



### UK to lead development of driverless car technology

The Department for Transport has published a [review](#) that states that the UK is uniquely positioned to develop driverless car technology with high potential for reducing accidents and making traffic flow more smoothly. Up to now, the scope for testing driverless cars has been limited, but the review provides industry with the green light for testing on public roads. To mark the launch of the review, government Ministers Claire Perry and Vince Cable attended the first official trials of one of the projects benefitting from the £19 million government fund for driverless car trials. The review, carried out over the past 6 months, considered the best and safest ways to trial automated vehicles where an individual is ready to take control of the car if necessary. It also looked further ahead to the implications of testing fully automated vehicles. The review provides legal clarity to encourage UK and international industry to invest in this technology and it encourages the largest global businesses to come to the UK to develop and test new models. The next step is for government to introduce a code of practice which will provide industry with the framework they need to trial cars in real-life scenarios, and to create more sophisticated versions of the models that already exist. This code of practice is scheduled for publication in spring 2015, with the first driverless cars supported by the prize fund expected to be tested on roads by the summer. Commenting on the launch of the review, Transport Minister Claire Perry stated: "Driverless cars are the future. I want Britain to be at the forefront of this exciting new development, to embrace a technology that could transform our roads and open up a brand new route for global investment. These are still early days but today is an important step. The trials present a fantastic opportunity for this country to take a lead internationally in the development of this new technology."

(Source: DfT)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-to-lead-development-of-driverless-car-technology>

### SMMT hosts 'Improving Air Quality' event

SMMT hosted its first debate on the contribution of commercial vehicles to improving air quality at the ME Hotel in London on Wednesday 11 February. At the event, SMMT brought together transport policy makers, vehicle manufacturers and other stakeholders from across the UK to discuss the future contribution of commercial vehicles to improving air quality. Speaking at the debate were Rt Hon John Hayes MP, Minister of State for Transport, Mike Hawes, SMMT Chief Executive, Doug Parr, Chief Scientist, Greenpeace and representatives from local transport authorities in London, Manchester and Scotland. SMMT called on government and local councils to recognise the vital role modern diesel vehicles can play in reducing emissions across Britain's towns and cities – and to do more to support their adoption. UK manufacturers have already invested billions of pounds in advanced diesel technology to meet the latest European emissions standard known as Euro-6. These new diesel vehicles have filters that capture 99% of harmful soot particulates, while exhaust after treatments drastically reduce emissions of Nitrogen Oxides (NOx). By supporting the uptake of the latest Euro-6 buses, government and local councils have the opportunity to significantly reduce pollution and avoid paying hundreds of millions of pounds in fines that will be levied by the EU if air quality obligations are not met.

(Source: SMMT)

<http://www.smmt.co.uk/2015/02/support-low-emission-diesel-cv-uptake-clean-britains-air-smmt-urges-policy-makers/>



## Latest beneficiaries of Regional Growth Fund announced

Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg has announced the latest beneficiaries of the Regional Growth Fund. 63 new projects and programmes across England will receive a further £297 million subject to due diligence. Since launching the [Regional Growth Fund](#) (RGF) in 2010, government has awarded close to £2.85 billion of funding to help regional companies expand and take on more staff. Businesses across all industrial sectors have benefited from the funding, with over £1.1 billion being invested in manufacturing, including £364 million in automotive, £100 million in aerospace and £104 million for low carbon enterprises. (Source: BIS)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/deputy-prime-minister-secures-almost-3-billion-for-local-business>

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## UKCES Futures Programme

The UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) is offering employers in the manufacturing sector the opportunity to receive co-investment from a pot of £1 million. Businesses of all sizes across the UK are invited to develop, pilot or scale-up new ways of boosting the skills and business practices needed to maximise the value of UK innovation, through the UK Futures Programme. The [UK Futures Programme](#) competition invites employer-led proposals from businesses of all sizes in the manufacturing sector to run initiatives lasting 12 months, that focus specifically on the skills required to manage an innovation process and exploit innovative products or services for commercial value. Proposals must be joint investments with employers investing in cash, in kind or both alongside a maximum government contribution of £150,000 per project. The competition closes at midday on Wednesday 11 March 2015. (Source: UKCES)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/1-million-available-to-help-uk-manufacturing-firms-develop-skills-to-maximise-value-of-innovation>

## Government report on the changing face of business

A new report on small firms from the Prime Minister's Enterprise Advisor Lord Young reviews the changing face of business over the past 5 years. [Lord Young's report on small firms](#) shows that small businesses are entering a 'golden age', with a record number of small firms now established in the UK – some 5.2 million, an increase of 760,000 since 2010 – and a record number of people in work. It finds that our changing relationship with the internet has brought down barriers that might previously have stopped a good idea from being turned into a viable business. The report also charts a change in culture, with growing numbers of people choosing to establish their own business not simply out of commercial necessity, but because of conviction in their own ideas.

(Source: Prime Minister's Office)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-support-and-accessible-technology-key-to-golden-age-for-small-business>

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## Week ahead

### House of Commons

- The House of Commons is in recess from 12 February to 23 February

### House of Lords

- The House of Lords is in recess from 12 February to 23 February

