
Meeting: Transport for the North Board
Subject: Decarbonisation Strategy Stocktake and Action Plan Update
Author: Peter Cole, Head of Decarbonisation
Sponsor: Katie Day, Strategy Director and Deputy Chief Executive
Meeting Date: Monday, 9 December 2024

1.0 Purpose of the Report:

1.1 To provide an update on Transport for the North's ("TfN's") Decarbonisation Strategy stocktake exercise, including early findings and next steps.

2.0 Recommendations:

2.1 TfN Board is asked to note the report, including the timescales for delivery, and provide any feedback on the early findings of the stocktake.

3.0 Context:

3.1 TfN's Regional Transport Decarbonisation Strategy, published in 2021, committed TfN to undertaking a stocktake exercise at each milestone along our Decarbonisation Trajectory, the first being in 2025.

3.2 The purpose of the stocktake is to monitor the North's progress in the decarbonisation of surface transport, allowing us to benchmark progress against the Decarbonisation Trajectory and adjust the focus or strengthen the recommended approach where needed.

3.3 The stocktake process is also driven by the need for TfN to revisit and align the pathway and policy recommendations with the strategic ambitions agreed in our Strategic Transport Plan ("STP"), published earlier this year.

3.4 Informed by the stocktake and ongoing engagement with MCA and LTA officers, we will also be seeking agreement to the actions TfN Board will take to support the STP decarbonisation ambitions. This will detail the activities that TfN is proposing to undertake, subject to funding, in the period from 2025 to 2030. The action plan will provide a focused list of activities that support our partners and enable delivery.

3.5 The stocktake and action plan do not constitute a new strategy, as TfN's 'near zero by 2045' decarbonisation ambition is already reflected in the STP. This work will update the evidence base (the Decarbonisation Pathway) and set out our intended actions for the next five years. As such no public consultation is now proposed.

4.0 Early Findings:

4.1 TfN's 2018 carbon baseline, used within the 2021 Regional Transport Decarbonisation Strategy, is being updated to 2023. Whilst the update is still ongoing, early findings indicate that the North has achieved transport related carbon reductions largely in line with our Decarbonisation Trajectory between 2018 and 2023.

4.2 These reductions have for the most part been due to traffic reductions experienced as a result of the Covid pandemic. The update also shows that some key transport decarbonisation policy lever ambitions, included within TfN's Decarbonisation Pathway, have progressed slower than anticipated. Most notably, this is around Zero Emission Vehicle ("ZEV") sales.

4.3 As part of the stocktake, we will advise Members if any adjustments are required to the level of commitment required as a region, against key transport decarbonisation policy levers. This will then be reflected in an updated Decarbonisation Pathway, upon which Members will have the opportunity to review and provide feedback.

4.4 Whilst the transition to ZEVs will continue to do the 'heavy lifting' in terms of absolute emissions, the lack of progress in this area means that managing both car and HGV mileage will now be essential. Through incorporating the STP's headline 'right share' metrics of no-net increase in regional car mileage, and a tripling of the share of freight carried by rail, early modelling suggests that the North could stay within its surface transport carbon budget. Importantly, it also aligns to the STP ambitions to reduce social exclusion, boost local economic growth, and ensuring there are better sustainable transport choices to encourage mode shift.

5.0 Next steps:

5.1 We will present the stocktake and action plan to TfN Board for approval in June 2025, having provided updates and opportunities for feedback as necessary in March 2025.

5.2 An elongated programme is required to be able to incorporate two important inputs:

Firstly, TfN's 2023 carbon footprint modelling and analysis: this re-timing to June has allowed TfN's in-house carbon modelling specialist resource to focus on the delivery of TfN's **Carbon Assessment Playbook (CAP)**. This is a 'policy builder' tool which allows every MCA/LTA to test the carbon reduction impacts of different local transport policies and interventions, within their Local Transport Plans, against their bespoke transport carbon baselines. The CAP is expected to be launched by early 2025.

Secondly, our work to map the vulnerability of the North's strategic transport networks to climate change effects, the evidence from which will be important in informing the stocktake document. Subject to TfN's business planning, we would also like to provide local road vulnerability data to partners, under a number of climate scenarios, to aid local and national planning too.

5.3 Both the development of the CAP and the climate vulnerability workstream are examples of where we are using TfN's analytical and research expertise to deliver practical tools to aid partners with the development and implementation of their transport plans.

5.4 TfN's Scrutiny Committee continued to be supportive of the stocktake focus on an inclusive and prosperous transition. They were keen that future actions in particular support: TfN's rail freight mode shift ambition; increasing local uptake of zero emission vehicles; the role of hydrogen for mobility; and opportunities for further rail electrification. The Committee was also very supportive of TfN's recent work on understanding the climate vulnerability of the North's strategic transport infrastructure and extending this where possible to local infrastructure over the coming years.

6.0 Corporate Considerations:

Financial and Resource Implications

6.1 There are no direct finance and resource implications as a result of this report.

Legal Implications

6.2 Any legal implications are contained within the body of this report.

Risk Management and Key Issues

6.3 A risk assessment is not required for this stage, however, a risk relating to progress against TfN’s decarbonisation delivery has been identified on the TfN Functional Risk Register.

Environmental Implications

6.4 The stocktake exercise aligns TfN’s 2021 Regional Transport Decarbonisation Strategy with TfN’s STP as adopted in 2024, which was subject to a full ISA.

6.5 The stocktake document does not constitute a new strategy, plan or programme requiring an SEA under the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

Equality and Diversity

6.6 Transport decarbonisation policy measures can potentially lead to uneven distributional impacts. As part of this stocktake, we intend to consider the potential distributional impacts of key transport decarbonisation policies through an Equality Impact Assessment.

Consultations

6.7 The requirement to produce a stocktake of the North’s progress against the Decarbonisation Trajectory was laid out in the 2021 strategy and subject to a public consultation in Summer 2021. The North’s decarbonisation ambition is reflected in the STP, which was also subject to a statutory consultation in 2023.

6.8 The stocktake and action plan do not constitute a new strategy. TfN’s ‘near zero by 2045’ decarbonisation ambition, Decarbonisation Trajectory and cumulative carbon budget remain unchanged. As such, no further public consultation is required. Engagement with MCA/LTA partners has been undertaken throughout 2024.

7.0 Background Papers

7.1 No background papers.

8.0 Appendices

8.1 No appendices.

Glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used:

a) MCA	Mayoral Combined Authority
b) LTA	Local Transport Authority
c) ZEV	Zero Emission Vehicle (including Electric Vehicles)
d) HGV	Heavy Goods Vehicle
e) STP	Strategic Transport Plan
f) SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
g) ISA	Integrated Sustainability Appraisal
h) CAP	Carbon Assessment Playbook