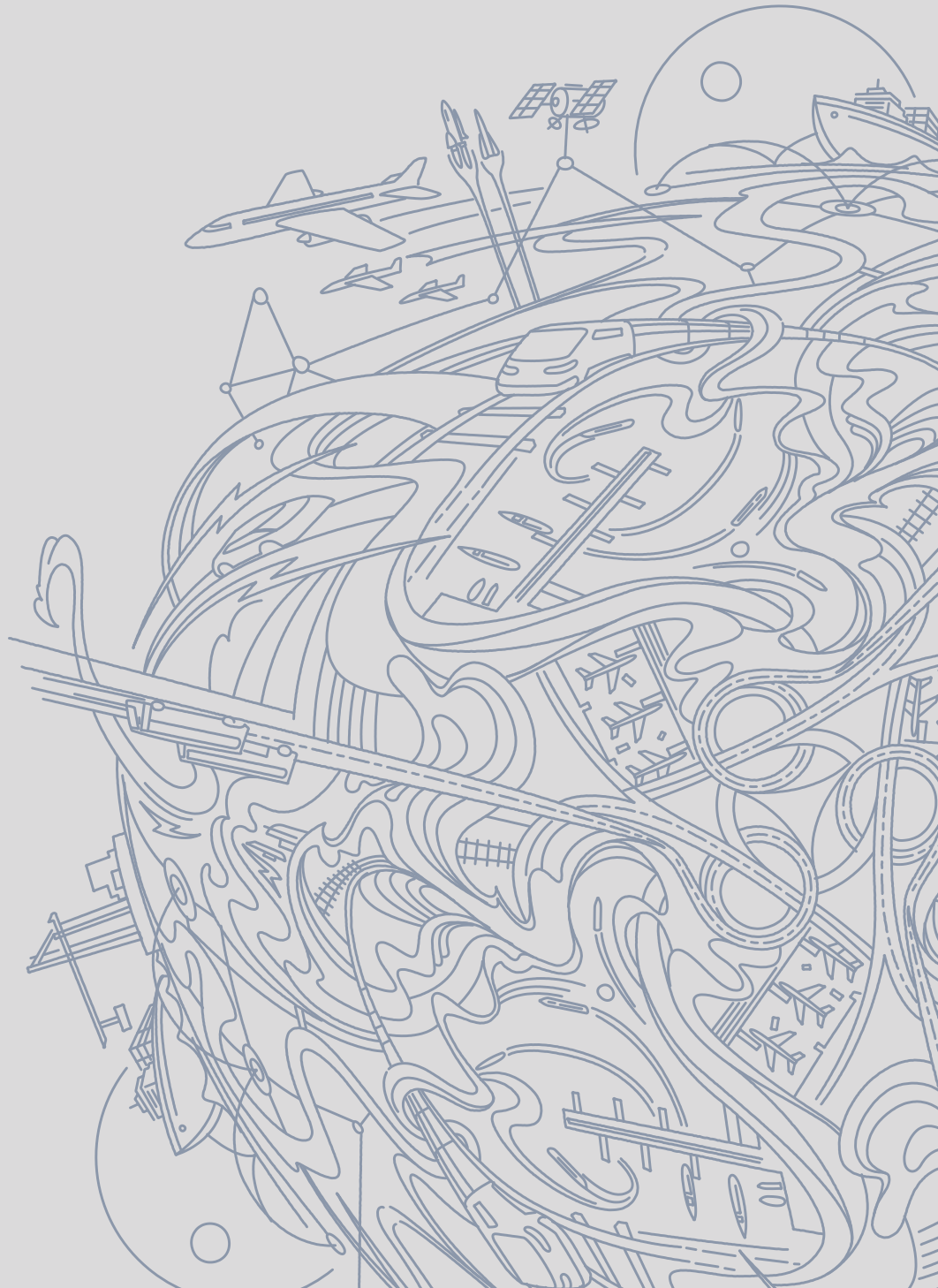


IS IT TIME TO REAPPRAISE HOW WE TRAVEL?

Trends in Transport
2020





TRANSPORT DECARBONISATION & COVID-19

On 26 March 2020, just as Coronavirus lockdown measures were introduced in the UK, the UK Government published [Decarbonising transport: setting the challenge](#). This is the start of a process to create a Transport Decarbonisation Plan, a document that will set out the policies and plans to tackle transport emissions, which are the largest contributor to the UK domestic greenhouse gas emissions at 28%.

The challenge is clear: even with the policies already in place (and there are many, all listed in the document), emissions from transport will not reduce fast enough to be 'net zero' by 2050. Policy measures need to ramp up significantly and urgently and the Government does not underestimate the challenge of delivering what will be fundamental changes to the way people and goods move around.

