



Andy Eastlake This autumn's colour is green

It feels a very encouraging start to the autumn with ultra low emission vehicle (ULEV) sales on the rise and a new UK Government strategy signalling continuing policy stability and welcome support to 2020.

The latest ULEV sales figures show a near 20 per cent improvement in the second quarter of 2013, compared with 2012 and cars eligible for the Plugged-in Car Grant (PICG) have doubled. There are some other promising indicators of an uptick in consumer demand along with a raft of new product offerings. Tesla, who showed their new Model S at the recent LCV event, report full order books and have a rapidly improving share price (up around four-fold following their first reported profit), and there's anecdotal evidence, at least, of an improvement in Nissan Leaf sales following the price drop.

There were a raft of new low carbon product offerings at the Frankfurt Motor Show. In addition to the much heralded electric BMW i3 (as seen at GreenFleet Scotland recently) there are new models from Audi, Porsche, McLaren and others which show that top performance does not necessarily mean high carbon emissions (though if these vehicles – mainly hybrids – are driven according to a 'Nurburgring cycle' they're not likely to meet the CO₂ figures quoted which are based on the more conventional test cycle of course!)

The Government has published a new strategy ('Driving the future today') to support the promotion of ULEVs and has reiterated its ambitious long-term goal of a zero emissions car fleet by the middle of the century. £500m – initially announced earlier in the summer alongside the strategy for roads – will be spent to support the industry's growth according to the outcome of a consultation which OLEV will announce shortly. (The LowCVP will, of course, play an active role in that discussion.)

The Government has also reconfirmed that the PICG will be unchanged until 2015 and that consumer incentives will remain in place for longer. Significantly – as it signals cross-government support for this agenda – there is a commitment in the strategy to maintain strong, clear and lasting tax signals for ULEVs until at least 2020 and a commitment to involving industry partners in the process for subsequent development of the tax regime.

It feels to me that momentum is building in the low-carbon vehicles industry and that a combination of policy consistency and industrial commitment is leading to a virtuous combination of green and growth. Long may it continue! And if ever there was a time to move to a greener fleet, now must be it.

FURTHER INFORMATION
tinyurl.com/q75hpyv

Andy Eastlake is managing director of the Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership (LowCVP)

HYDROGEN

UK H2Mobility website promotes hydrogen potential

The UK H2Mobility project has launched a dedicated new website to show the opportunities and benefits of hydrogen-fuelled transport.

The latest step in the UK H2Mobility consortium's work, www.ukh2mobility.co.uk features the latest information about how the UK can make the best advantages of hydrogen as a low-carbon fuel for road transport. The UK H2Mobility project covers a wide range of issues, from fuel production, supply and distribution, to the development of a national hydrogen fuel infrastructure, and the introduction of fuel cell electric vehicles (FCEVs).

The consortium's initial research has identified the potential for 1.6 million hydrogen-powered vehicles to be on Britain's roads by 2030. A roadmap has also been produced to help detail the steps needed to be taken to transform this potential into a reality.



The new website features an overview of the project, as well as an FAQ section. Chris O'Keefe, chair of UK H2Mobility Communications Committee said: "It is important that the work UK H2Mobility is doing is kept in the public eye. The more we can explain the advantages that hydrogen fuel can deliver, the more we can build public interest and therefore confidence in the technology."



VISIT THE WEBSITE:
www.ukh2mobility.co.uk



10,000th Kangoo Z.E. produced

Renault has celebrated production of the 10,000th Kangoo Z.E., which was handed over to Deutsche Bahn at the recent Frankfurt Motor Show. Béatrice Foucher, manager of Renault's Electric Vehicle programme, Uwe Hochgeschurtz, corporate sales manager, and Achim Schaible, director of Renault Germany, officially handed the keys to Deutsche Bahn's purchasing and technical director Gerhard Dech. The vehicle will be used by German Railways' maintenance division. The small electric van was launched at the end of 2011, and is Europe's best-selling model in its segment. The zero-emission LCV was restyled in June and is the best-selling electric vehicle in France where 6,000 have been sold.