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Movement Matters is a series of inspirational thought leadership events exploring new ideas about places, people and economies. Drawing on experience from leaders from around the globe, these sessions provide a burst of fresh thinking. To attend any of our events register at: www.steergroup.com/events

Event summary

MM Movement Matters events

NET ZERO BY 2030 FACT OR FICTION?

SESSION 1: TRANSPORT POLICY & STRATEGY

We commenced the week with the outlook for transport policy and strategy in the UK. Discussing the role of local and regional partners in delivering government policy, we examine the extent to which policy is joined up across all levels of government. With local authorities and regional bodies all with different baseline emissions, different capability and capacity to deliver net zero commitments, and with different target dates for net zero, how can a successful joined-up, deliverable approach be brokered?

Speaker's presentation

Naomi Green, Director at England's Economic Heartland

A week of five discussions with eminent speakers on the topic of achieving Net Zero by 2030 began with an excellent turnout of attendees to explore the topic of transport policy and strategy with Naomi Green, Director of England's Economic Heartland (EEH). This discussion delved into questions of delivering decarbonisation strategy amidst complications of administrative boundaries, funding streams, and differences in baseline emissions, capability, and capacity - as well as the extent to which policy is joined up across all levels of government.

Naomi is responsible for delivering EEH's work programme, including preparation and implementation of the regional Transport Strategy to 2050: ensuring EEH is driving forward the region's ambitions for supporting economic growth while delivering a decarbonised transport system.

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The key message from Naomi is that the devil is in the detail when it comes to delivering strategy. In reflecting on COP26 Naomi states that is easy to make bold promises – but these must be backed up by a clear plan and pathway to delivery. This was brought into further clarity as Naomi outlined the complex context of transport strategy in England's Economic Heartland:

"There are parts of England's Economic Heartland where only 28% of journeys are locally derived – this shows that to achieve results requires a local effort, a regional effort, and a national effort."

Naomi outlined the important strategic position of Sub-national Transport Bodies such as EEH in supporting a joined-up approach between Local Authorities and acting as a vital intermediary between local and national governance. Naomi also outlined some of the work that Steer have supported EEH on including a market-led approach to improving first/last mile connections – by understanding locations and their transport needs based on a series of personas – thus allowing a prediction of needs barriers, openness to alternative modes of travel, and possible incentives to encourage modal shift.

Q&A

The session was then opened to questions by chair **Hugh Jones – Chief Executive Officer at Steer**. These questions cut to the core of the topic and explored issues such as:
- achieving radical behaviour change while maintain public support
- how to harness private sector innovation to forward transport strategy goals
- the opportunities and challenges for mobility in newly developed communities; and
- how to ensure car dependent communities are not left behind in the delivery of transport strategies

What's your commentary on COP26 and what does this mean for you and others in your industry?
One of the challenges for us is – it's easy to make bold statements. But the reality is they need to be backed up with plans for delivery. Announcements regarding freight at COP26 – but the devil is in the detail. The power supply in our region is around half what it needs to be to deliver an electric fleet.

How do we achieve the radical behaviour change and keep the public on side?
If I begin with myself, am I making all the best travel options. If I look at why – it's about the other pressure points that go alongside this choice making – affordability, schedules. The technology is there to allow us to offer incentives – but everything needs to be backed up by real access to comprehensive public transport. The discussion needs to happen about price. People need access to alternatives to private motor vehicle.

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What do you think the future models of movement are in newly developed communities?

There are some huge opportunities for change. One aspect is managing small scale freight. There is a real opportunity to design freight differently. The opportunity to design a community where public transport walking and cycling are prioritised. But I do recognise that for developers the need to deliver car space makes sense to sell houses. We can broaden public transport catchments by improving first last mile connections/options.

How would you harness the powers of innovation to move at a quicker pace towards decarbonisation?

One of the challenges is moving innovation within companies to the mass scale – this requires support by the government and other bodies. Moving from a pilot to a transformative scale. Regulation and funding are key challenges.

Do you know of any examples of mobility credit schemes to incentivise sustainable transport modes?

This is not something that we have in the region yet. But there is a lot of innovation and plans. But this is an example of an opportunity for knowledge sharing across the industry.

If you could change one thing, or gain one extra power, what would that wish list look like?

Ticketing is an enormous barrier to making transport choices. It's bordering on impossible to have comparable price choices. It is difficult to compare these journeys as they are too unpredictable.

I think we need more opportunities for trialling more innovative models for incentivising sustainable transport. Not about stick but also about carrot. A shift in regulation on pricing and ticketing.

What should central government do with respect to funding powers and governance to deliver a step change locally?

In terms of funding – it is incredibly difficult to plan a transport system when funding is modal. You are working within constrained networks. When you get down to walking, buses, where you are having to – you are not comparing like for like. You are finding schemes that fit the pot you have available. What kind of pot can we access? Regulation – the regulatory powers (pt. 6 of traffic act), that legislation came in 2004 but has still not been enacted. It's that kind of barrier, of making the best of the regulation we have got. We also need innovation.

Viable active travel and public transport requires high density development – how do we persuade people to sacrifice space?

That is a sector wide discussion. We have been seeking the answer to this question for a long time without coming to a conclusion. Community space would be incredibly important. People need to see that working before they trust it. The reality is you need the public space first, and demonstrable effectiveness before people will feel comfortable giving up that space.

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Like many areas EEH has large school related peaks. How do we galvanise the enthusiasm of younger people to help guide and deliver decarbonisation?

I think it is about how effectively parents/adults can embed good practices.

There is a degree of complexity in England's administrative boundary – do you think this is effective situation for delivering the needed

On administrative boundaries - the short answer is no and that we could spend our whole lives redeveloping them. So, the answer is collaboration and working together.

The implication of making bold decisions is quite difficult. The funding is against them, and they don't know how it will land locally. It can mean it's not worth them taking these risks.

You mentioned the correlation with emissions and rural communities – how can we ensure that car dependent people in rural communities are not left behind?

There is a social equality point here – if people don't have access to a car they're excluded. Public transport needs to be commercially viable, and you need to be realistic with what you are planning. Mobility hubs with incentive for stopping – and moving on by a different mode – with a big enough catchment to warrant their existence.

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