
TRANSPORT DECARBONSATION PLAN / RAIL ENVIRONMENT POLICY STATEMENT – SUMMARY

July 2021

Transport Decarbonisation Plan

Overview

- The Decarbonisation Plan points to the recently published Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail which highlights electrification as the main way of decarbonising the majority of the rail network. The report claims that electrification will not only decarbonise existing rail journeys, but also has the potential to attract new passengers to rail.
- The report notes that in the last twenty years while the cost of motoring fell by 15 per cent, over the same period the cost of rail fares went up by over 20 per cent. The plan calls for simpler, cheaper fares for public transport helping to make trains (as well as buses) better value and more competitively priced.
- The report outlines that the government will also look to newer technologies such as hydrogen and battery trains, deploying the most appropriate technology for each route across the network.
- The plan – which will include all transport modes but particularly road, rail and aviation – paves the way to achieve net-zero carbon emissions across the transport sector by 2050.

Notable Commitments

Electrification (P.74 – 75)

- Ambition is to remove all diesel-only trains (passenger and freight) from the network by 2040.
 - The Plan for Rail will encourage more freight onto rail from roads, reducing emissions. The Government aims to support this by providing the right conditions for the rail freight industry to grow with better coordination, modern contracts, and new safeguards.
- To deliver an ambitious, sustainable, and cost-effective programme of electrification guided by Network Rail's TDNS

- The Government will announce further electrification projects shortly, ensuring the lessons of previous schemes are learned and that individual projects deliver value for money.

Hydrogen / Battery Technology (P.76)

- Supporting the development of battery and hydrogen trains and will deploy them on the network as we decarbonise.
 - DfT's Rail Innovation Programme will continue to fund "First of a Kind" competitions to develop and demonstrate existing technology for use on the railway. The programme is providing a further £9 million support for projects in 2021/22, with 'Low emissions and a greener railway' one of three themes.

Network Capacity (P.79)

- Building extra capacity on the UK's rail network to meet growing passenger and freight demand and support significant shifts from road and air to rail.
 - The Government note their commitment to the construction of new lines to meet growing demand for rail travel.

Modal Shift (P.80)

- Government will work with industry to modernise fares ticketing and retail to encourage a shift to rail and cleaner and greener transport journeys.
 - Preserve affordable 'walk up and go' fares. On shorter-distance routes, there will be a move to contactless ticketing to improve convenience for passengers.
- Government will improve rail journey connectivity with walking, cycling and other modes of transport.
 - Greater provision of walking and cycling routes to and from stations will be introduced to support healthier greener journeys after the pandemic.

Freight (P.82)

- Government will introduce a rail freight growth target to encourage the continued growth of rail freight.
 - The Government will introduce a rail freight growth target for all areas of the network DfT oversees, to encourage the continued growth of rail freight.
 - The Government will look to switch services over to electric traction through Short "infill" electrification projects.

Rail Environment Policy Statement - On Track for a Cleaner, Greener Railway

Overview

- The purpose of the Rail Environment Policy Statement (REPS) is to set a clear direction for the rail industry on environmental sustainability and to outline policy priorities for the Sustainable Rail Strategy.
- The report emphasises how the reform of the rail sector provides an opportunity to transform rail sustainability, noting that in order to support a green recovery, railways need to encourage a shift away from polluting forms of transport such as planes, cars and lorries, to become the best option for long-distance travel, and improve the whole journey experience.
 - This will include making it easier to get to and from stations by walking, cycling or other public transport, supporting green infrastructure outside cities, modernising fares to compete with air travel, improving freight connectivity through interchanges and creating better links with freeways.
- There is a notable emphasis in the report on the role that rail will have to play in maximising environmental benefits of moving freight, with GBR having a “statutory duty” to promote rail freight.
 - The report also notes that GBR will develop a methodology to better assess the value of rail freight to support decision making, building on the “Value of Rail Freight” report commissioned by the Rail Delivery Group.

Notable Commitments

Environmental priorities for the railway (page 8)

The plan lists the following priorities for the rail industry:

- Net zero greenhouse gas emissions from trains by 2050.
- An ambition to remove all diesel-only trains from the rail network by 2040.
- A commitment to a sustainable deliverable programme of electrification that delivers a higher performing net zero railway.
- Air quality targets will be set for all parts of the railway that the public can access in 2022, with the ambition of meeting those targets by the end of 2030.
- The industry will be required to develop air quality improvement plans for all stations identified as having poor air quality.
- Network Rail will achieve net zero biodiversity by 2024 and biodiversity net gain by 2035.
- 100% of Network Rail’s cars and vans will be zero emission by 2027.
- Zero waste from railways activities and passengers will go to landfill by 2025.
- Targets will be set for renewable energy generation and use at stations.

Traction decarbonisation (Page 10)

- Decarbonising rail freight by electrifying more of the network to enable electric rail freight to run on more routes.
- Develop further interventions, in partnership with industry, to help Freight Operating Companies have the confidence and business assurance to invest in new rolling stock to overhaul their largely diesel fleets.

Electrification

- Aspiration to achieve a stable, ongoing rail electrification programme that learns from past mistakes.

- Great British Railways will lead an efficient electrification programme, working with funders and suppliers to minimise the cost and disruption of further electrification.

New Traction Technology

- Future rolling stock procurements will need to consider how to enable the use of hydrogen and battery trains where they are the best way to deliver decarbonisation targets.

Integrated travel and modal shift (page 27)

Passenger Modal Shift

- To make rail the first option for suitable journeys in the UK and encourage commuters to cycle, walk or take public transport to and from rail stations, making their journey environmentally sustainable from door to door.
- In the future, each Passenger Service Contract will be designed by Great British Railways to support the needs of passengers and the whole network, as part of an integrated system

Freight Modal Shift

- The Government is supportive of modal shift from road to rail, wherever possible, to reduce emissions from the freight sector.
- The Government will introduce a rail freight growth target for all areas of the network that the department oversees. The target will provide a common objective for industry collaboration, help provide private operator investment confidence, and galvanise action across local partners and industry.
- To further grow rail freight for 2021/22, the Government has invested £20 million in the Mode Shift Revenue Support (MSRS) scheme and will continue to work with the rail freight industry, Innovate UK, and RSSB to look at how best to progress options on innovation, research and development to reduce emissions from rail freight.