



LowCVP's Andy Eastlake

The "green" energy for future transport

Much of the focus of low carbon transport policy in recent years has been on improving the efficiency of the vehicles we drive. European regulations, in particular, have driven down CO₂ emissions and improved the fuel efficiency of vehicles. But cutting emissions from the fuels themselves is also a key part of the puzzle for which policies have been less stable. Over the last few months, in collaboration with the Department for Transport, the LowCVP has been leading a project to map out the long term trajectory. The Transport Energy Task Force recently published its final report (downloadable from the LowCVP website), concluding that transport energy can and should contribute to major reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and that, for the foreseeable future, sustainable biofuels have a critical role to play along with other low carbon options including methane, LPG and electricity.

The Task Force involved stakeholders from the mainstream fuels and automotive industries as well as the new biofuels sector and a range of government departments. It included representatives of the environmental NGO movement which has been increasingly critical of certain biofuels in recent years. It is particularly significant; I think, that a consensus was reached that all the involved parties could sign up to. Certainly, finding the right form of words gave my colleagues and I some headaches!

We can all see (and support that) electrification of transport is a cornerstone of current policy, but there is also no doubt liquid and gaseous fuels will remain dominant in combustion engines for some time and there is an significant opportunity for sustainable biofuels to play a role in cutting carbon to 2030 and beyond.

Importantly the science and understanding of the impacts of different energy sources has increased over the last few years, but one of the most important aspects is for us to consider all options on a level playing field and with "technology neutral" boundaries, in the same way as we try to approach the vehicles themselves. Of course, key to unlocking the potential of low carbon transport energy is the development of fuelling infrastructure for new fuels and energy. The LowCVP has commissioned a report to develop a transport energy infrastructure roadmap, which will be published later this year. This aims to complete the picture of fuels, infrastructure and vehicle roadmaps, needed to define the future of low carbon vehicles.

FURTHER INFORMATION

www.lowcvp.org.uk and follow LowCVP on Twitter: @theLowCVP and @aeastlake