EXECUTIVE INSIGHT

LOGISTICS UK

No 28
May
2026

GREEN MILES

Interview with

★

HEAD OF CLIMATE POLICY, GREEN ALLIANCE

DR NICHOLAS DAVIES

★ **TECH TALK**
A report on the recent AI and Automation in Logistics *conference*

★ **PORT NET ZERO**
Port of Dover achieves net zero success

EXECUTIVE INSIGHT

No 28 ★ May 2026

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Power shift

The conflict in the Middle East has placed energy prices squarely back in the headlines. With the government planning to shake up the way electricity is priced by delinking it from the volatile gas market, the case for decarbonising logistics may soon begin to look more compelling from an economic, as well as a sustainability, perspective.

To explore the role that emerging energy solutions will play in the decarbonisation of logistics, we are hosting two dinners on the topic this month, the first in London with Claire Dykta, Director of Strategy and Policy, NESO, and the second in Birmingham with Andrew Gwilliam, Head of Product and Standards, First Bus.

I do hope you will be able to join us at one of these events to discuss this important issue further. ■

Phil Roe,
President, Logistics UK

EXECUTIVE DINNER – GLOBAL TRADE

Geopolitical shifts in global trade, driven in large part by the Trump administration in the US, are reshaping UK logistics, with fluctuating demand patterns, new trade routes and evolving freight movements across ports, airports and road freight. These global forces create both challenge and opportunity, influencing costs, capacity and the resilience required across the sector.

Find out more

EXECUTIVE DINNER: ENERGY FOR DECARBONISATION

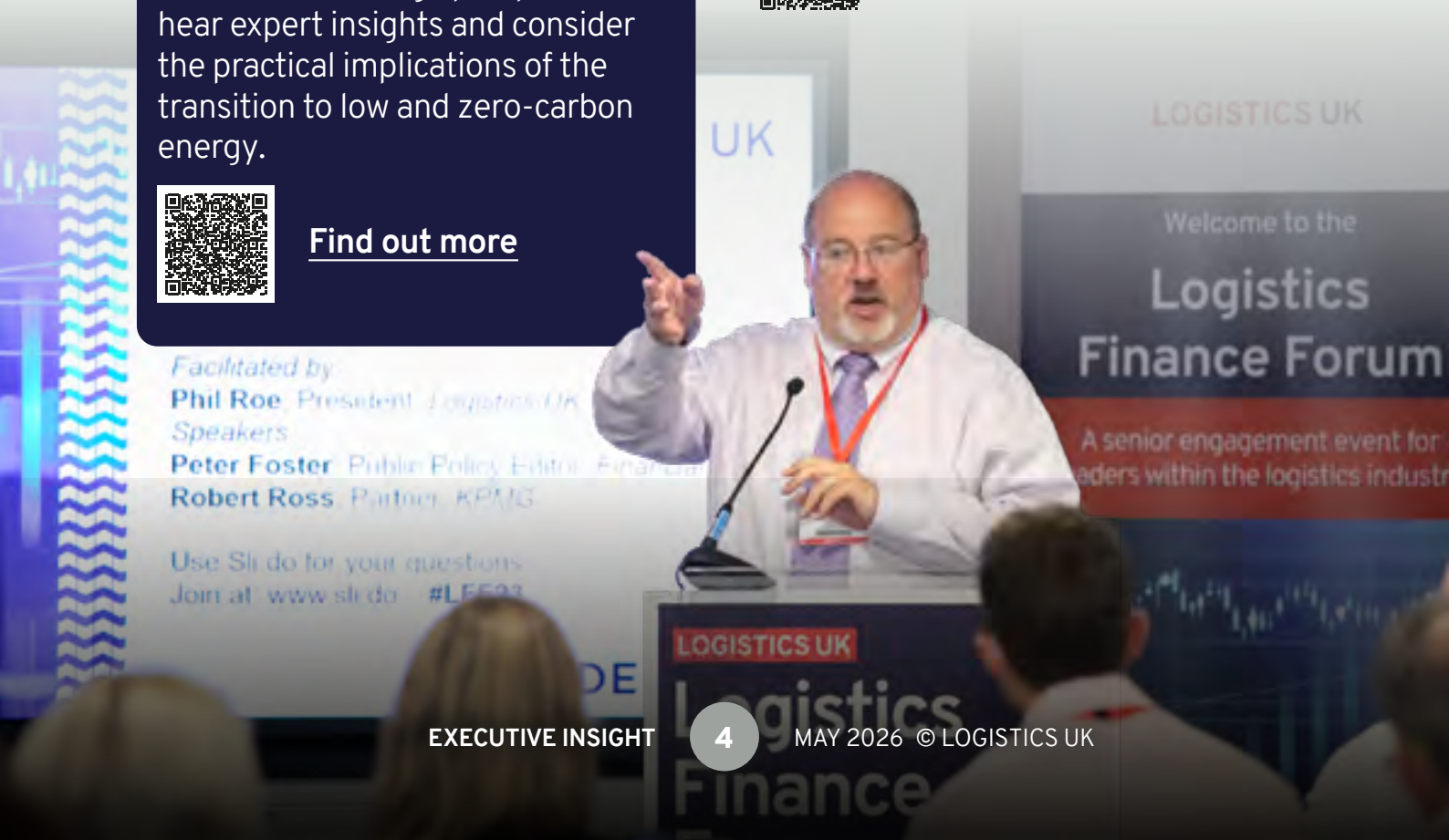
Join your industry peers for an evening of discussion focused on the role emerging energy solutions will play in the decarbonisation of logistics. The dinner will provide a confidential forum for senior leaders to exchange perspectives, hear expert insights and consider the practical implications of the transition to low and zero-carbon energy.

Find out more

LOGISTICS FINANCE FORUM 2026

A dynamic senior engagement event where leaders in the logistics industry come together to delve into the crucial topics of productivity, efficiency and cost management that drive streamlined logistics operations.

Find out more



Logistics industry seeks government support package to reduce Iran war inflation risk

Logistics UK is urging government to provide a package of support for the country's logistics sector to avoid rising costs caused by the Middle East conflict from having a knock-on impact on the UK's economy.

"Logistics businesses operate on very narrow margins," explained Ben Fletcher, Logistics UK's Chief Executive, "but are facing spiralling costs, most notably the price of fuel, with the cost of filling up a large HGV having risen by 30% to nearly £1,000 between 23 February and 6 April. Around half of businesses we've surveyed say they are passing on a lot of this cost, meaning higher prices on the shelves, and the other half are unable to, creating severe cash-flow issues.

"The pressures on our sector are unsustainable, and risk pushing up inflation, weakening growth and creating severe cash-flow issues for those who are responsible for keeping our shops stocked with food, our hospitals with medicines and our

homes with access to the goods we rely on every day. What our members need is an urgent package of support from government to help weather the storm. The policies we have proposed would also support logistics businesses to switch to net zero technologies over time, increasing the UK's energy independence."

In the short term, Logistics UK is pressing Chancellor Rachel Reeves to reconsider her plan to begin increasing Fuel Duty by 5p from September.

