

North East England Views on the European Commission's Communication on a 'Sustainable future for transport'- COM (2009)279 final

The North East England very much welcomes the European Commission's Communication preparing the ground for future policy developments and it looks forward to the issue of the Transport White Paper setting out the policy measures to be adopted in the next decade 2010-2020.

The North East England is the first region ever in the UK and the EU to have signed up the Covenant of Mayors Initiative, all its twelve local authorities committing to reduce their CO2 emissions on their territories by at least 20% by 2020. The North East has the ambition to strengthen its emerging position as an internationally leading Low Carbon Region and for doing so, ensuring a low-carbon transportation system is the key pillar of its strategy.

However, because transport is a complex system that depends on multiple factors (human settlements, consumption, organisation of production and availability of infrastructure), coordination is needed at the European level to accelerate the transformation to the low-carbon economy.

The North East England believes that:

- Ø **The European Union must pave the way to sustainable mobility, where possible providing solutions that are valid on a global scale and that can be exported to other regions of the world. The most important policy instrument will probably be standard setting aimed at interoperable, safe and user-friendly equipment.**
- Ø **Because financing will be the key to foster the introduction of low-carbon vehicles onto the market, the North East strongly believe that the use of public funding in addition to 'user-pays' sources is justified on the basis of wider socio-economic benefits.**
- Ø **Education, information and awareness raising campaigns will play an important role in influencing consumer behaviour and facilitating sustainable mobility choices.**
- Ø **The European Commission must show effective European wide leadership to ensure that the low carbon transport revolution is implemented rapidly.**

Background – North East England leadership in low-carbon transportation system

The North East England recently became the first region in Europe to secure agreement from all Local Authorities to commit to the Covenant of Mayors agreement on Climate Change. This commits each of the twelve Local Authorities to develop a comprehensive Sustainable Energy Action Plan, identifying measures to achieve a minimum 20% reduction in emissions by 2020.

Ensuring a sustainable transportation system is one of the key pillars of the North East strategy in reducing CO2 emissions and the region is truly taking the lead in the development of a low-carbon transportation system at the European and UK level.

On 20th July 2009, the UK Prime Minister Rt. Hon Gordon Brown announced that North East England was the chosen location for the UK Low Carbon Vehicles 'Low Carbon Economic Area.' This Low Carbon Economic Area is extremely important for the future of the automotive industry in the region and it will enable the North East region to attract further investment related to electric vehicles and their infrastructure.

Nissan has also announced its intention to invest over £200 million in a new rechargeable battery factory in Sunderland, boosting the region's drive to become a leading centre for Electric Vehicles development. The investment will create over 350 direct jobs and over 1000 will be created / safeguarded in the supply chain. The capacity of the factory will be 60,000 units and Sunderland will be Nissan's European "centre of Excellence" and "Mother Plant" for Electric Vehicle battery production. Construction will start in 2010 with production set to commence in 2012.

One North East has assembled an Infrastructure Resource Group with an interest in advancing the deployment of the low carbon transportation infrastructure in the UK. By 2011, 750 charging points will be installed as part of One North East's £30 million plan harnessing the region's global fame for engineering and manufacturing, and its developing renewable energy sector to become a Low Carbon Region.

Key recommendations on the Commission's Communication

- 1) **The European Union must pave the way to sustainable mobility, where possible providing solutions that are valid on a global scale and that can be exported to other regions of the world.**

The North East England is calling the Commission for greater **standardization** in order to ensure operable, safe and user-friendly equipment. Many new technologies will develop in the next few years to address transport challenges and coordination will be needed to ensure equipments' interoperability and to avoid the proliferation of different systems at national level, for example rules and standards for tolling.

The North East England has already taken a leading role in setting Common Standards for EV Charging Points in the UK and Europe, and future proofing the charging infrastructure for future technologies.

As mentioned above, by 2011, 750 charging points will be installed in the North East England as part of One North East's £30 million plan harnessing the region's global fame for engineering and manufacturing, and its developing renewable energy sector to become a Low Carbon Region.

- 2) **Because financing will be the key to foster the introduction of low-carbon vehicles onto the market, the North East strongly believes that the use of public funding in addition to 'user-pays' sources is justified on the basis of wider socio-economic benefits.**

The North East England very welcomes the Green Cars Initiative focus on demonstration mobility project for electric vehicles, strongly believing that new transport systems and vehicle technologies will have to be first implemented as demonstration projects, to assess their feasibility and economic viability.

The North East England will itself be part of a consortium which will gather the major cities and the more advanced automobile manufacturers to demonstrate electric vehicles in various locations across Europe.

The North East encourages the European Union to further prioritise R&D funds for electric vehicle research, including batteries, notably through the Intelligent Energy Europe programme and Joint Technology initiatives.

3) Education, information and awareness raising campaigns will play an important role in influencing consumer behaviour and facilitating sustainable mobility choices.

The North East England encourage the Commission to facilitate greater public involvement in transport planning by recourse to participatory instruments, namely open consultations, surveys and stakeholders' representation in decision processes.

Citizens should be given better information on the existing transport alternatives and the North East England welcomes the European Mobility Week as an effective tool to better educate, inform and involve our citizens.

4) The European Commission must show effective European wide leadership to ensure that the low carbon transport revolution is implemented rapidly.

The North East England encourages the European Commission to take urgent and effective action to remove barriers to the rapid deployment and implementation of low carbon transportation technology, particularly electric vehicles.

These are an opportunity to achieve immediate and wide spread benefits for the citizens, environment and places of Europe. The Commission should ensure that barriers arising from outmoded technologies and interests do not prevent the widespread adoption of these innovations.

About North East England office in Brussels:

The North East England office in Brussels represents the interests of the North East England region at the European level. Being a membership-based organisation, NEEO's role is to promote partners' interests, create opportunities, influence EU decision-makers and support the region's engagement in Europe.

North East England Office in Brussels

Centre for the Regions

Boulevard St Michel 80

B-1040 Brussels

Tel: +32 27 35 35 47

Email: anne-benedicte.genachte@northeastengland.eu

www.northeastengland.eu

Passionate about North East England

