

Delivering Port of Liverpool-Associated Road-freight Zero Emissions (DePoLARiZE)

Final Briefing Note

Final stakeholder meeting – process and discussion

On Wednesday 5th October, a final meeting of the DePoLARiZE stakeholder group was held at the Athenaeum in central Liverpool. The purpose of this final session was to build on the collective exploration of reducing carbon emissions from freight transport in/out of the Port of Liverpool at the series of workshops in May/June. The aim thus was to identify specific, concrete next steps to be actioned by the diverse group assembled by this project. This was the only in-person session, and attendance proved difficult for many of those who had been involved in the prior process. Nonetheless, the group that assembled included representatives of the freight industry, professional consultants, local government and resident groups, as well as the academic project team. The session was professionally facilitated by Ai Change Management, an organizational development consultancy committed to regeneration and equity in the Liverpool city region. The group was led through a series of steps in order, first, to map out a decision pathway from 'here' to a future in which there are no road-based GHG emissions from freight associated with the Port; secondly, to identify and prioritise key next steps (limited to a maximum of three); and, finally, to identify specific people and/or roles that need to be involved or pulled into the discussion in order to push forward on these actions.

Working alone and then together, it emerged there was considerable overlap, i.e. agreement, between the decision pathways mapped out by those assembled. These are set out overleaf. Key points emerging from this exercise, though, include:

- The discussion focused primarily on electrification of road-freight movements, rather than hydrogen. This is because discussion with the freight industry and experts in the immediate run-up to the event presented a strong consensus that electrification is accelerating strongly, above even expectation, and may well already have established a clear lead over hydrogen, at least for freight road mobility in the UK. This is not to say that there will be no role for hydrogen in the future of British freight mobilities, but that HGV road mobility seems likely to be dominated by electric vehicles. Electrification does still, nonetheless, pose the choice between batteries within the vehicle itself or electric power through overhead cables/subsurface induction etc...
- It is clear that a wholesale shift to the complete replacement of ICE by electrified freight entering/exiting the Port will need the convergence of multiple developments. While the participation of many stakeholders is essential, and private and/or local actors can make significant impact and progress, the involvement of government will also eventually be necessary. Specifically, government alone (whether national/ central or local) has the levers to introduce the regulations that all those assembled agreed would ultimately be needed to prohibit the access of ICE HGVs to the Port. Similarly, the involvement of government is likely to be crucial in the construction of adequate, future-proofed infrastructures, both of mobility itself and of the (renewable-sourced) electricity needed. As a result, ongoing discussion with and/or lobbying of government will be needed to build the case for these interventions.
- The discussion was focused specifically on the challenge of how to decarbonise road-based freight associated with the Port. Even so, decision pathways mapped out continually returned to the importance of seeing the broader challenge of infrastructural redesign and the opportunities for an 'oblique' approach (Kay 2010). Specifically, participants brought into their decision pathways as key steps previous recommendations from this project, regarding the sui generis importance of building

adequate facilities for drivers in an out-of-town hub, and the potential for such a development to reframe productively the whole challenge of freight transition for the Port. It was also noted that the Port is increasingly pressed for space to accommodate containers – a challenge that will likely only increase as docking of the biggest ships continues to grow at Liverpool 2. The rationale for an inland hub site thus continues to strengthen – as win-win for the Port, for the freight industry and drivers, and for the local community, and hence for government as a matter of public interest.

- While there was clear consensus that regulation will be needed to support the expedited transition from ICE to electrified freight movements in/out of the Port, there was some debate about whether such regulation is most strategically targeted as medium-to-long-term outcome of a process or as a near-term goal to kickstart it. Discussion regarding the live consideration by Sefton Council of a Clean Air Zone (probably for the T-shaped corridor of the A5036 and A565 accessing the Port) led to the consensus that introducing such regulation as soon as possible would be the more effective approach, even as such a move is recognized as challenging and expensive for Sefton. Pertinent considerations, though, include the introduction by Portsmouth of a Clean Air Zone that will apply to HGVs, but *not* private cars, and the process of local consultation that was involved in this policy. Foregrounding legal responsibilities regarding the impacts of poor air quality on health, especially of children (with many schools along and/or nearby these two routes), and the need to act urgently on what are grievous and urgent health risks also supports immediate action.

Next steps

From this discussion, a consensus was reached regarding **three key next steps**:

1. Expedited introduction of a **Clean Air Zone** policy for the T-shaped corridor of access to the Port
2. A locked-in decision on the construction and siting of an **inland hub**, that will include adequate facilities for drivers and infrastructure for EV-HGV charging
3. Consultation and recruitment of **big shipping firms** to the transition agenda for the Port of Liverpool (e.g. regarding points 1 and 2 in the first instance)

Discussion also then explored key stakeholders that need to be involved in taking each of these points forward. Regarding all of these decisions, another key issue will be the formalization of an appropriate forum for ongoing stakeholder participation and working together on these issues.

Concretely, plans are now live to hold a larger event (if possible, before end of 2022) at the Athenaeum convening as many of these key stakeholders as possible to advance these actions. Ai Change Management has generously offered to take the lead in organising this event, but support and introductions from all those involved in this project and others interested in advancing this agenda are warmly welcomed. We would hope that the event will likely take the form of a half-day thought & action leadership forum, with opening plenary setting the agenda for the issues to be discussed, before dividing into two parallel sessions, discussing respectively items 1 and 2 above. The presence of shipping firms and their major customers (i.e. 'shippers') at the event will also directly tackle item 3.

For further details about this project and/or the planned follow-up event, please contact **Professor David Tyfield** (d.tyfield@lancaster.ac.uk) and/or **Peter Lawrence** (peter@ai-cm.co.uk).