"Currently, the cost of fuel is the single biggest concern for our member businesses," Fletcher continued, "and the impact of the price rises is being felt most keenly by small- and medium-sized enterprises, which often cannot pass on these increases to their customers. From the end of February to 6 April, the Treasury has benefitted by an increase of more than £40 million from VAT, thanks to fuel price rises, so a decision to maintain the 5p per litre cut on Fuel Duty would not harm the tax take, and would be a welcome boost in such straightened times."

Logistics UK is also urging the Chancellor to support the logistics sector with its electricity costs and the costs of decarbonisation, by including logistics in the British Industrial Competitiveness Scheme, and to bring it forward from 2027.

"The government's energy support for businesses is focused on manufacturers," he continued, "but no sector can succeed without the logistics businesses that underpin them, and many parts of our industry, from chilled warehouses to electric HGVs, are facing higher electricity bills due to the conflict. Not only is this increasing costs for our members and across the economy, it is also making it harder to switch to electric vehicles and support the UK's energy independence. Reducing the duty on liquid low carbon fuels would also be a welcome step towards decarbonisation and away from dependence on the Gulf."

Finally, Logistics UK is also urging the Chancellor to take action on business rates: "The recent increase in business rates on warehouses and other parts of the logistics sector could not have come at a more unfortunate time," Fletcher explained, "which is why we are calling for it to be reversed for at least a year, and for the system to be properly reformed, so that businesses can better manage the pressures caused by the conflict and invest for the future.

"Logistics keeps the wheels of the economy turning," he concluded, "delivering everything the country needs, every day. In such difficult times it is imperative that our sector is supported, to avoid pushing up the cost of living and harming the UK's growth prospects." ■

Find out more

NISTA cuts projects from 200 to 80

The National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority (NISTA) announced on 31 March an overhaul of the government's major projects portfolio (GMPP), cutting the number of projects from over 200 to 80.

The GMPP is a set of the most complex, high-risk and strategically significant projects and programmes across government, and there had previously been criticism that the original portfolio was too large and unfocused.

Key schemes for the logistics sector remain within the updated pipeline, including the Lower Thames Crossing, Heathrow Expansion Programme, A66 Northern Trans-Pennine Project and the Rail Sector Transformation Programme.

From 1 April, to be included in the GMPP, projects must meet the criteria set out in the Treasury Approval Process guidance and must also meet all of the following requirements: support a top government priority; have whole-life costs of more than £1 billion; and be a project that would benefit most from focused central support and scrutiny.

To underpin the new pipeline, NISTA has also introduced an official definition of a "mega project": one with "transformational impacts on the economy, society or national security, with whole-life costs above £10 billion, which typically will take more than 10 years to deliver." ■

Find out more

Government must fast track freight plan, says Logistics UK

Following the publication of the government's Integrated Transport Strategy on 2 April, Logistics UK is calling for a renewed focus on the delivery of the plan for freight promised in the strategy.

Commenting on the strategy, Logistics UK's Chief Executive Ben Fletcher said: "The situation in the Middle East has put transport networks and supply chains under the spotlight like never before, and a comprehensive integrated transport strategy must take the work of our sector into account, balancing the needs of the travelling public and business.

"In recent discussions with government, Logistics UK urged officials to recognise the interdependent nature of the country's freight and transport networks and to include freight within its final strategy. The decision to produce a separate freight plan will delay any changes which will benefit our sector, and so it is vital that this new plan is delivered at pace with clear delivery milestones.

"The logistics sector is an essential user of the transport network and its role in underpinning supply chains across all UK industries and enabling economic growth must be reflected in the government's long-term vision for how transport is designed and delivered. Our members are keen to help deliver the growth agenda the country needs, but to do that will need a functioning, effective transport network."

Find out more

Logistics UK makes internal appointments to support strategic growth

Logistics UK has made three internal appointments to support the organisation's work in representing its members and the whole of the logistics sector.

Michelle Gardner, formerly Deputy Director of Policy, has been appointed to the new position of Chief of Staff, to provide strategic advice and day to day management to Chief Executive Ben Fletcher, who joined the organisation in December 2025.

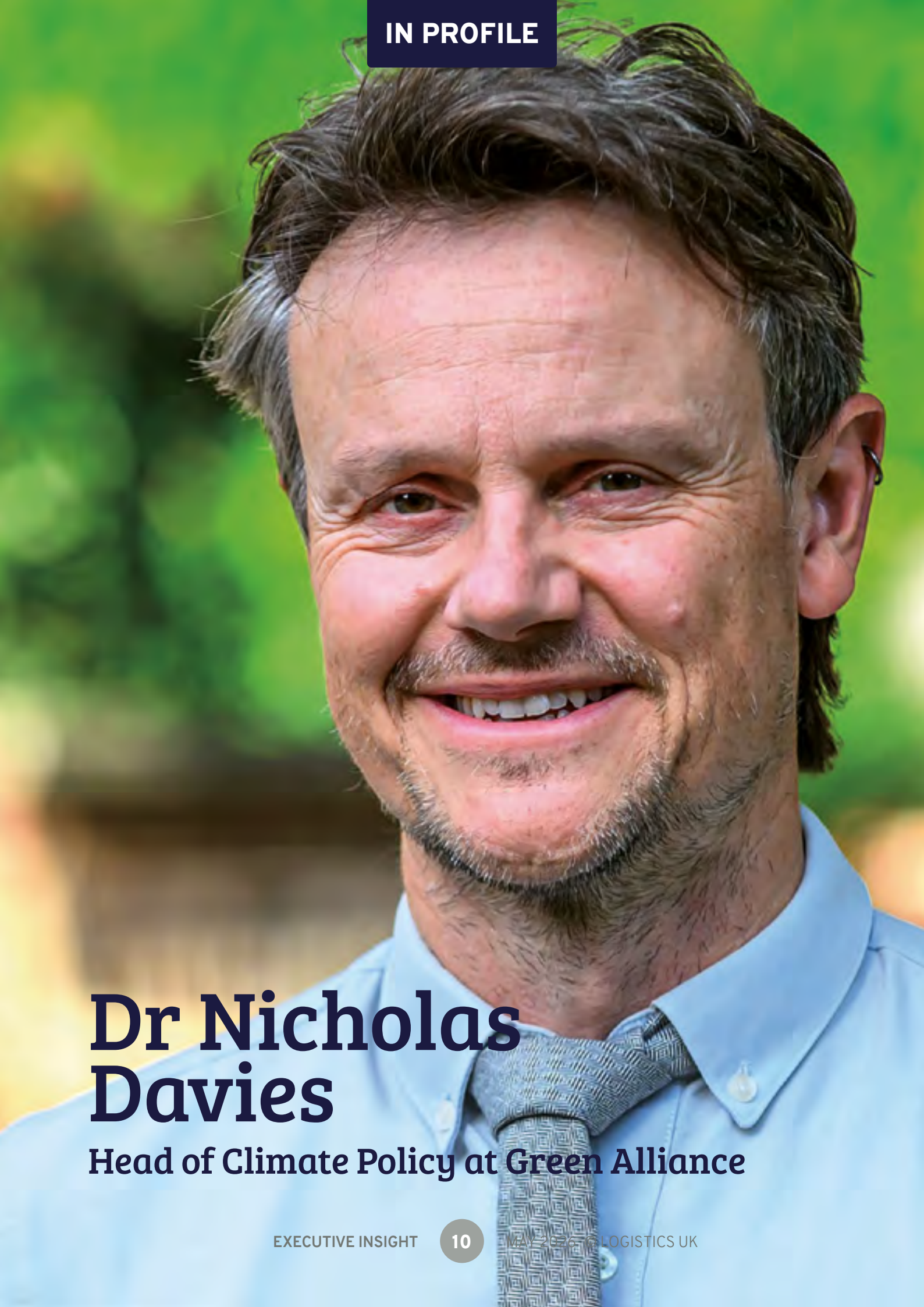
"Michelle is a highly trusted member of our senior management team," Fletcher said, "and is committed to delivering efficiencies and driving focus throughout the business as we continue to expand the organisation's reach and impact. Her new role will see her identifying opportunities for growth, as well as supporting me as I take the business into its next phase. I would like to congratulate her on her success."

