

Transport decarbonisation plan: call for ideas

Your details

Q1. Your (used for contact details only):

name? Roger Blake

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Q2. Are you responding:

on behalf of an organisation?

Organisation details

Q9. What is the approximate total number of employees in your organisation?

1,000 and above

Q10. What best describes your organisation?

Other:

Independent voluntary national pro-rail membership campaign

Share your views

Q11. What do you think government should be doing to reduce the greenhouse gases that are produced from:

cars?	Applicable to most subsequent categories, if reducing greenhouse gases is a mix of technological and behavioural change then two tools are available - legislative and fiscal. In other other areas of public policy, legislation has mandated the wearing of seat belts and the phasing out of fossil-fuelled vehicles, while fiscal changes have introduced the landfill tax and the progressive reduction of single-use plastic bags. The introduction of a whole-life-cycle graduated carbon tax could encourage a more holistic appraisal of the greenhouse gases produced during the production and disposal, as well as use, of in this case cars but of other powered vehicles more generally.
buses and coaches?	Ditto
vans and lorries?	Ditto
passenger rail?	Ditto, and while 'self-powered' trains have a role to play their whole-life environment and natural resource costs may compare unfavourably with tried and tested electric traction [the more so as the electricity supply continues to decarbonise]. A greenhouse gas-lite passenger railway is fundamentally and foremost an electrified railway. Railfuture thinks that government should be committing to a continuous programme of passenger rail decarbonisation which is led by an expanding electrified network. While that will minimise the greenhouse gas production of the railway itself, maximising the value then to be gained will come from increasing the use of the passenger railway by for example expanding its capacity through upgrades to lines and stations [including accessibility, and sufficient secure parking for cars and bikes], and its contribution to connectivity through taking new stations and lines closer to unserved or poorly-served communities viz. Restoring Your Railway.
aviation?	Ditto as cars, and with additional fiscal measures applicable to domestic travel between mainland British destinations, and with European destinations, where passenger rail is available as an alternative.
freight?	Ditto as passenger rail. For rail freight, maximising the value to be gained from an increasingly electrified railway will include sustained support for new sidings and terminals, to capture freight transferable to rail where wafer-thin margins justify public support for private enterprise when public ie environmental benefit accrues.
maritime?	We offer no suggestions.
other transport?	We offer no suggestions.

Local journeys

Q12. What, if any, changes to reduce the greenhouse gases produced by your local transport, would you like to see made?

As a national organisation we offer no specific response to a question for individual citizens. Our thoughts will be in response to the previous question no.5, in 'passenger rail'.

Q13. 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)?

As a national organisation we are aware through our local branches and individual members of numerous examples of good practice, and of a number of awards to recognise and reward them.

Longer journeys

Q14. What changes would you like to see that will help to reduce the greenhouse gases produced from longer journeys?

Although as with question no.6 this is addressed to individuals, 'longer journeys' encompasses passenger rail perhaps more so than 'local journeys', where rail is available as an alternative. In essence, Railfuture contends that whatever technological changes can do, whether to road, air or rail transport, the maximum overall efficiency of environmental benefit to be gained from such changes is likely to come from parallel fiscal measures to incentivise transfer of longer journeys by road or air to rail. This applies no less to freight than to passenger journeys.

Purchasing goods

Q15. What action do you think government should take to reduce the greenhouse gases produced from the:

distribution of goods across the country?

As in response to question nos 5, 7, and 8, a mix of technological and fiscal measures to maximise transfer of logistics operations to a progressively electrifying railway.

delivery of goods to shops or residences?

We offer no specific response as the contribution of rail to decarbonisation at this level is probably unlikely to be significant.

Travel choices

Q16. Do you find it:

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

Information to inform travel choices

Q17. What information would you find helpful in making those choices?

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

Other:

Great Western Railway may be the only operator to show such a comparison at the point of booking a journey eg London Paddington-Cardiff return shows a "68% CO2 emission saving - Based on 1 person(s) travelling this journey by train and not by car" and "17.26kg CO2e" by a train symbol with "54.6kg CO2e" by a car symbol; non-GWR journeys can also be booked and will show the same basic comparison eg London Euston-Manchester Piccadilly but there may be an issue when London Marylebone-Birmingham Snow Hill (a diesel-operated service) still shows the same 68% CO2 emission saving. Nevertheless it shows what is possible, and as well as this becoming a requirement of all train operators such comparisons between domestic air and train journeys could be especially instructive.

Final comments

Q18. What other views do you have on how to decarbonise the UK transport network?

Strategically, this is more than a matter of making technological choices. Changes to legislative, regulatory and fiscal frameworks will also be required if individual, commercial, and societal behaviours are to decarbonise.

Q19. Any other comments?

Further to Q12, Railfuture contends that this is primarily a matter of governments leading by taking sound, evidence-based policy decisions and committing to their sustained implementation with the necessary resources - everything from Parliamentary time to adequate budgetary allocations for investment and training.