

Progress on the Government's Transport Decarbonisation Strategy

Purpose of Report

For information.

Is this report confidential? No

Summary

It is now nearly 2 years on since the Government published its Transport Decarbonisation Plan (TDP) in July 2021. This is an opportunity for the Board to assess national progress on the TDP, what that means for the trajectory of action required and implication for local authority action. Greg Marsden, Professor of Transport Governance, Institute for Transport Studies at the University of Leeds, will lead the discussion with a presentation on his assessment followed by discussion with the Board

LGA Plan Theme: Championing climate change and local environments

Recommendations

That the Board

- 1. Notes and discusses the issues raised in this paper and by Professor Marsden**
- 2. Provide a steer for further work to be overseen by the new board**

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Progress on the Government's Transport Decarbonisation Strategy

Proposal

1. It is now nearly 2 years on since the Government published its Transport Decarbonisation Plan (TDP) in July 2021. This is an opportunity for the Board to assess national progress on the TDP, what that means for the trajectory of action required and implications for local authority action.
2. Greg Marsden, Professor of Transport Governance, Institute for Transport Studies at the University of Leeds, will lead the discussion with a presentation on his assessment followed by discussion with the Board. Greg has previously presented to the Board on this issue and also led on producing a series of [policy briefs](#) on transport decarbonisation aimed at council and local leaders.

Background

3. The TDP sets out the Government's overall vision and strategy for how it intends to decarbonise the way we travel. The following are key commitments most relevant to councils:
 - We will deliver the Prime Minister's bold vision for cycling and walking investing £2 billion over five years with the aim that half of all journeys in towns and cities will be cycled or walked by 2030
 - We will ensure the UK's charging infrastructure network meets the demands of its users
 - We will deliver the National Bus Strategy's vision of a transformed bus industry and a green bus revolution
 - We will consult on modernising the Bus Service Operators' Grant in 2021
 - We will take forward measures to transform 'last mile' deliveries
 - We will drive decarbonisation and transport improvements at a local level by making quantifiable carbon reductions a fundamental part of local transport planning and funding
 - We will embed transport decarbonisation principles in spatial planning and across transport policymaking
 - We will publish guidance for local authorities on support for shared car ownership and shared occupancy schemes and services
 - We will use national e-scooter trials to understand their environmental impact, safety, and mode shift potential to evaluate whether they should be legalised

4. Recent new analysis, jointly undertaken by CREDS (Centre for Research into Energy Demand Solutions) and Decarbon8 Research Network (a collaborative network of the eight most research-intensive universities across the North of England, working together to find innovative, place-based solutions for decarbonising transport) reveals a lowering of ambition from the Department of Transport to reduce traffic demand and shift to lower carbon modes of travel. The analysis is captured in a report "[Reverse gear: The reality and implications of national transport emission reduction policies](#)", authored by Professor Marsden, published in May 2023.
5. This Board has undertaken extensive work, covering both lobbying and policy development and in support of councils on helping them achieve transport decarbonisation ambitions, and against the commitments from the TDP highlighted above. An illustration of the range of work is set out in the table below.

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| <p>We will deliver the Prime Minister's bold vision for cycling and walking investing £2 billion over five years with the aim that half of all journeys in towns and cities will be cycled or walked by 2030</p> | <p>We have said that we share the Government's ambition. The LGA has developed a close working relationship with Active Travel England, with both chairman (Chris Boardman) and CE (Danny Williams) presenting to the Board. Recently we expressed disappointment with the £200 million reduction in future funding to local authorities.</p> |
| <p>We will ensure the UK's charging infrastructure network meets the demands of its users</p> | <p>We commissioned Local Partnerships to undertake a scoping exercise of the role of local government on EV infrastructure. This fed directly into the development of the Government's EV Infrastructure strategy. Achieved a step change in revenue and capital resources, flexibility and expert support via the £450 million Local EV Infrastructure (LEVI)Fund. The LGA is on the working group of the LEVI Fund.</p> |
| <p>We will deliver the National Bus Strategy's (NBS) vision of a transformed bus</p> | <p>We used LGA research to inform national bus policy. During the pandemic we worked with Government and councils to protect bus</p> |