Formerly Deputy Director of Public Affairs, Ben Garratt steps into the role of Interim Policy and Communications Director, with a focus on enhancing the organisation's influence while leading its policy, insight, communications and marketing functions. Garratt takes over from Kevin Green, who left the business in early January.

Left to right: Michelle Gardner, Ben Garratt and Katia Yakovleva

Meanwhile, Katia Yakovleva's role has been expanded from Deputy Director of Events to Interim Deputy Director of Engagement and Membership, which will see her develop the organisation's strategy for optimising member engagement across the business, while continuing to lead its high-quality programme of conferences. She will work closely with Commercial Director Jerry Kane and Head of Membership Al Richardson, who remain responsible for membership management.

Find out more



Dr Nicholas Davies

Head of Climate Policy at Green Alliance

Dr Nicholas Davies

DR Davies is the Head of Climate Policy at the influential think tank Green Alliance, having joined in 2024 after a 20-year career in sustainability-focused roles. His previous experience includes working with the NGO team that coordinated the 'The Big Ask' campaign that secured the Climate Change Act 2008 and supporting cross-party MPs in their scrutiny of climate and energy policy in the House of Commons.

Davies has managed influential inquiries on sustainable fashion and water quality in rivers, and his work was recognised in the ENDs report Power List in 2023, celebrating the 100 environmental professionals making the most impact in the UK. He holds degrees from Queen Mary University and the London School of Economics.

Tim Southwell, Editor of *Executive Insight*'s sister publication *The Green Miles*, sat down with Davies to discuss more about his work in climate policy.

In your view, what are the biggest and most common sustainability challenges facing the whole sector?

The biggest brakes on the transition to electric heavy goods vehicles are the high upfront costs of investing in the vehicles and depot charging infrastructure, and the challenges involved in securing grid connections for logistics hubs.

Finding the capital to meet these challenges is particularly acute for some logistics operators because of the tight profit margins for the sector. The government is right to be consulting on new regulation to drive the shift to zero emission HGVs, but it also needs to back this up with support for businesses to make the switch.

We've seen a welcome extension of the plug-in truck grant, but only for a year. That sort of support is going to be needed for the coming years to ensure we can accelerate take up to meet the 2035 and 2040 phase out dates for non-zero-emission trucks.

Crucially, ministers also need to do much more to tip the balance of incentives in favour of electrification. At present the total cost of ownership for electric lorries is still not fully competitive with conventional diesel vehicles.

Taking further action to reduce the cost of electricity could help incentivise the switch to cleaner, quieter electric trucks.

Do you think the UK's net zero goals are realistic?

Yes. Clean alternative technologies exist and are coming down in cost. They will ultimately be better for our businesses, our health, the climate and national security.

Shifting freight off imported diesel toward domestically generated clean

Dr Nicholas Davies

renewable electricity makes us less exposed to global fossil fuel price shocks like the one we saw in 2022. The UK is already more than halfway to net zero and we've made remarkable progress on clean power.

In 2010, polluting coal and gas generated around 75 per cent of our electricity, while clean renewable technologies like wind power produced less than four per cent. Today over 50 per cent of our electricity is now low carbon and the UK has become the first major economy to end coal burning for power.

We can learn from our power sector success by setting clear policy timelines and putting incentives in place that help to bring costs down for zero-emission freight.

Do you think it's wise for the government to be fixated with electric and not look properly at hydrogen and other zero- and low-carbon fuels?

I don't think it is fair to say government is fixated with electric options. Its regulatory approach for cars, vans and HGVs is to scale 'zero emission' alternatives, meaning it is agnostic about which technological solution wins out. In fact, it has even funded hydrogen trials.

The fact is, hydrogen fuel cell vehicles are less efficient at converting energy to motion than electrified power trains, and that inefficiency shows up as additional cost in total cost of ownership figures. It is the market that has shown that electric vehicles are the primary solution to deliver zero-emission logistics.

Low carbon fuels like biodiesel have offered a transitional way for companies to reduce their scope 1 emissions from their own transport fleets or scope 3 emissions from outsourced logistics. But these fuels come with their own problems, often requiring land that could be better used to grow other crops, and only have a limited impact in reducing emissions.

We believe zero emission HGVs should be defined as the absence of a combustion engine in the powertrain. This guarantees zero tailpipe emissions, ensuring we have cleaner air in our towns and cities and much lower carbon dioxide emissions.

Who is an inspirational figure in logistics?

Jamie Sands from Welch Group, because he's shown what practical leadership looks like: piloting electric HGV operations in the real world. He also powerfully makes the case that the tech is ready, but scaling needs government support and policy direction.

Do you see rail freight competing with road and air transport?

It would be good to see as much freight moved by rail as possible. It is by far the most efficient and low pollution form of mass transportation, especially when running on electrified routes. And, at the moment, the UK underuses its rail freight capacity.

Rail won't replace road freight, but it can play its part in helping to reduce costly congestion and pollution. We're pleased to see the government setting an ambition to grow rail freight and taking practical steps to increase how much rail freight uses the Channel Tunnel.

How do logistics companies deal with first mover hesitancy?

They need better support from the government to help with the upfront costs, guarantee residual value, and make grid connections predictable, so that innovation is easier and the current total cost of ownership gap is closed.

What does 2026 look like for logistics decarbonisation?

This year we need to see the government provide clarity, certainty and direction, setting out its intention to introduce a mandate to drive the uptake of zero emission HGVs. We need a clear trajectory that manufacturers, investors and fleet operators can plan around for the next decade and beyond.

It's positive that government is now actively consulting on regulatory options. The key test will be whether the final framework gives long-term certainty and is paired with practical support for the sector to speed up grid connections, deliver charging infrastructure and provide grants for operators to make the switch.

What are the best examples of positive breakthroughs you've seen in the last decade?

One exciting breakthrough is the new Megawatt Charging System (MCS) being rolled out on the continent. With MCS, charging a lorry from 20 to 80 per cent can take as little as 30 minutes, fitting neatly into mandated driver rest periods.

To fully electrify the UK's freight network, rapid charging will need to be part of the solution.

Imagine you're Prime Minister for a day and you can change one policy. What would it be?

I'd reduce electricity prices by moving more policy levies into general taxation, so that electric zero emission lorries (and other clean electric technologies) are the obvious economic choice.

