

TRANSPORT

Business Perspective



Business is responsible for a significant proportion of transport emissions and therefore has enormous potential to reduce transport related emissions. Reducing Means Business on Climate Change's aims of reducing the need to travel, encouraging the use of more sustainable modes of transport and alternative energy sources are very relevant to business. There are three main components to business travel impacts – freight, personal travel in the course of business and personal travel to and from the workplace.

Freight Transporting goods contributes significantly to the UK's carbon footprint. There is potential to reduce this in numerous different ways. Some of the more direct options are choosing lower emissions vehicles, optimising delivery routes, re-designing packaging to reduce the weight or volume of cartons and consolidating consignments to maximise use of vehicles.

Taking a more holistic approach, based on the principles of the 'circular economy' (see the chapter on 'Purchasing, Supply and Consumption' for more on the 'circular economy'), it may also be possible to reduce transport impacts by replacing a physical product with a service, or by collaborating with other companies to share distribution networks or set up freight hubs. With fuel costs steadily rising, reducing the use of fuel for freight can also reduce costs, improving both profitability and competitiveness.

Travel in the course of business Most businesses need to visit customers or suppliers, but the frequency of these visits can often be reduced without any negative impact on the relationship. The use of video-conferencing or telepresence allows high quality meetings to take place without the need to leave the office. If "virtual meetings" are presented as part of a strategic approach to reducing business impacts, the reaction can often be positive. Altering the mode of travel can also help; if several people are attending the meeting, carsharing is a possibility. Where company vehicles are provided, an emissions limit is a good way to ensure that they are as fuel efficient as possible. Often, public transport can be an alternative – and it's possible to do productive work while travelling by train, which is impossible when driving. Policy can be established via a company travel plan that makes it clear how to choose the appropriate mode of transport. Cycling can also be promoted for more local business travel, and supported by pool bikes or cycle hire schemes.

Travel to and from work Businesses have less direct influence over how employees travel to and from their workplace, but it's still possible to encourage behaviour change. While the local authority can provide the facilities for low carbon and active travel, the business can help staff make positive choices. Businesses can help by incentivising active travel, subsidising public transport and the purchase of bicycles, and taking part in national, regional and local events that promote active or low carbon travel. Where travel by car is unavoidable, car sharing clubs and priority parking spaces for car sharers can be considered. Active travel can also have a business benefit in terms of improved fitness for work.