And yet, look what's happened since the lockdown began. Roads are virtually empty. Trains have seen a 95% drop in passengers. Buses are running less frequently and with social distancing measures in place. You can hear birdsong and enjoy walking or running alongside roads that you would normally avoid due to the fumes and noise from traffic. We are not travelling to meetings but instead using video conferencing from our homes. Freight is running more smoothly, benefiting from less congested roads and more train paths in the absence of passenger trains. Could we get used to this? Will we ever go back to how we were?

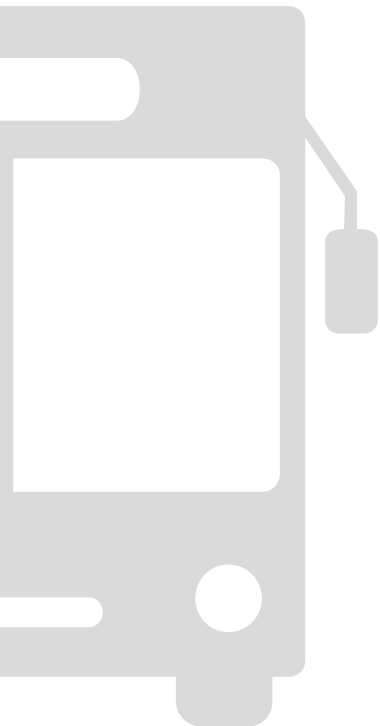
Now is a fantastic opportunity to reappraise those 'essential' journeys and think about how we are contributing to carbon emissions by the way we travel. This enables us to look at two recent transport consultations in a new light: the decarbonising transport one mentioned above and the [Future of Transport Regulatory Review call for evidence](#) which follows on from the Future of Mobility Urban Strategy that we reported on in this [Trends in Transport article](#).

Both consultations are related. The Regulatory Review looks at how transport regulation needs to adapt to keep up with the changes taking place in our transport habits, including more 'green' travel. The Decarbonising Transport call for evidence is wider, encompassing the Regulatory Review as part of it but looking holistically across all transport modes.

FUTURE OF TRANSPORT

The [Future of Transport Regulatory Review call for evidence](#) is a Call for Evidence on three workstreams out of eight forming the overall Future of Transport Regulatory Review (formerly Future of Mobility Regulatory Review). The overall Regulatory Review process is expected to take three years. The three workstreams the Government is concentrating on now (as mentioned in our [Future of Mobility Urban Strategy article](#)) are:

- **Micromobility** – such as electric scooters. The consultation asks how they should be regulated, for example whether they should be treated like e-bikes or like mopeds.
- **Flexible bus services** – are defined in the Public Services Vehicles (Registration of Local Services) Regulations 2004 which apply to England and Wales (Scotland does not have flexible bus services). However these Regulations were drafted before smartphones and ride-hailing apps like Uber and can be restrictive, leading to some operators choosing to operate under private hire legislation instead. The consultation concentrates on making the flexible bus services regulations more – flexible – but is also thinking longer term about how the bus, taxi and PHV regimes are converging.
- **Mobility as a Service (MaaS)** – the consultation defines this as “the integration of various modes of transport along with information and payment functions into a single mobility service”. At the moment it is still in the trial stage: the £92 million [Future Transport Zones fund](#) will support local trials. Current legislation and regulation of MaaS is fragmented and the Government has identified a number of areas across four themes where it wants further evidence on whether future regulation is required. The four themes are:
 - Digital infrastructure to support innovation – making transport data more accessible to MaaS platform providers
 - A fair and open market for businesses to innovate – the risk that a mobility provider or a MaaS platform could become the dominant player in the market and refuse to deal with others or could increase prices
 - Accessible, inclusive and safe mobility – making sure that disabled people are able to travel and whether using exclusively digital platforms could exclude sections of society
 - Impacts on the wider transport system – if done well, MaaS could reduce car ownership and move people towards active and sustainable modes; alternatively increased use of taxis could lead to decreased bus use and more road congestion.



The other workstreams in the overall Future of Transport Regulatory Review are: Roads: zero emission vehicles, self-driving vehicles; Maritime: innovation in maritime; Aviation: drones and future flight; Cross-cutting theme: transport data. Work is ongoing on these and Chapter 6 of the consultation lists the highlights, including that a Transport Data Strategy is being developed.

