

Written evidence submitted by the Institute for Public Policy Research (EVP0065)

INTRODUCTION

- The Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) is pleased to make this submission to the Transport Select Committee's inquiry on accelerating the shift to zero emission vehicles and the potential introduction of road pricing.
- IPPR's [Environmental Justice Commission](#) was created in 2019 with the aim of working with people across the UK to develop policies and ideas that will tackle the climate crisis and restore nature as quickly and fairly as possible, and that put people and fairness at the heart of the response to the climate and nature emergencies. The Commission is co-chaired by Hilary Benn MP, Laura Sandys and Caroline Lucas MP, leading politicians from the Labour, Conservative and Green Parties.
- On behalf of the Environmental Justice Commission, IPPR is delivering four citizens' juries in different parts of the UK designed to make recommendations on the action required to reach net zero. These events build on the conclusions of Climate Assembly UK by focusing on the needs and hopes of specific communities for a just transition to net zero and a nature recovery.
- This deliberative democracy programme is just over halfway complete, and the response to this inquiry focuses on the conclusions made by citizens' juries in the [South Wales Valleys](#) and [Tees Valley and County Durham](#) at the end of 2020. We will have concluded the final two juries in Thurrock and Aberdeenshire by the end of March 2021. We are undertaking further research relevant to the Transport Select Committee on the implications of these recommendations for the future of mobility and how we design and deliver services to our communities.
- We would be available to discuss the points raised in this submission, the citizens' jury process and the wider work of the commission relevant to the Transport Select Committee's inquiry.

PUBLIC ACCEPTABILITY AND COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP

- We welcome the Transport Select Committee's role in supporting Climate Assembly UK and using the assembly member's recommendations in setting the terms of this inquiry. The Environmental Justice Commission believes that it is through high quality deliberative activities such as the assembly that we can design a mobility system that addresses the climate emergency and is fair to those disadvantaged by our current system.
- Throughout our citizens' juries we have heard personal testimony of the challenges many face in accessing services and work, particularly if they live in rural areas:

“In our area there are few jobs and most skilled people travel outside to work, unemployment and those on benefits is huge. One of the walls I face as a woman with a young family is being able to get my children to school on time

and then travel to one of the bigger cities (Swansea, Cardiff) to work and get there on time, making public transport an impossible option.”

- We recommend convening a citizens’ assembly, or similar deliberative process, on the future of travel and planning. This process would build on the recommendations of Climate Assembly UK and consider the implications of a future where the DfT’s official estimates for car ownership increasing by 10 million, or more, by 2050 comes true.
- Such an assembly would seek to address the purpose of everyday transport and consider how these needs could be met by planning communities differently, and reflect on what we have learned from Covid-19 about the future opportunities to enable flexible working and revitalise local economies. As the South Wales Valleys jury concluded:

The key is to enable good jobs in local areas. Covid-19 has demonstrated that digital or remote-working is very possible for many businesses that may previously have been reluctant to use it. But remote- working requires good internet and the local spaces to enable this kind of working and local jobs.

- Within this assembly’s terms of reference would be consideration of how to fairly reduce the levels car ownership, whilst also increasing people’s wellbeing and the ability to access the things they need and that help them to thrive. Such an approach would recognise the interconnections between transport, planning, public service delivery, environment and the economy. It also provides the opportunity to consider how action can be taken that prioritises tackling existing inequalities, and addressing the needs of the areas and people disconnected from the current mobility system.
- Across Climate Assembly UK’s recommendations and in our own citizens’ juries we hear the importance of educating, involving and inspiring people to make the changes needed in their lives. To do this we need take every opportunity we can to involve the public in the decisions that will affect them, in the words of our South Wales Valleys Climate and Fairness Panel:

People need to feel that they are part of the change. We need to bring people with us and for it not to feel like we are having things done to us. We need to empower individuals and communities to take the action needed.

- We also need to consider how communities can be given a tangible stake in the assets that will sustain a zero mobility system. This means thinking seriously about the role of shared mobility (both of vehicles and of trips) and the opportunities for an ultra low emission, community transport service to play a prominent role in connecting people to where they need to go. This follows the recommendation of the Tees Valley and County Durham panel that:

There should be more community ownership of local assets, so that citizens have more control over and a greater stake in the decisions that affect them.

- If we are to leave no one behind in the transition to a new mobility system we need to involve communities in every step of the journey.

ACCELERATING THE SHIFT TO ZERO EMISSION VEHICLES

- We welcome the ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel vehicles being brought forward to 2030. The feasibility of this faster shift to ultra low emission vehicles is to some extent proven by the announcements of car manufacturers shifting to electric only production well within this timeframe.
- There are significant opportunities to consider how the public sector (at all levels) can lead this transition, through a more rapid phasing out of petrol and diesel vehicles across its fleets and ensuring that procurement of future vehicles is in-line with achieving the highest possible social value. As a major employer with reach across the country, the public sector can also be an anchor provider of shared mobility assets and set targets for replacing individual cars with ultra low emission car club vehicles by 2030.
- These fleets are important. In 2019 the majority of new car registrations were made by companies. They represented [59% of all registrations](#) and these company cars tend to quickly move into private hands. If the government leads by example in the transition away from petrol and diesel then many more organisations will follow. The conclusions of Tees Valley and County Durham citizens' jury reflect this need for government leadership:

Government should seek to make investment as soon as possible. The government leading the way on investments means that individuals, communities and businesses are more likely to follow.

