

WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

Week ending Friday 14 August

England to test charge-as-you-drive 'electric motorways'

Motorists will be able to recharge their cars as they drive if a scheme being proposed by Highways England comes to fruition. The government agency has announced plans to test wireless power-transfer technology that it hopes to build under the country's motorways and major A roads. It has already completed a feasibility study and is now asking companies to tender bids to host off-road trials. The trials are expected to begin later this year following the completion of an ongoing procurement process. The trials will involve fitting vehicles with wireless technology and testing the equipment, installed underneath the road, to replicate motorway conditions. The trials are expected to last for approximately 18 months and, subject to the results, could be followed by on road trials. As well as investigating the potential to install technology to wirelessly power ultra-low efficient vehicles, Highways England is also committed in the longer-term to installing plug-in charging points every 20 miles on the motorway network as part of the government's Road Investment Strategy. (Source: [Highways England](#))

Ian Constance appointed APC Chief Executive

Ian Constance has been appointed as the new Chief Executive of the Advanced Propulsion Centre (APC). He is due to take over in September 2015, as Tony Pixton returns to the APC Board having guided the organisation safely through its start-up phase. Formed in 2013, the Advanced Propulsion Centre aims to help get good low carbon propulsion ideas off the drawing board and to market. The £1 billion programme emerged from the Automotive Council and represents a 10-year commitment from government and the automotive industry to position the UK as a global centre of excellence for low carbon powertrain development and production. Ian Constance joins the APC from Ford Motor Company, having worked for the marque in the UK, Germany, China, Thailand and the US, and he brings with him 25 years of industry experience. (Source: [SMMT](#))

SMMT Automotive Award for Innovation opens for entries

SMMT's Automotive Award for Innovation, which recognises UK-developed concepts and technologies with the potential to transform the automotive industry, is now open for its sixth year of entries. The Award – in partnership with the Advanced Propulsion Centre (APC), sponsored by GKN, and supported by The Times – promotes the UK automotive sector's huge capacity for innovation. Global demand for British-made vehicles has significantly increased in recent years – manufacturing output is up more than 50% since 2009 – but this growth must be supported by home-grown innovation to help maintain the industry's international competitiveness. A judging panel of industry experts will be looking for products, technologies, processes or systems that could transform the UK's automotive industry for the better. The deadline for entries is midnight on 28 August. Entry is free and open to any manufacturer, supplier or developer, whether as an individual, team, department, or a submission on behalf of an organisation. After a shortlisting process, successful entrants will present their innovations to a panel of industry experts. The winner will be announced at the SMMT Annual Dinner on 24 November, in front of more than 1,000 leading industry figures. (Source: [SMMT](#))



Blueprint for Northern Powerhouse published

A blueprint for how £13 billion of government investment in transport will help create the Northern Powerhouse was unveiled this week as ministers visit major infrastructure projects that are transforming the region. The Northern Powerhouse is a government drive to close the economic gap between north and south by helping the region realise its full power and create a balanced, healthier economy. The blueprint shows how transport links across the north are being transformed by government investment.

(Source: [DfT](#))

Diesel prices hit five-year low

The average price of diesel has fallen below 113p per litre for the first time since January 2010, according to the information group Experian Catalist. In the last week, supermarkets have cut prices by between 2p and 4p per litre. Last month, diesel became, on average, cheaper than petrol for the first time since July 2001. Petrol has also fallen in price this week, hitting 115.24p per litre on average, its lowest level for three months. Lower fuel prices have followed the falls in the price of oil. This month, the price of a barrel of Brent Crude oil fell below \$50 (£32) for the first time since January this year. The International Energy Agency said that oil demand around the world is expanding at its fastest pace in five years thanks to rebounding economic growth and low prices, but global oversupply will last through to 2016.

(Source: [BBC](#))



Week ahead

The House of Commons and House of Lords are on summer recess until 7 September