And I would set in law an ambitious but achievable sales mandate for manufacturers to drive supply of eHGVs. ■

AI and Automation in Logistics 2026

Tuesday 24 March 2026 • Hallam Conference Centre, London W1

PROFESSIONALS from across the logistics industry, government and the tech sector gathered at Hallam Conference Centre, situated in London, on 24 March 2026 to discuss how AI and automation are reshaping the logistics sector at a fundamental level.

Chair Jemma James, Director of Partnerships & Digital Services, Logistics UK, opened the event: "AI and automation have rapidly shifted from emerging concepts to core logistics capabilities and leaders today face critical decisions about efficiency, resilience and competitiveness. And this event is designed to give you the insight, strategy and connections you need to navigate that shift with confidence."

The role of artificial intelligence, or AI, is the simulation of human intelligence in machines, James explained. The conference revealed how AI proactively detects risks and enables resources to scale and pivot according to needs, and delivers a data-driven, smarter approach.

DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT KEYNOTE

The conference began with a memorable keynote speech from Dr

Michaela Nelson, Head of Advanced Digital Connectivity Technologies at the Department for Transport (DfT). Her interactive session was designed to support DfT's work assessing the telecommunication needs of the industry and producing use cases as a cost-benefit analysis.

Published in June 2025, the government's 10-year Infrastructure Strategy contained more than £700 billion worth of funding for infrastructure across the next decade and promises to help transform how projects are planned and delivered in the UK. Within the strategy is a commitment by government to look at the telecommunication needs of three sectors: energy, water and transport. The government is working with Ofcom and other regulators to set out its assessment of those needs by the end of 2026, which should inform an update to the 10-year Infrastructure Strategy.

"I am leading that work to assess the telecommunication needs of the transport sector in the Department for Transport," Nelson said, while engaging with the National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority (NISTA), which is responsible for delivering the 10-year Infrastructure Strategy. NISTA sits between HM Treasury and the Cabinet Office, while the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology is the policyholder for digital connectivity.

Michaela Nelson

There are areas of doing business where digital connectivity is a challenge, Nelson said. Having carried out a needs assessment for the transport network, she said that digital connectivity is already an integral part of how the network operates.

"But the current ecosystem is highly fragmented. It's very complex and it's very modal," she said, "A lot of what we do in the Department for Transport is done along modal lines."

There were also many legacy technologies such as 2G and 3G which are being switched off and the sector uses an incredible amount of the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN). Thousands of assets across the transport network are using copper landlines, including many traffic signals.

Concluding, she said: "The applications that we can support with better digital connectivity are things like digital twins, mobility as a service, asset tracking, real-time information for passengers and operators so that we can make better decisions. Smart routeing, over-the-air updates and the benefits that those should enable are safer journeys, safer staff, reduced congestion, faster incident response. Digital connectivity is a really underpinning part of that."

AUTOMATED HGVS ON BRITISH ROADS

The first panel debate of the conference explored the readiness, challenges and opportunities around automated HGVs on British roads. Chair Maddi Solloway-Price, Head of Road Freight & English Regions Policy at Logistics UK, was joined by three guest panellists: Michael Boxwell, Founder & Corporate Development Officer, Voltempo; Rem Noormohamed, Partner, Weightmans; and David Webb, Head of CAM Technologies & Innovation at the Department for Business and Trade.

The panel discussion covered real-world UK trials; the pathway to safe, scalable, commercially viable deployment; regulatory, technical and operational challenges; and implications for the workforce and the wider society.

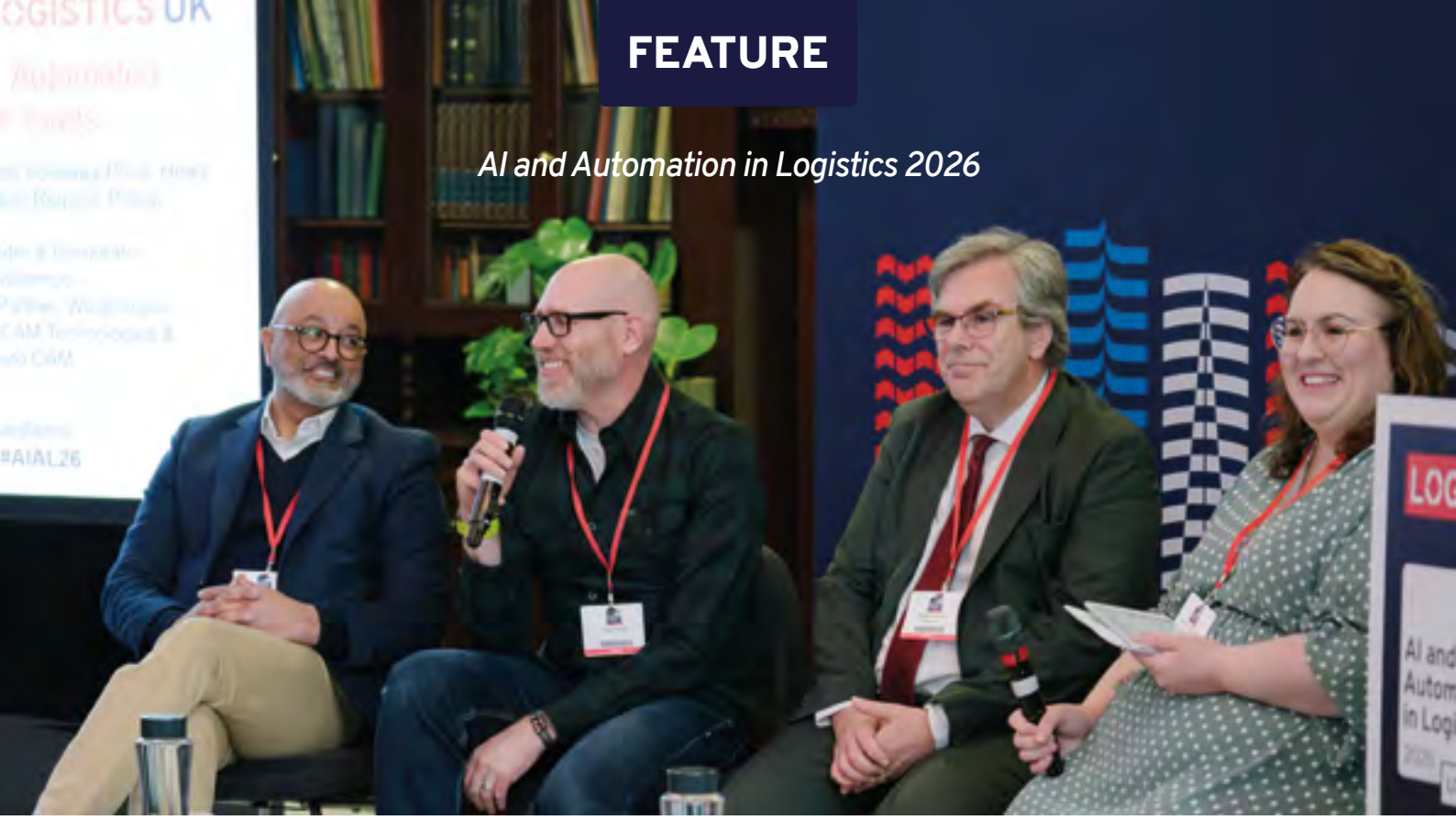
UK electric freight consortiums, such as Voltempo, are already deploying charging infrastructure and preparing for autonomous truck trials and a dedicated autonomous test track is operating in South Wales.

