

RSSB: rail ready to lead in decarbonisation

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A new series of sustainability thought pieces is being put together by the RSSB to coincide with the United Nations climate change conference, COP26.

In its **first piece**, the RSSB says it is time to realise rails low carbon credentials and to properly exploit them as part of a decarbonised, sustainable transport system.

According to them, recent petrol and diesel supply issues reveal just how unprepared road transport is.

It says that for all cars and vans to go electric by 2050, Britain would need 210,000 public chargers, as well as 3,500 rapid chargers near motorways. There are not yet any batteries that work for long-distance HGVs, and overhead electrified 'e-highways' are at a very early trial stage. Air and shipping present even bigger challenges.

The publication of the Government's *Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener*, made the commitment to a 'sustained, long-term programme of investment' in rail electrification, battery and hydrogen trains. But, the RSSB adds, the media attention on the plan for roads shows just how far other modes are playing catch up.

By comparison, it says, a sustainable programme of electrification, guided by Network Rail's Traction

Decarbonisation Network Strategy (TDNS) can happen cost-effectively and at pace.

There is a genuine opportunity to shift freight from an over-reliance on roads and embed the railway as part of a low carbon society.

According to RSSB, rail will still need to become a more obvious mode of choice to get the full benefits of decarbonisation. This means being responsive to fundamental changes in the world of work, and greener ways of living, all of which will require modernised ticketing, more capacity, and making it cleaner and greener to reach the station.

See the RSSB's think pieces [here](#).