- Although the potential, and necessity, of ultra low emission vehicles is recognised by the public there is still much scepticism of their suitability for all trips. This is particularly an issue for those living in car dependent rural communities who regularly use their vehicles for long distance commutes.
- Within the South Wales Valleys this was reflected in participants concern about the availability of charging facilities that will be suitable for installation within local their villages and towns. Beyond those immediate practicalities there was also concern about the negative environmental and social impacts of electric car use in general, including the environmental damage of mining and the potential for human rights abuses in the supply chains. This led the jury for this area to conclude:

Electric is only part of the answer; we also need fewer car trips overall, so a move to electric vehicles must only happen in combination with public transport improvements and a reduction in journeys.

Invest in infrastructure ahead of need to accelerate adoption of low carbon technology or behaviours. Government investment in electric vehicle charging infrastructure is needed to increase confidence in buying electric vehicles.

- The transition to ultra low emission vehicles, particularly as many wait for the price to come down, will be one of the largest opportunities to reset our approach to travel the country has seen. We need to get the incentives for shifting from petrol and diesel cars to public, active and shared transport right. This means that any scrappage schemes or grants put in place to support this transition for existing car owners should be focused on access to sustainable mobility options, including e-bikes, public transport and car clubs, not a new car.
- Providing these alternatives will have significant economic benefits. Our research on the wider action required to decarbonise transport, contained within [our report](#) on the economic transformation required after Covid-19, shows the opportunity for new jobs that comes with investment in public transport. We found over 140,000 jobs could be created through a rapid decarbonisation of rail and a comprehensive electric bus service. This kind of government action is both a direct stimulant to the economy, enables mode shift and provides support to those with the lowest incomes in the UK, who are more likely to use buses already.
- In [2017/18 more than 40% of households in the East of England](#) owned more than one car. Many of these households have no viable alternative to the convenience and flexibility of owning multiple cars. It is particularly for these multi-vehicle households that there is an opportunity to support a shift to other modes, an opportunity that will be missed without significant investment in making these modes viable for more people.

HOW TO IMPLEMENT ROAD PRICING

- Our research into the future models of road pricing that might work in the UK has only just started but we offer some principles to this inquiry as to how it can be designed in a way that is publicly acceptable. As previously outlined within this submission, we believe it is fundamental that purpose and design of such a charge be part of deliberative process with the public.
- Our experience with citizens' juries has shown us that, although there is understanding about the need for change, the process of introducing new charges for behaviours has to be handled carefully and fairly. This is reflected in the recommendations from these juries that:

Change needs to be well thought through. We need to get the timing right so people don't experience the negative impacts before they see benefits. If things are planned well and made clear, we believe people will act in the way needed.

We don't want to punish anyone for where they live, so benefits and subsidies are better than sanctions and penalties for encouraging greener travel.

- We take the view that the introduction of both a new national scheme for road user charging and local, largely urban, equivalents are necessary to enable the levels of behaviour change required over the coming years. The five principles we believe will need to be considered in the fair introduction of such charges are:

1. They must reflect the challenges of different communities across the UK; including those who live in rural areas, are currently dependent on cars to access services or have needs that make cars the only viable option for most trips.
2. They have to be supported by viable, high quality, sustainable alternatives.
3. They should be focused on the aim of achieving a net zero and nature friendly mobility system, not raising funds for use on other activities.
4. The funds raised, where possible, should be ringfenced for use within local areas and be allocated with the involvement of those communities.
5. The introduction of the charge needs to be considered hand in hand with the future of road building and the governance of highways agencies.
 - If those criteria are met, and used to inform a meaningful dialogue with the public, then road user charging can be implemented in a way that is fair and leads to the desired environmental and social impact. Without this kind of engagement the implementation of new charges will meet with both resistance and risk exacerbating existing inequalities in mobility.

ABOUT IPPR

IPPR, the Institute for Public Policy Research, is the UK's leading progressive think tank. We are an independent charitable organisation with our main office in London. IPPR North, IPPR's dedicated think tank for the north of England, operates out of offices in Manchester and Newcastle, and IPPR Scotland, our dedicated think tank for Scotland, is based in Edinburgh.

Our primary purpose is to conduct and promote research into, and the education of the public in, the economic, social and political sciences, science and technology, the voluntary sector and social enterprise, public services, and industry and commerce. Other purposes include to advance physical and mental health, the efficiency of public services and environmental protection or improvement; and to relieve poverty, unemployment, or those in need by reason of youth, age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship, or other disadvantage.

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