The UK has invested £400m in autonomy R&D over 10 years, matched by industry. While funding has largely focused on buses and passenger services, new allocations will include freight. Remote monitoring and off-highway autonomy are also seeing progress.

On the legal framework, the Automated Vehicles Act 2024 provides a foundation, but does not take full effect until 2027. Regulatory work is now focusing on: defining 'careful and competent driver' equivalents for autonomous systems; detailed safety requirements; and consultation with the public and industry.

In trials, safety drivers remain responsible for the vehicle and must remain alert, technically aware and ready to intervene. This requirement places autonomy within Level 2 for now.

UK policy emphasises safety-first design, multiple layers of sensing (vision and lidar), and evidence-based, monitored deployment. This contrasts with more permissive models in the US and China, which have seen faster deployment but more safety incidents.



On skills, it was agreed that while jobs may change, they will not disappear. Drivers who want to continue driving will be able to, while many roles go beyond driving to include customer service and load handling. The best drivers may become remote supervisors, safety operators, technical support for autonomy systems or customer-experience specialists.

The business benefits of automation include improving staff retention, increasing delivery hours, reducing labour shortages and supporting long-distance logistics. It would enable routes which are impossible under current drivers' hours rules, for example Glasgow to Paris.

When asked to give one-sentence answers to what the success factors for UK deployment would be, panellists answered: sustainability – environmental and commercial; public buy-in – trust must be carefully built; and safety at scale – consistent, evidenced and resilient.

DEPLOYING AI IN COMPLEX OPERATIONS

Toby Mills, CEO of Entopy, delivered the third conference session. Having been involved in delivering AI solutions in complex logistics environments, such as the Port of Dover and the Port of Felixstowe, he wanted to share some of the lessons learnt.

Giving the wider context of AI, he said that generative AI, such as ChatGPT, is only a very small part. When you combine deep learning, continuous learning and natural language processing, generative AI looks like a magical tool. However, the drawback with large language models (LLMs) is that they are not particularly good at understanding reality, because they are not interacting with it and they

Toby Mills

do not have a good understanding of space and time.

The next step in AI is what is often referred to as world models or digital twins. This is where data is taken from a real-world operational context and modelled into a structure that LLMs can understand.

The stage after that is decision intelligence, where AI is used to drive decision making in operational landscapes, for example to predict what an operation will look like in six hours' time.

Mills then shared a real-life story of deploying AI operationally across entire ecosystems. The first was the deployment at the Port of Felixstowe and Harwich Haven Authority, which he described as a very complicated ecosystem.

Although the overarching goal was operational decision intelligence across the entire ecosystem, Entopy could not achieve that on the first day. Instead, it selected a very narrow and isolated part of its operation and deployed some machine learning models to that specific area. As it was an issue that happened over a period of time, Entopy needed a lot of history to understand what that operation looked like in the past to be able to train an AI model and predict forward.

As the port only had three months' data in that particular area, it expanded the limited data set with synthetic data to ensure it had sufficient data to be able to train an artificial intelligence model effectively.

Concluding, he said a key insight was to think about AI differently: "This is not a software tool, this is an intelligence tool that needs to live inside your organisation exactly how a command-and-control team would."

POWER OF DATA

The second panel session of the day explored how data and embedded AI are transforming vehicle fleet operations, from reactive reporting to real-time prediction and automated

decision support. Chair Maddi Solloway-Price was joined by guest panellists Ben Glossop, Vice President, Sales, UK and Ireland, Aptean; and Thomas Sebastian, Managing Director, Intangles.

Both speakers described a clear progression from hindsight to foresight, as industry moves from dashboards and alarms which are reactive to systems that make predictions and suggest interventions during the day. Once trust is established, the next stage is autonomous decision making.

The biggest untapped opportunities lie in high-volume, repetitive decisions, such as routeing choices and maintenance triggers. There are also situations where humans have limited visibility, but sensors and telematics do not. Automation will be gradual, as people validate the machine's decisions repeatedly until it becomes the 'default'. Trust and adoption are the hardest part, it was suggested, not the technology.

The value of telematics comes from combining behavioural, structural and technical signals. Fuel efficiency can be achieved through behavioural, structural and technical means. Behavioural through speeding, harsh acceleration and idling; structural through route quality, terrain and stop-start frequency; and technical via ambient temperature, engine boost pressure and real-time sensor data.

Thomas Sebastian from Intangles suggested that customers could save up to 10% in fuel costs by using real-time digital twin modelling.

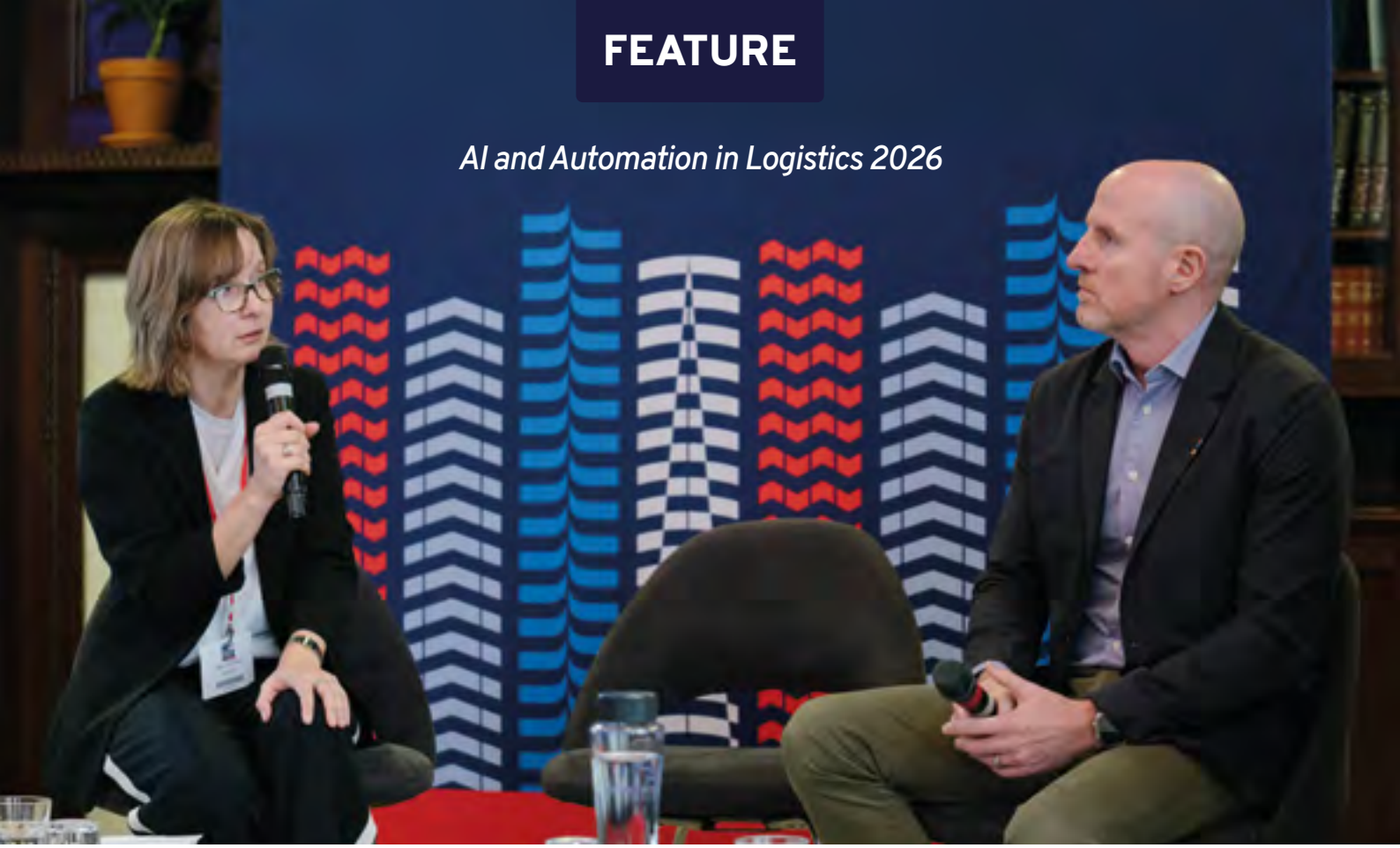
Sustainability cannot be bolted on, it must reinforce cost and service reliability, not sit as a separate reporting requirement.

