



Delivering a resilient, net zero economy – webinar one:

How do we transition infrastructure at pace in the race to zero?

2.30pm – 3.30pm, Thursday 5 November 2020

Notes

Polly Courtice, Dame Polly Courtice, Founder Director, CISL

Dame Polly welcomed the audience on behalf of the Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership (CISL) to the first in The Prince of Wales's Corporate Leaders Group (CLG) webinar series, *Delivering a resilient, net zero economy* and provided an introductory background on both CISL and CLG and their related activities. She introduced this CLG webinar series that aims to build confidence with businesses and policy makers that the net zero transition is both achievable and accelerating through exploring the barriers and enablers to business action on net zero on specific areas of the transition. This webinar chaired by Colin Matthews focussed on how we transition infrastructure at pace in the race to zero.

Colin Matthews, (Chair), Non-Executive Chairman of EDF in the UK, and co-Chair of the CLG

Colin briefly introduced this webinar and pointed out that business leadership has a huge contribution to make, collaboration and direct conversations between business and government will be key to deliver a resilient, net zero economy. The Government will produce bolder policy if business leaders' will proactively engage with its work.

Steve Barclay, Chief Secretary to the Treasury

The Minister explained the current Treasury's top priorities: the COVID-19 green recovery and the one-year spending review, and his role related to them looking at expenditure across the board and infrastructure and how funds are injected into this.

He paid tribute to the huge amount of work business is doing in response to the pandemic and acknowledged that the Government is willing to collaborate further with progressive businesses to build back better. Infrastructure is crucial to the Government's response together with the job challenge that needs to be addressed particularly for the worst affected sectors by this pandemic such as hospitality. Green jobs and the net zero agenda are essential to recover and deliver quicker and better. R&D and new technologies like carbon capture are vital ingredients on the net zero agenda.

The Government is also looking at the way they use data supported by analysts and how data can be better exploited to take the right policy decisions.

Emma Pinchbeck, Chief Executive, Energy UK

Emma highlighted that the utility sector provides an essential service, Energy UK are responsible for over 700,000 jobs in the UK. Looking at the challenge of how to decarbonise power, pushing forward with smart, digital and low carbon infrastructure, with heat being a massive emitter in the UK, mass retrofit of buildings, innovative technologies are key to achieve the net zero goal.

Renewables and EV are also very important to tackle these challenges and developing the related flexible markets. We need a profitable industry to achieve these goals and it is tough currently to do these things.



Another relevant aspect of the decarbonisation process is about stakeholders' engagement: people, customers, workforce all need to be more involved. Behavioural economics can help analysing people's habits and choices to guide the Government to develop the right policy and schemes.

This is also a whole economy challenge requiring a more holistic approach within Government. The Treasury should look more into the cost and benefit analysis of decarbonisation.

Responding to the question - where should the Government start to prioritise? Emma said that starting with institutional reforms, using net zero tests and moving quickly by experimenting various tools and solutions is important. She gave the example of the NHS commissioning budget to fund the installation of improved insulations and more efficient boilers in vulnerable people's houses to save NHS' money by reducing hospitals admissions.

Joao Pola, CEO UKI, Signify

Joao pointed out that the combination of a 3 percent increase in energy efficiency, an increase of the buildings renovation rate and an increase in renewables can get us to net zero by 2050. An integrated approach can drive that massively and we could have a double effect on the speed of decarbonisation.

He provided an example of a city-renovating project in the UK, specifically on lighting infrastructure that helped with energy consumption reduction and associated community/societal benefits thanks to the reduction in street crime, which proves that product quality and societal benefits can be combined.

Addressing the question - what would enable you to go quicker and better? Joao responded that any policies that make 'LEDification' faster are welcome, only 1/5 of the light points in the world are electrified today – any element to accelerate this would be useful – legislation and clear guidelines for buildings on electrification of lighting (LED) – linked to the energy efficiency journey.

Giles Harvey, Group Supply Chain Director, Sky

Sky has a commitment to reach net zero by 2030. Specifically on its fleet, they have in-house engineers who drive company cars and vans; thus, fleet is a big part of their carbon footprint and they are working to change the whole ownership model for their engineers. Load and distance are the main challenges together with charging infrastructure at parking.

Giles set out they are replacing heavily polluting cars like diesel ones with EV ones; vans are proving more challenging to replace. Cost implications are also high but definitely worth investing on.

In response to a question on enabling factors to go quicker and better, Giles replied that removing single use plastics from everything that Sky does, requires a big culture shift; for vehicles, it is important to focus on infrastructure and charging.

Julia Pike, Director of Sizewell C Financing and Economic Regulation, EDF

Julia reiterated the importance of engaging with people as an essential aspect of the transition to net zero. She talked about EDF's work in Leiston, a deprived and post-industrial town in Suffolk, with the community to build a roadmap to net zero inspired by the Atkins engineering net zero report.

By taking a holistic approach, they are looking at EV charging where people travel, new forms of heating – market for heat pumps where people don't have access to the grid, exploring water sustainability with Anglian Water and making electricity from hydrogen to clean up their own constructions and help kick start the hydrogen economy within the community. They are hoping to develop a blueprint based on the Leiston's model for other towns to follow.



When asked if players can come together in a locality around a place-based approach like in Leiston, Julia answered that partnering with other companies, working with local government and communities are key.

Conclusion:

Colin outlined the benefits of integration to speed up progress and of collaboration with Government and between business and Government as fundamental ingredients to succeed in the net zero journey. He thanked the speakers and the audience for joining this webinar and reminded everyone about the next one on 18 November: [Transforming infrastructure investments to deliver a resilient and net zero world](#) that will examine how we transform infrastructure investments globally to deliver a resilient and net zero world.