

### Government publishes response to plug-in vehicles report

The House of Commons Transport Select Committee has published government's response to its report into low carbon vehicles, entitled 'Plug-in vehicles, plugged in policy?' SMMT submitted written evidence to the Committee's inquiry in April 2012 and appeared before the Committee to give oral evidence on in June. Key items from the government's response include:

- Government noted that on the promotion of plug-in vehicles it is undertaking research into purchasing trends which would inform any campaign looking to persuade businesses and private motorists to consider an ultra-low emission vehicle.
- On Budget 2012 announcements regarding low carbon vehicles, government stated that tax issues were a matter for the Treasury but ministers and officials at the Department for Transport would continue to liaise with the Treasury. Government also stated that it recognised the automotive industry's position on the importance of ensuring a stable and long term regulatory framework.
- Clarifying issues around an outlined departmental underspend on low carbon vehicles, government noted that; to the end of September 2012, £6.2 million had been spent on Plugged-In Places, and from 1 January 2011 to 31 October 2012 there had been £11.4 million in validated payment claims through the Plug-in Car and Van Grants.
- On standardisation of connectors, government stated that the market and industry should decide on what charging hardware and infrastructure should be.
- Government noted that it would continue to monitor and consider how the National Chargepoint Registry operates, and whether there is a further role for government to encourage sharing of recharging point data.
- The response noted that government remains "wholly committed to the policy of encouraging the early market for plug-in vehicles", as part of a long-term strategic benefit to the UK. Government

would continue to promote the UK as a key market and support the early market through grants until at least 2015.

(Source: Transport Committee)

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmtran/884/884.pdf>



### Government publishes response to Apprenticeships report

The House of Commons Business, Innovation and Skills Select Committee has published government's response to its report into Apprenticeships. Government has stated that it will consult in the spring on recommendations from the Richard Review, and therefore this response defers to that date on many issues. However, key items from the response to note include government taking forward recommendations from the Holt review into how to make it quicker and easier for SMEs to access Apprenticeships; government highlighting that measures to support progression within key sectors are currently being considered within the context of its industrial strategy work, noting that employers in these sectors will be encouraged to compete for funding through the Employer Ownership Pilot, with value for money being one key criterion for the award of funding; government stating that it 'shares the Committee's interest in the considerable potential for large employers to support Apprenticeships in their supply chains', and NAS have requested that larger grant holding employers are allowed to draw down funding for the training of their supply chains. The Skills Funding Agency legal team are reviewing this option; government note that NAS

has asked large employers to promote Apprenticeships to supply chains, noting the example of Nissan UK who were asked to write to all the smaller employers they use in the North east to prompt them to consider recruiting apprentices; government has declined to require schools to publish 'apprenticeship entries' as well as the number of university places their students achieve, as suggested in the Committee's report.

(Source: BIS Committee)

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/business-innovation-and-skills/news/publ-gvt-resp-to-apprenticeships1/>

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## Education Committee publishes Careers Guidance report

The House of Commons Education Committee has published its report into 'Careers guidance for young people'. The report states the Committee's view that government's decision to transfer responsibility for careers guidance to schools is regrettable, but that further change to rectify this would lead to greater uncertainty. The report does not recommend additional funding be provided to schools, but instead calls for urgent steps to be taken by government to ensure that the current settlement meets the needs of young people (through increased funding and enhanced role of the National Careers Service, and improved accountability). The report recommends that the National Apprenticeship Service's remit be extended to include the promotion of apprenticeships in schools, and that the statutory guidance should include a requirement for a minimum of one personal careers interview with an independent adviser who is not a teacher for every young person. The report also welcomes government's support for the increased involvement of local employers in careers guidance, and recommends that schools be required to set out in their careers plans their arrangements with local employers and how they intend to enhance them. Commenting on the report, Education Committee Chair, Graham Stuart MP, stated: "Good careers guidance has never been so important. The Education Committee has found that the quality and quantity of guidance for young people is deteriorating just when it is most needed. If young people are to benefit from the increased choices created by this Government we need a careers advice and guidance system which supports them to make the right ones."

(Source: Education Committee)

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmeduc/632/632.pdf>

## Mayor's Clean Air Fund programme reports good progress

At a conference held at City Hall on Tuesday 22 January, TFL reported that the Mayor's Cleaner Air Fund programme had met its objectives and has successfully improved air quality at a number of hotspots across the capital. Government provided £5m for the first phase of the programme, which uses targeted short term measures to reduce local particulate matter (PM10) emissions and concentrations in the capital. Over the last two years an array of projects have been funded and delivered by the Cleaner Air Fund. They include the fitting of Diesel Particulate Filters on buses, a 'No Engine Idling' campaign to educate and raise awareness with drivers, the installation of two 'green walls' at Edgware Road Tube station and Marylebone Road and the expansion of the trial of Cleaning and Applications of Dust Suppressants. Commenting on the announcement, Norman Baker, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport, stated: 'It is encouraging to see that London is taking ambitious steps to improve air quality. Londoners have benefited from the £5 million DfT grant for measures to reduce emissions on the most polluted streets. The challenge is to build on the success of the programme to ensure that best practice is spread across the country. Of course, one of the best measures to tackle poor air quality is to move as quickly as possible to full roll out of low emission vehicles'. (Source: TFL)

<http://www.tfl.gov.uk/corporate/media/newscentre/27051.aspx>

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## Week ahead

### Commons Chamber

Thursday 31 January

Adjournment debate: UK vehicle registration mark regime (Steve McCabe, Lab, Birmingham Selly Oak)

### Commons Committees

Tuesday 29 January

Treasury Committee (9:30am Thatcher room)  
Quantitative easing

### Lords Committees

No relevant activity

### Westminster Hall

No relevant activity