On skills, what is required is not technical coding skills but human qualities, for example an open-mindedness to digital co-workers, pattern recognition and acting early on insights. Plus, judgment even when assisted by data; orchestration across drivers, workshops, suppliers, telematics and planning systems; real-time communication; and behavioural coaching. Technology does not deliver value, it was suggested, but operating models do.

The overall takeaway from this session is that the industry is shifting to real-time autonomous decision making. The technology is ready, but people, processes and mindsets must evolve to unlock the full value.

HOW AI AND AUTOMATION ARE CHANGING WAREHOUSING

Following a networking lunch, conference delegates reassembled in the main hall to listen to a fireside chat between Katia Yakovleva, Deputy Director, Logistics UK, and Paul Dunne, Managing Director of Operations, Segro.



Dunne estimated that around 70% of warehouses still have no automation at all, while electric HGVs and AI usage are even less prevalent. The perception that 'everyone else is ahead' is largely misleading, he suggested.

However, the pace of change was accelerating. Large-scale central distribution centres are now almost always automated and mega-sheds are getting bigger, more automated and more energy-intensive. Automation is beginning to trickle down from mega-sites into urban and mid-sized warehouses.

There had been three major shifts in automated warehousing in 2026: power needs have exploded, with automation and eHGV charging meaning that the historic energy demand is now two to ten times higher; connectivity and smart infrastructure, meaning warehouses now have high-speed fibre and smart building systems; and flexibility, with customers now asking for adaptable buildings with moveable internal walls, reduced mezzanine permanence and flexibility embedded into leases. Owing to the advent of automation, warehouse designs now need to accommodate changing operational models.

Dunne argued that AI amplifies human ability, but does not replace it. Supply chain roles have always been about making sense of large, changing data environments and he expected AI to be "prolific" in the sector soon.

Looking ahead, Dunne predicted that by 2030 automation costs will fall sharply. He told delegates to expect a major price drop as Chinese and newer entrants disrupt the market, traditional European suppliers face competition

and the industry hits an "inflection point". The result would be an explosion of automation across not just large warehouses, but medium and small ones too.

In conclusion, Dunne said that warehousing in the next decade will be shaped by skyrocketing power demands, smart data-driven buildings, rapidly decreasing automation costs, shifting workforce demographics, and accelerating adoption across business sizes. The industry is behind the curve, but set to accelerate rapidly.

CYBER SECURITY – THREATS ON THE RISE

The penultimate conference session focused on the rising threat of cyber crime. Following 30 years' service as a police officer with Essex Police, speaker Paul Lopez became the Director of the Eastern Cyber Resilience Centre (CRC).

The CRC network was established about five or six years ago as a national network, in response to the rising tide of cyber crime.

"I think it's fair to say that the biggest threat to the UK economy comes from cyber, and about three years ago the government reclassified ransomware as a tier one security threat, alongside terrorism."

The CRC focuses its support on SME companies, which make up 99% of businesses in the UK. Lopez said that while SMEs understand the problem, they don't always have the means to deal with it themselves. The CRC was set up to help them become more resilient.

Three-quarters of cyber attacks started as phishing attacks into organisations. Chillingly, the CRC is seeing the vast majority are AI enabled, which has lowered the bar for criminals.

"Criminals don't need to have a high technical expertise," Lopez said, "Anybody in this room within half an hour could launch a phishing campaign on another organisation if you chose to do so."

Access to LinkedIn posts enabled AI to use social engineering, to understand what target to attack within an organisation. Around half of all recorded crime is now online, and the majority of attacks against UK businesses in the UK are committed from abroad, typically Russia, Iran, Nigeria and China.

"This makes it really hard from a conventional perspective to actually go after criminals and arrest them and lock them up," he said.

In terms of what the CRC can offer logistics businesses, Lopez claimed it was above and beyond what you can access in the commercial sector.

"We provide cyber support and guidance to small- and medium-sized businesses and third sector organisations with a range of fully-funded cyber services."

"The ambition with humanoid robots is that they will be able to do everything a human can do."

The CRC also provides a 30-minute one-to-one free consultation to any business that wants to talk about cyber security. It also attends member conferences, networking events and community engagement, and encourages businesses to adopt its Cyber Essentials certification.

"If you've got Cyber Essentials certification as a business, you are 90% less likely to suffer a cyber attack than if you haven't got it," Lopez maintained. "We recommend all SMEs to consider looking at [Cyber Essentials] to protect themselves."