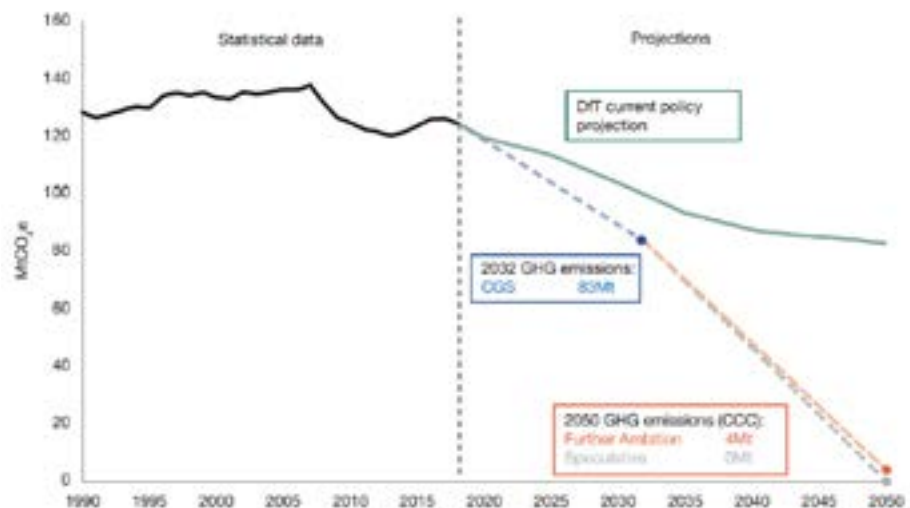


DECARBONISING TRANSPORT

[Decarbonising transport: setting the challenge](#) asks for views that will help to shape the Transport Decarbonisation Plan, which is due to be published in autumn 2020 – originally, just before the COP26 climate conference that was to be held in Glasgow in November, but which has now been [postponed](#) due to Covid-19. We do not yet know if the Transport Decarbonisation Plan will similarly be delayed, but hopefully not. It did envisage holding a number of workshops with the public and industry over the coming months to shape the plan so we will wait and see if these still go ahead, maybe via videoconferencing, or whether written submissions alone will be enough.

The first three chapters set out the current GHG emissions of the various transport modes and what policies are already in place to address these. It's only when we get to Chapter 4 that we really see the scale of the challenge. Even with existing policies, we are nowhere near meeting net zero transport emissions by 2050:

Figure 18: DfT's latest domestic GHG emissions projections based on current policies, compared to Clean Growth Strategy (CGS) targets and CCC Net Zero 'Further Ambition' and 'Speculative' scenarios"



To address this gap, the Transport Decarbonisation Plan will take a co-ordinated, cross-modal approach with six strategic priorities, which are purposefully not aligned to particular modes of transport:



Accelerating modal shift to public and active transport – this should be the natural first choice



Decarbonisation of road vehicles – this needs a supportive regulatory framework, a strong consumer base developed by building trust in new technologies as providing a viable alternative, the right market conditions, adequate vehicle supply and ensuring the necessary refuelling and recharging infrastructure.



Decarbonising how we get our goods (i.e. logistics) – ‘last mile’ deliveries and logistics efficiency, plus making rail freight an even more attractive option



Place-based solutions for emissions reduction – a tailored response for specific areas, with a key role for local bodies



UK as a hub for green transport technology and innovation – building on the Future of Transport Grand Challenge, with a key role for R&D



Reduce carbon in a global economy – recognising that aviation and maritime are international (and for the moment not included in UK carbon budgets) but the UK can lead the way in low carbon innovation and behaviour change

WHAT ELSE CAN WE EXPECT THIS YEAR?

The Transport Decarbonisation Plan consultation mentions various other plans and consultations we can expect over the next few months:

- A vision for a core network of rapid/high power chargepoints along England's key roads in spring 2020
- A decarbonisation programme for the rail network, building on Network Rail's Traction Decarbonisation Network Strategy (TDNS)
- A Net Zero Aviation consultation later this year
- A new cross-modal freight strategy later this year, building on the work of the National Infrastructure Commission and including the Government's final response to the recommendations in the Commission's report Better delivery: the challenge for freight
- A Science Plan from the DfT in spring 2020, setting out transport's key science and innovation challenges and how the Government will work with industry and academia to address these.

These are exciting times and it feels like we are on the cusp of major change. The lockdown is an ideal chance to reappraise how and why we travel and to think about the effect our travel has on the environment as we enjoy the cleaner air and the much-reduced road traffic. Both consultations suggest we should have some sort of tool to enable people to compare emissions from different transport modes: a universally-recognised carbon measure that will help us all make informed choices about the way we travel and the effect it has on the environment. Let's hope we choose wisely when lockdown is over.

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**PROBLEMS. POSSIBILITIES.
COMPLEXITY. CLARITY.
OBSTACLES. OPPORTUNITIES.
THE DIFFERENCE IS IMAGINATION.
THE DIFFERENCE IS **AG.****

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