of a wider range of consumers. This may also offer greater scope and flexibility to respond to future changes in passenger demand.

Emissions of planes at altitude also has non-CO₂ impacts and these are not properly understood or accounted for. It is likely that including non-CO₂ emissions would result in a doubling of the overall climate of aviation. Following the recommendation of the Committee on Climate Change it is vital that further research is commissioned to guide policy and regulations for non-CO₂ emissions.