

WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

Week ending Friday 1 August

UK government announces measures on driverless cars

Business Secretary Vince Cable has announced two new measures to enable driverless cars to take to UK roads from January 2015. UK cities can now bid for a share of a £10million competition to host a driverless cars trial. Government is calling on cities to join together with business and research organisations to put forward proposals to become a test location. Up to three cities will be selected to host the trials from 2015, and each project is expected to last between 18 and 36 months and start in January 2015. Ministers have also launched a review to look at current road regulations to establish how the UK can remain at the forefront of driverless car technology, and to ensure that there is an appropriate regime for testing driverless cars in the UK. The review will cover two areas of driverless technology: fully autonomous vehicles where there is no driver, and cars with a qualified driver who can take over control of the driverless car. Business Secretary Vince Cable said "Today's announcement will see driverless cars take to our streets in less than six months, putting us at the forefront of this transformational technology and opening up new opportunities for our economy and society."

(Source: BIS)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-government-fast-tracks-driverless-cars>



London Mayor calls for improvement on air quality

The Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, has called on government and the European Commission to match London's plans to tackle air quality and to help London meet EU limits for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) emissions. The Mayor will launch a new air quality manifesto, which will set out the actions of City Hall, including the proposed Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ), which City Hall says will take London two thirds of the way to compliance with EU NO₂ limits by 2020. In his announcement, the Mayor called on government to put air quality at the heart of health, energy and climate change policies, with incentives to promote cleaner vehicles and funding to tackle problem areas. The Mayor will also call on the European Commission to improve the testing of new engine emission standards, and to create a new fund to help European cities tackle pollution. Boris Johnson said, "Improving London's air quality is an urgent challenge, it affects the health and well-being of all Londoners, and it simply cannot be put on hold." Working alongside the Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV), the Mayor is aiming to transform London's vehicle fleets, delivering 200,000 ultra-low emission cars, 7,000 zero emission capable taxis, 11,5000 ultra-low emission private hire vehicles, and additional 1,600 zero emission capable buses, and up to 350 electric vehicles in other public fleets. London will also have 35 rapid charging hubs with 350 rapid charge points and an inductive charging network by 2020.

(Source: Greater London Authority)

<http://www.london.gov.uk/media/mayor-press-releases/2014/07/mayor-calls-on-eu-and-government-to-do-more-to-help-improve-air>

All-Party Parliamentary Motor Group launches annual report

The All Party Parliamentary Motor Group has launched their annual report, which welcomes the impressive levels of growth in the UK automotive sector. The report notes that there is no room for complacency in order to keep the sector driving ahead. The report notes that the automotive sector is

delivering around £12million in net value added to the economy, making it a vital part of the UK's return to growth. The report highlights four key recommendations to government:

- The publication of the joint government-industry Automotive Sector Strategy is an important statement of long term commitment to the UK automotive industry and its priorities must be taken forward across government departments and adopted by all political parties.
- Government must maximise the £500million funding for ultra-low emission vehicles for industrial benefit, positioning the UK as a world leader in low carbon technology.
- There needs to be a collaborative approach and concerted action to boost skills and supply chain capacity, in order to attract investment into the automotive industry.
- Government must show leadership on the issue of air pollution to promote the uptake of new technology and implement new measures that drive behaviour change.

(Source: APMG)

<http://motorappg.com/report-2014/>

London safer lorries consultation published

Transport for London has published a consultation on safer lorries in London. At present, UK law requires most HGVs to be fitted with side guards and extended view mirrors, which are intended to reduce injury severity and to prevent collisions from occurring. However, certain HGVs are currently exempt from national regulations regarding side guards, and older HGVs are exempt from national regulations requiring mirrors. TfL and London Councils are proposing to prohibit HGVs over 3.5 tonnes that are not fitted with the required safety equipment from driving in London. It is proposed that the ban would be across London within the same area as the Low Emission Zone, and would apply to all roads within the zone except motorways. They are proposing to introduce the ban in early 2015 to operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week. TfL has opened a consultation on these proposals, which closes on 22 September. A Traffic Order Regulation will then be needed to enable the implementation of the Safer Lorries Scheme.

(Source: TfL)

<https://consultations.tfl.gov.uk/buses/safer-lorries>

Car clubs receive cash funding

Transport Minister Baroness Kramer has announced that car clubs will receive a £500,000 boost to drive forward their work. The minister announced that the Department for Transport will provide funding to support two pilot programmes which will promote wider access to car clubs. Commenting on the announcement, Baroness Kramer said, "Car clubs cut congestion, reduce carbon and save people money while still giving people the freedom and flexibility to use a car when they want to."

(Source: DfT)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/car-clubs-cash-boost>



Week ahead

The House of Commons is in Recess from Wednesday 23 July to Monday 1 September

The House of Lords is in recess from Thursday 31 July until Monday October 13