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| <p>industry and a green bus revolution.</p> <p>We will consult on modernising the Bus Service Operators' Grant (BSOG) in 2021</p> | <p>services and support recovery (see transport update). We have called for the Government to fully commit to NBS reforms, including BSOG reform, which is behind schedule, and fully fund the BSIP programme to the original £3 billion, not £1.1 billion which was the outcome. The LGA is on the advisory board of the new Bus Centre of Excellence</p> |
| <p>We will take forward measures to transform 'last mile' deliveries</p> | <p>We undertook research on "The future of last-mile deliveries: Understanding the local perspective". One of the main findings was the need to develop local authority capacity on this issue.</p> |
| <p>We will drive decarbonisation and transport improvements at a local level by making quantifiable carbon reductions a fundamental part of local transport planning (LTP) and funding</p> | <p>The Transport Act 2020 requires all local transport authorities to publish statutory plans. The Department for Transport has said it intends to refresh their guidance on LTPs and LGA officers have engaged with officials on their initial thinking. A consultation is now expected before the summer recess.</p> |
| <p>We will embed transport decarbonisation principles in spatial planning and across transport policymaking</p> | <p>The TDP says that we need to move away from transport planning based on predicting future demand to provide capacity ('predict and provide') to planning that sets an outcome communities want to achieve and provides the transport solutions to deliver those outcomes (sometimes referred to as 'vision and validate'). In our recent response to the latest draft refreshed National Networks National Planning Statement we stated that the draft appears at odds with the TDP – seemingly reverting back to 'predict and provide'.</p> |
| <p>We will publish guidance for local authorities on support for shared car ownership</p> | <p>The LGA produced a practical guide on car sharing and car clubs.</p> |

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| and shared occupancy schemes and services | |
| We will use national e-scooter trials to understand their environmental impact, safety, and mode shift potential to evaluate whether they should be legalised | The LGA produced a practical guide on shared micromobility, reflecting good practice and lessons learned from the trial areas. We have called for the Government to recommence work on the Transport Bill, which intended to provide a new regulatory framework for shared schemes as well as dealing with private scooters. |

About Professor Greg Marsden

- Greg is Professor of Transport Governance at the Institute for Transport Studies at the University of Leeds. He has researched issues surrounding the design and implementation of new policies for over 20 years covering a range of issues. He is an expert in climate and energy policy in the transport sector and is the Transport Decarbonisation Champion for [EPSRC](#). He is the Principal Investigator on the DecarboN8 network where he is responsible for integrating a new place-based approach to decarbonising transport. Greg co-chairs the [Commission on Travel Demand](#) which has published influential studies on travel demand and shared mobility. He is the Secretary General of the [World Conference on Transport Research Society](#) and the Chair of the Special Interest Group on Governance. He has served as an advisor to the House of Commons Transport Select Committee and regularly advises local, national and international governments.

Implications for Wales

- It is noted that there are very different approaches to traffic reduction across the four nations. Wales has set the target of a 10% reduction in per capita car mileage travelled by 2030. Scotland is pursuing a 20% reduction in car mileage by 2030, Northern Ireland is pursuing a similar target. However, there is no such target in England.

Financial Implications

- There are no financial implications

Equalities implications

9. There are no direct equalities implications from this report. However, promotion of individual transport modes will have some implications. For example, more lower income people depend on bus travel; EV purchases are currently dominated by those with higher income; solutions for EV charging needs to be found for the 30% of households who have no access to off-street parking.

Next steps

10. Irrespective of national policy, local authorities will continue to seek ways to reduce carbon emissions from local transport. This is driven from their desire to show leadership on this global issue, but also because of overlapping benefits of pursuing transport decarbonisation – e.g., reducing congestion, improving air quality, tackling cost-of-living and promoting sustainable and active travel.
11. LGA officers will continue to work with this and future boards in support of transport decarbonisation.