

RSSB welcomes French leadership in decarbonising transport

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Rail industry body, RSSB has welcomed moves by the French government to restrict short-haul domestic flights in favour of rail, to eliminate carbon on environmental grounds.

Following a policy announcement made last summer, French lawmakers voted in the measure over the weekend which restricts the use of short-haul flights within France where the same journey can be made by rail in under 2.5 hours. It forms part of a broader climate change bill that aims to cut French carbon emissions by 40% in 2030 compared to 1990 levels.

RSSB says the move shows how rail can be activated to play a bigger role in the decarbonised transport system the UK needs.

RSSB's Director of Sustainable Development, George Davies said: "This is a big intervention and good leadership by the French. It tackles unnecessary carbon emissions and takes full advantage of France's high-speed, low-carbon, rail network.

"But it also recognises the need for long-haul connectivity so that international air travel is still an option

providing for domestic to international connecting flights. It's not about trains versus planes, it's about picking the right mode for the right journey type.

"This is the sort of intervention we should be aspiring to in the UK. To make this happen here we need a similar commitment to high speed rail to release capacity for lower carbon journeys, and to electrification to make train travel even greener."

RSSB is leading the Sustainable Rail programme for Britain's railways, developing a coherent, unified framework for sustainability, working in partnership with industry and government. RSSB's role is "lead developer" bringing its own in-house expertise in environmental sustainability topics such as carbon and air quality, as well as on social sustainability, to the wealth of talent and knowhow in organisations across the industry and throughout the supply chain.

The 2020s have been identified as 'the decade to make a difference', by the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), where humanity must press ahead with efforts to decarbonise industries if we are to control the climate emergency.