FUTURE GAZING

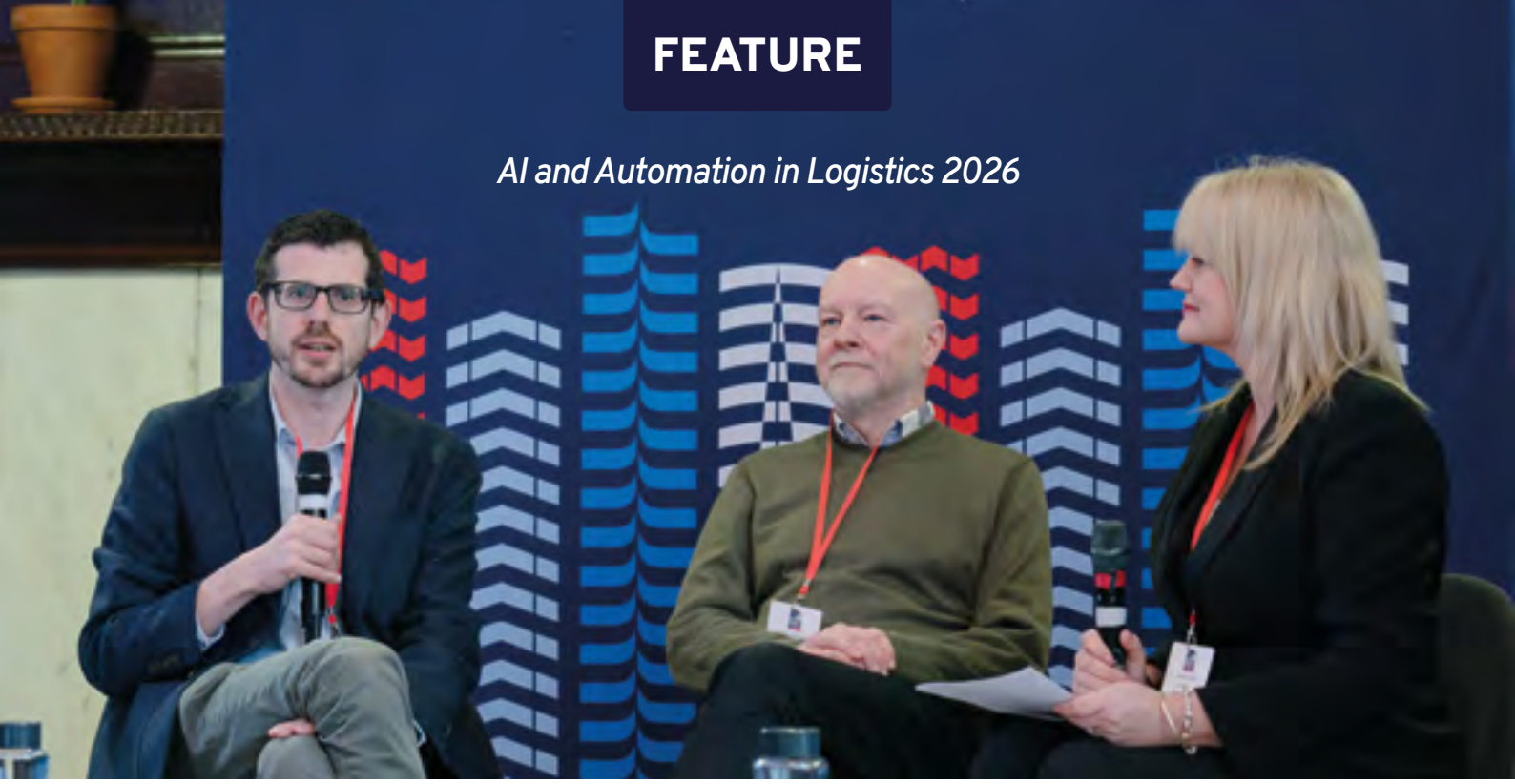
The final session of the conference looked ahead to the tech of the future. Chair Jemma James was joined by panellists Thomas Ableman, Founder of Freewheeling and Professor Philip Greening, Director of the Centre for Sustainable Road Freight.

The session explored how emerging technologies – AI, electrification, autonomy and digital twins – will shape logistics, transport systems, infrastructure and the workforce over the next decade and beyond.

The future will see a mix of technologies, panellists suggested, there will not be a single dominant technology. Electric vehicles (EVs), AI-enabled, partially autonomous and legacy vehicles will all co-exist. Electric vehicles are expected to grow rapidly, but the fleet turnover will be slow. China expects around 40% of its new HGVs to be electric. The UK may lag initially, but will accelerate its adoption of eHGVs.

On autonomy, it was suggested that the motorway will be the first place where autonomy will be implemented, as the environment is simpler. Removing drivers on long motorway stretches may become safer than retaining them, owing to 'cognitive underload'. But full autonomy is likely to take 30 years, not 10.

In terms of warehousing, the grid connection will become the single most important factor, with EV depots requiring power equivalent to that needed for small data centres. Warehousing operations will have to change because eHGVs have shorter ranges and longer refuelling times. Plus, the larger batteries will reduce payload. The net effect of this is that 15-20% more vehicles may be needed to move the same freight. Warehouses must accommodate



charging, dwell time and fleet growth, it was suggested. Automation is already accelerating, with Amazon now employing more robots than people. Humanoid robots are commercially available for between £20,000-£60,000, posing a risk for long-term disruption.

"A humanoid robot doesn't need to be paid anymore and it works 24/7," Professor Greening said, "That's something worth thinking about because the ambition with humanoid robots is that they will be able to do everything a human can do. So that's quite an interesting area."

However, on the wider charge that AI will take people's jobs, both panellists agreed that it will replace tasks, not work itself. History shows that new technologies create more complexity and more work, not less. The workforce will evolve toward judgement, leadership and systems thinking. People will also remain essential for trust, reassurance, ethics, adaptability and resilience.

CHAIR'S CLOSE

Chair Jemma James closed the conference by underlining the point that humans are more important than ever, not less. Some of the key capabilities that will be required in the workforce going forward are emotional intelligence, trust-building leadership through change and flexibility and resilience.

"I personally believe we are better placed to be that flexible and proactive industry to be able to pivot alongside that technology," James concluded. "I think that's why we're seeing innovation more than ever touch so many different aspects and it's going to be very interesting to see where this is going to go." ■

Find out more

Logistics UK Annual Conference 2026

Wednesday 3 June 2026 • QEII Centre • Westminster, London

EXECUTIVE Members are invited to join Logistics UK's second flagship conference for senior leaders in the sector at the prestigious QEII Centre in London's Westminster.

An exceptional line-up of speakers – including government ministers, C-suite executives from leading global and UK logistics businesses, inspirational representatives from academia and Logistics UK's very own experts – will explore some of the most pressing topics shaping the industry today and in the future.

Specifically tailored to meet the needs of logistics leaders, the Logistics UK Annual Conference offers valuable insights and actionable strategies to help navigate the complexities of the industry, plus exclusive networking opportunities with your industry counterparts.

The conference will touch upon the following themes: how logistics can

Logistics UK Annual Conference 2026

support the country's global trade ambitions; achieving growth for the future of the sector; the continued impact of AI on the future of the industry; the ZEHID trials; and supply chain resilience.

Confirmed speakers include: Dr Laura Gilbert, who will explore the impact of AI; Andrew Griffith MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Business and Trade; Chris McDonald MP, Minister for Industry in the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero and the Department for Business and Trade. The final keynote will be delivered by Vice Admiral Andy Kyte, the Chief of Defence Logistics and Support (CDLS), who will talk on successful strategies for defence support organisations.

All Executive Members will receive an invitation to the Annual Conference as part of their membership. ■

Find out more

Port of Dover receives plaudits for landmark net zero success

THE Port of Dover recently announced it has achieved its ambitious goal of carbon net zero emissions (Scope 1 and 2) for 2025, at least five years ahead of any other UK port target, and 25 years ahead of the UK government's maritime target.

Its emissions for Scope 1 and 2 have fallen by a huge 98.3% from 2007, with residual emissions being offset through a local regenerative farming scheme issued under the UK Carbon Code of Conduct.

The announcement on Tuesday 14 April came shortly after external verification of the Port's 2025 emissions was received, (against ISO 14064 and the GHG Protocols Corporate Accounting and Reporting Standard). The Short Straits counts for 8% of all UK maritime emissions, so this news is a significant step forward for the future of maritime decarbonisation.

Doug Bannister, CEO of the Port of Dover, said: "We are proud to be celebrating this milestone moment, which has seen our carbon emissions reduce drastically from nearly 14,000 tonnes 18 years ago. Since setting our goal four years ago, people from across the Port have all contributed to this incredible result.

