

WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

Week ending Friday 8 April

Mayor announces LEZ discount for new van and minibuses

The Mayor of London, Boris Johnson has announced that he has secured discounts off new vans and minibuses in a package of financial deals for drivers set to be affected by changes to the capital's Low Emission Zone. A range of manufacturers have pledged offers to provide the owners of around 72,000 larger vans and minibuses, more affordable ways to buy new, cleaner vehicles, in order to avoid fines when changes to the LEZ come into effect in January 2012. 80% of vehicles affected by LEZ for the first time in 2012 are vans and the deals in some cases amount to thousands of pounds off a new vehicle. Boris Johnson, the Mayor of London, said: "The vast majority of people who are affected by these new changes have upgraded their vehicles and need not take any action. But for those remaining people I know these are difficult times and that their vehicles are essential for their livelihoods." (Source: Mayor of London)

www.london.gov.uk/media/press_releases_mayoral/mayors-discount-deals-van-drivers-ahead-pollution-scheme-changes



£5m to tackle transport emissions in London

Transport Secretary Philip Hammond has committed £5m funding to the Mayor of London Boris Johnson to

help improve air quality in the capital. This funding is for a programme of localised measures designed to improve London's air quality and help compliance with legally binding European targets. The Mayor intends to use the money to establish a 'Clean Air Fund' to extend measures in place at the small number of locations in central London that are at risk of exceeding the daily limit value for particulate matter (PM10) including Marylebone Road. Other measures being developed that could now be extended include travel plans for local businesses, traffic smoothing measures, the development of a no-idling zone, local cycling and walking schemes and the introduction of 'greening' (e.g. tree and vegetation planting) to help absorb particles. (Source: DfT)

<http://nds.coi.gov.uk/content/detail.aspx?NewsAreaId=2&ReleaseID=418983&SubjectId=2>

Government launches website in an attempt to cut regulations

Government has launched a website inviting members of the public, businesses and community organisations to help cut regulations. The Red Tape challenge website has been launched by the Prime Minister and Business Secretary Vince Cable. In total there will be five themes of the Red Tape challenge, two of these will be road transportation (open for two weeks beginning May 19) and manufacturing (open for two weeks beginning June 16). The campaign will also have six cross cutting themes that affect all businesses and are open throughout the whole of the campaign. Departments will need to make comments on the cross cutting themes every four months. Every few weeks the government will publish all the regulations in one specific sector or industry and will consult on what is working and what isn't, what can be simplified and what can be scrapped. Once government has received feedback, ministers will have three weeks to work out which regulations should be kept and why. (Source: Cabinet Office) www.redtapechallenge.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/home/index/

Billions of pounds and thousands of lives to be saved by focused road improvements

Six thousand lives could be saved on Britain's roads over the next ten years if the money currently spent on road maintenance was used more efficiently, according to a report published by the RAC Foundation. According to the report, entitled 'Saving Lives, Saving Money', the total cost of crashes is well estimated by the Department for Transport but the way costs fall on families, business, carers, NHS, emergency services and the insurance industry is poorly understood. Britain loses up to £30 billion (2.3% GDP) annually in the cost of road crashes, according to the RAC Foundation, and most of which falls on busy, targetable motorways and main roads. It finds the cost of fatal and serious crashes on the Highways Agency's network amounts to £1.2bn annually. The RAC Foundation proposes a 10-year safety programme until 2020, concluding that it would cost less than 10% of existing road budgets. (Source: RAC Foundation)

www.racfoundation.org/research/safety/saving-lives-saving-money

England to benefit from over 500 green buses

Transport Minister Norman Baker has announced that government funding of £46 million will see 542 new low carbon buses on roads across England by March 2012. The money is part of government's drive to target investment in new projects that promote green growth and encourage use of sustainable local transport. All English regions will benefit with funds which have been paid to 20 bus operators and 6 local authorities. Green, low carbon hybrid-electric buses supported by the fund are already in operation in London, Manchester, Oxford and Reading. Electric buses supported by the Fund are operating in Durham. Norman Baker said: "Low carbon buses emit around 30 per cent fewer greenhouse gas emissions than standard diesel buses and use around a third less fuel - that is why it was so important to kick-start the market. They also represent an important and developing industry - both in this country and throughout the world - which has the potential to create jobs and boost economic growth." (Source: DfT)

nds.coi.gov.uk/content/detail.aspx?NewsAreaId=2&ReleaseId=419025&SubjectId=2



Emissions achieve all-time low despite subdued March market

SMMT has published new car registration figures for March. New car registrations in March reached 366,101 demonstrating sustained demand in what is traditionally the biggest month of the year. March bettered expectations, up 5.9% on 2010 with scrappage volumes excluded. Registrations in quarter one fell 8.7% to 558,336 units. The 2011 market is forecast to drop 5.0% to 1.93 million. However, more positively, Q1 recorded the lowest ever average new car CO₂ emissions, down 3.4% to 140.3g/km. Fleet and business volumes grew in both March and Q1 demonstrating underlying business confidence that should stabilise the market through 2011. Paul Everitt, SMMT Chief Executive, said: "Despite a dip versus 2010, the market remains on course to meet SMMT's forecast for the year with motorists buying increasingly fuel-efficient and low emitting vehicles across every segment." In the van and truck section, registrations were up 25.3% as recovery continues. March total CV registrations were at 48,756 with a rolling year up 22.7% to 276,584. In the bus and coach section, registrations fell by 38.3% in March. (Source: SMMT) www.smm.co.uk/2011/04/emissions-achieve-all-time-low-despite-subdued-march-market/

International green light for CCS

Energy Ministers from around the world have agreed proposals to help speed up the global deployment of carbon capture and storage (CCS). In a meeting this

week in the United Arab Emirates, ministers at the Clean Energy Ministerial endorsed recommendations from the Carbon Capture, Use and Storage (CCUS) Action Group chaired by Australia and the UK. Speaking at the meeting in Abu Dhabi, the UK's Energy and Climate Change Secretary Chris Huhne said: "Deployment of the technology is tantalisingly close, but it won't happen at commercial scale without concerted efforts by governments around the world to address legal, financial and technical barriers. The UK will host the next Clean Energy Ministerial in London next spring and will be pressing hard for substantial progress by then." (Source: DECC)

www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/news/pn_joint/pn_joint_int.aspx

Week ahead

House of Commons

Easter recess – House returns on Tuesday 26 April

House of Lords

Easter recess – House returns on Tuesday 26 April