



Trudy Harrison MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

EEH Business Unit  
c/o Buckinghamshire Council  
Walton Street  
Aylesbury  
HP20 1UA

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Dear Trudy

Following our meeting on Wednesday 8 December, I am writing to thank you for your time. I very much welcomed the discussion about how STBs are playing a key role in ensuring delivery of ours and the government's shared priorities around planning for a net zero transport system. I was encouraged by your enthusiasm for delivery and the need for us to work collaboratively to plan programmes of work which will meaningfully support the UK's transition to net zero.

In February 2021, England's Economic Heartland published its regional transport strategy. The strategy sets out in more detail our approach to delivering a world class net zero transport system for the region, underpinning the long-term success of the UK. As outlined in our meeting, we are collaborating with both our local authority partners and colleagues from National Highways and Network Rail to drive forward our ambitions.

England's Economic Heartland is also the leading STB for net zero transport. On behalf of all seven STBs in England, EEH ensures we collectively look for opportunities to:

- Deliver shared work programmes, bringing economies of scale
- Disseminate capacity and capability around net zero, ensuring expertise from STBs with larger programmes is transferred to those who have small programmes and limited resources
- Bring a level of consistency, ensuring proportionate uniformity in the way we are planning and prioritising investment in net zero solutions
- Act as the link between the Department for Transport and local authorities; ensuring all local authorities in England are planning and able to deliver what is required in government's transport decarbonisation plan.

Now is the time to turn Britain's world leading commitments on net zero into reality on the ground. The EEH region, which accounts for 10% of the UK's emissions from surface transport (and where emissions per capita and car ownership exceed the national average), has a crucial role to play in this.

The move to electric vehicles, while important, will not on its own enable our region's transport system to reach net zero. A significant shift to more sustainable travel behaviours is required. As the government's transport decarbonisation plan recognises, this will require a 'place-based' approach, acknowledging that different areas require different solutions.

England's Economic Heartland is committed to facilitating the 'right intervention/right place' approach to planning for net zero. The EEH evidence base, which we touched on in our meeting, is allowing us to do this. The evidence base includes targeted analysis of carbon emissions from transport, ensuring local authorities are planning solutions that respond to the source of their carbon emissions. We are additionally capturing behavioural science as well as analysis of transport movements in our planning.

We are keen that DfT officials are kept updated on ours and other STBs' decarbonisation work. The plans we have in place, if supported by the right tools from government, will play a significant role in delivering net zero.

As we discussed, EEH is also engaging with both DfT and the private sector to support a reimagining of how local transport plans can be used as a catalyst for change and allow local transport authorities to fully demonstrate their ambitions on decarbonisation. We look forward to sharing the outcome of this work with you and your team in February 2022.

Finally, during the meeting, we also spoke of the need for continued leadership of a pan-sector response. The DfT's Net Zero Transport Board, created in 2020, provides the right opportunity to achieve just that. In reinvigorating the board, I would urge you to support the addition of an STB presence. Sub-national transport bodies are already playing a critical role at a regional level on decarbonisation and by having us represented, the board would be better able to factor in and plan for the role of place-based solutions to net zero. I would suggest that, as EEH leads the net zero workstream for the STBs, it would be us that acted as your representative in the first instance.

In addition, I would be delighted to invite you to visit the Heartland region in the new year. There are many world-leading engineering and technology businesses delivering new approaches to mobility and net-zero in our region which I think you would enjoy visiting.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to meet with us – we look forward to working with you and your team.

Yours sincerely



Cllr Richard Wenham  
Chair, England's Economic Heartland