

COUNTDOWN TO CARBON ZERO

CONVERSATION SERIES:
SAM LONGMAN
INTERVIEW



TALKING CARBON ZERO

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT STARTS WITH LAND USE

'It's time to reimagine city living and build a future founded on sustainable transport', says **Sam Longman, Head of Corporate Environment for Transport for London**. We hear him in conversation with **Paul Hirst, Head of Transport at Addleshaw Goddard**.

Can we start by looking at the role of transport in tackling the climate crisis? How do you see this role?

Transport plays a vital role in building a sustainable society but importantly, it doesn't start with transport, it starts with land use. People don't tend to travel around for the sake of it. They're generally going somewhere. So firstly, it's important that you get your land use planning right - that you build dense, mixed use developments with local services and community activities to maximise the potential for travel by walking or cycling. These developments need to be close to public transport provision or built at the same time as public transport provision. Secondly, you need vehicles to be powered by renewable energy and to be as efficient as possible. And thirdly you need awareness in the wider population about the benefits of moving towards a sustainable society. When you do all this, people naturally choose sustainable transport.

What has changed in Transport for London's strategy as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

I think there's been a change in people's relationship with cities. More and more, people want cities to be built around people and their ability to walk, cycle and live within their local community. There's a lot of talk about 15-minute cities like Paris. As we rebuild our economies and societies, our hope at Transport for London is that we can build on this and create a recovery founded on sustainable transport.

So effectively we want to double down on our existing strategy to increase the number of people who are walking, cycling and using public transport. This means demonstrating that the public transport system is clean and safe to use so we can avoid a car-based recovery. It also means making the network safe and inviting. During the pandemic, we've created lots of temporary space for walking and cycling under London's new Streetspace plan and there's now a real opportunity to lock in some of these gains where appropriate.

How big a leap is it for people to walk or cycle rather than taking a taxi or using public transport?

It's important to get people to give it a go. Once someone actually tries to walk or cycle a journey, they often realise how easy and accessible it is. But they also experience immediate gains in terms of their mental state, health and well-being. If you do a ten minute walk to the train station twice a day, that's 20 minutes exercise a day. And that can make a significant difference in terms of avoiding things like heart disease. So using transport is not just a way of getting around, it's also a way of getting exercise and improving your health.



I THINK THERE'S BEEN A CHANGE IN PEOPLE'S RELATIONSHIP WITH CITIES.

What level of shift to sustainable transport is needed?

Well, under the Mayor's Transport Strategy we want 80% of journeys to be done on foot, by cycle or using public transport by 2041. A decade ago we were at about 53% and we're now at about 63/64% so we're going in the right direction. But we definitely need to accelerate if we're to achieve our goal.

And how do you incentivise the right behaviour?

It's a combination of carrot and stick. You need to promote the positive benefits of sustainable travel so that it's a policy that's supported and actually called for.

Can we talk about technology now? What's your view on battery versus hydrogen?

We're technology neutral at Transport for London. Having said that, battery technology in vehicles currently has the jump on hydrogen which is why we now have more than 400 electric buses, with over 100 of those being double decker and comparatively few hydrogen buses simply because electric buses have been the best choice for a large number of the routes switched to zero emission so far. The UK has a huge number of electric charging points and they're increasing day by day whereas we don't have a UK hydrogen refuelling network. So I'm not saying we're not supportive of hydrogen, I'm just saying you have to look at which way the wind is blowing

How might freight and deliveries be adapted?

We've seen some huge orders from companies like UPS for electric vans. These are starting to make sense from a business point of view as they're cheaper to operate. In terms of making the network more efficient, this is a real challenge. Organisations need to look at the opportunities to work together and consolidate where possible and we are seeing innovation in this area.

How do you embed sustainability in the transport culture in the way that safety is embedded?

We need to create a carbon conscious culture where everyone sees that they have a role to play in reducing carbon, both in their personal life and in their work. At the organisational level, we need to learn from each other and develop new innovative solutions in the way we model and measure and construct. This is already happening. There's a lot going on, we just need to double down on it and bring it all together so we have a really clear roadmap about what we can achieve.

TALKING CARBON ZERO

Should corporates take a more active position on how their staff travel to work?

A recent YouGov poll showed that over half of young adults want to work for organisations that are actively trying to address the climate crisis. So yes, if you want to be a sustainable organisation that attracts talent and investment then you need to have a strong story about what you're doing to be more sustainable.

Are there systemic issues that are preventing us from making faster progress towards our goals under the Paris Agreement?

For energy, heating and transport direct emission, the options are well understood, and it comes down to political choice and willingness to fund the transition. But we should look beyond UK reported emission because our impact is global. I think data reporting and intelligence are key and I think technology can play a significant role in helping us achieve this. If you know more about the carbon embedded in your supply chains and you also know more about the different options available to you and the costs and implications of these options, then you can make better, more informed choices and decisions. When you're developing schemes or you're designing operations, having a much more detailed understanding about the carbon impacts in particular I think is of great value. Being able to able to build a model so you test different options and the carbon implications of each, having that deeper understanding and that intelligence to inform decision making could be quite powerful

Are there other things that are really key to delivering decarbonisation?

I think there's a lot of potential with smart grid technology and interoperability of charging infrastructure. Data collection on how people use their vehicles also has significant potential in informing transport planning.

Is there any other behaviour change needed to get people out of their cars?

I think we've come back to where we started - with land use planning. We need to create cities, towns and rural areas where people can live locally as much as possible. People need to have a reason to stay in their local area

The challenge is that some people still think of sustainable transport as about taking stuff away rather than focusing on the positives. Sustainable transport isn't just about transport, it's about creating a healthy, inclusive, fair and ultimately sustainable society. And that's something everyone should want.



IF YOU KNOW MORE ABOUT THE CARBON EMBEDDED IN YOUR SUPPLY CHAINS, YOU CAN MAKE BETTER, MORE INFORMED CHOICES