"Our brilliant in-house environment team has implemented modern and forward-thinking assets, sustainable processes and progressive behaviours across all areas of the Port to get here. This has then given us the tools for our customers, partners and internal stakeholders to follow. My thanks and congratulations go to our team, particularly Megan Turner, Environment and Sustainability Manager.

"We are not stopping here. We want Dover to be a global leader, putting the UK on the global stage as home to the world's first high-volume Green Shipping Corridor here on the Short Straits.

Port of Dover receives plaudits

"This sustainability drive is an essential part of our Port of Dover 2050 Masterplan, helping to protect the UK's competitiveness and drive economic growth in an efficient and sustainable manner."

Aviation, Maritime and Decarbonisation Minister Keir Mather said: "It's fantastic to see the Port of Dover charting the course for a cleaner maritime future, showing net zero port operations are becoming a reality in Britain.

"UK shipping is vital to our national prosperity. That's why we're supporting industry with £448m to develop clean fuels and technologies to support skilled jobs, cut carbon emissions and drive growth in our coastal communities."

Lamech Solomon, Logistics UK's Head of Decarbonisation Policy, said: "Dover's achievement shows what's possible when long-term ambition is matched with decisive action and investment. Reaching net zero for Scope 1 and 2 emissions well ahead of both industry and government timelines sets a powerful benchmark for ports across the UK and beyond.

"The scale of reduction delivered here is particularly significant given the strategic importance of the Short Straits to UK trade. As we look to decarbonise the entire supply chain, successes like this provide both a blueprint and a confidence boost that meaningful progress can be delivered at pace.

"The challenge now is to build on this momentum, particularly in tackling Scope 3 emissions, where partnership across operators, carriers and government will be essential."

The Port's longer-term ambitions require strong partnerships with industry and government, and the Port is already working hard with both. Its Scope 1 and 2 achievements have, nevertheless, all been accomplished through its own drive and determination to champion sustainable maritime trade and travel. Some specific examples include:

- Purchasing sustainably sourced HVO (Hydrotreated vegetable oil) to operate machinery.
- Installing 1.5MW of on-site solar generation.
- General energy efficiency improvements, such as purchasing renewable electricity and using LED lighting and heating controls.
- Residual emissions being offset through an approved local regenerative farming scheme, which has produced carbon credits under the UK Carbon Code of Conduct.

The Port also recently achieved recertification under the EcoPorts environmental management standard (PERS) for the fourth time, which is the only port-specific environmental management classification. ■

Find out more

CAMPAIGN HIGHLIGHT

Calling for a pragmatic approach to decarbonisation

LOGISTICS UK continues to call on government to adopt a pragmatic approach to decarbonisation, which reflects the needs of industry and allows the sector to reduce emissions in a commercially and operationally viable way.

Following the publication of a statement on low carbon fuels (LCF) sent to ministers with over 50 supporting organisations, and two reports on decarbonising road freight: Powering Change and The role of LCFs in decarbonising HGVs at the end of last year, and an initial roundtable on the importance of embracing all viable technologies and fuels to decarbonise, Logistics UK met with officials to further provide evidence on the transition.

Attendees at the roundtable included Logistics UK members as well as the Deputy Director of Decarbonisation Strategy at the Department for Transport, and colleagues from the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles, Climate Change Strategy team and Low Carbon Fuels team. Also in

Calling for a pragmatic approach to decarbonisation

attendance were Zemo Partnership, The Renewable Transport Fuels Association, The Green Gas Taskforce, Sustainable Logistics Forum, an OEM and fuel suppliers.

Members and officials discussed decarbonisation objectives and government's approach and talked about challenges around switching to battery electric fleets and specifically, concerns around what impact a ZEV mandate for HGVs could have.

Logistics UK and members also stressed that with cost of living being a government priority, regulatory decisions taken around a ZEV mandate must enable all viable ways to decarbonise, including LCFs.

Logistics UK will continue to engage with government on any future regulatory decisions made around the decarbonisation of the sector and emphasise the need for this to be commercially viable and not penalise operators. ■

Find out more

LEADING ON LOGISTICS

In the latest podcast episode Mike is joined by Philip Bird, Partner and Head of Logistics at RPG Crouch Chapman, and Phil Roe, President of Logistics UK, who co-authored the *M&A Insight Report 2026*. Together they unpack what the latest index reveals about confidence in the sector, with sentiment dipping back below the key 50-point threshold.

Listen now

Exclusive events

and networking opportunities

AS an Executive Member, you have complimentary access to a number of our flagship events and conferences, including AI and Automation in Logistics, Delivering Decarbonisation, Digital Transformation in Logistics and Logistics Finance Forum, as well as our celebratory black-tie Logistics Awards event.

You can also benefit from access to a variety of exclusive networking opportunities with your industry counterparts at frequent roundtables, advisory boards, drinks receptions, breakfasts and dinners. ■

Upcoming events

7 & 19 MAY 2026 | DINNER

Energy for Decarbonisation

Join your industry peers for an evening of discussion focused on the role emerging energy solutions will play in the decarbonisation of logistics.

Register now

3 JUNE 2026 | CONFERENCE

Logistics UK Annual Conference

Join us on 3 June 2026 at the QEII Centre in London for Logistics UK's flagship senior leader conference. Featuring government ministers, C-suite executives, leading academics and Logistics UK experts, the event will tackle the most pressing issues shaping the future of the industry.

Register now

23 JUNE | DINNER

Should the logistics sector embrace industry collaboration?

As an industry that frequently finds itself operating on wafer-thin margins, it is vital that logistics businesses optimise their efficiency to retain their profitability and competitiveness.

With fuel and other costs rising, one area that is rapidly increasing in attractiveness is the prospect of logistics operators collaborating with each other.

Register now

1 JULY | DINNER

Global Trade

Geopolitical shifts in global trade, particularly those driven by the Trump administration, are reshaping UK logistics. Changing demand patterns, new trade routes and evolving freight movements are creating both challenges and opportunities, influencing costs, capacity and sector resilience.

Register now

3 SEPTEMBER | DRINKS RECEPTION

Networking on the Thames

Set sail for an exclusive evening of networking on the water as we cruise down the River Thames! Enjoy stunning views, music, drinks and delicious catering while connecting with senior leaders from across the logistics sector.

Register now

Logistics Awards 2026

Entry is easy, just go to **www.logistics.org.uk/logistics26ev** and complete the desired application form. The deadline for entries is Friday 3 July 2026.

They're back and better than ever, Logistics UK's prestigious Logistics Awards return for 2026! Now in their 10th year and well established as the go-to event for the industry, don't miss this opportunity to showcase your achievements over the last 12 months. Be part of our milestone year and enter the 10th anniversary awards!

Taking place on Thursday 10 December at Park Plaza Westminster Bridge, London, the awards will give us all the opportunity to reflect on the past year and celebrate all of our triumphs and achievements in the logistics industry. Our Logistics Awards 2026 will celebrate those who have made a significant contribution to the industry with an evening of conversation, networking and insights from some of the sector's biggest names. With fabulous post-dinner entertainment too, it really is an event not to be missed!

Don't miss out! Enter or book your table now to make sure you secure your place at this sell-out event at **www.logistics.org.uk/logistics26ev**

Thursday 10 December 2026 – Park Plaza Westminster Bridge, London, SE1 7UT

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