

News in brief

Tesla store opens in Birmingham



Tesla has opened its fourth UK store and third service centre in Birmingham, which includes a four-bay service area and a purpose built delivery bay. The electric car manufacturer also announced plans for stores in Manchester, Bristol, Newcastle and Edinburgh.

The company has revealed plans to augment its charge point provision, adding to the nine currently in place. "We are working on additional London locations with new sites to be announced shortly," said Georg Ell, Tesla's country director for the UK and Ireland. "Our plan for routes around the UK is also under way and we now have four locations outside of the capital."

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Manchester charging on the increase

Greater Manchester has seen a near twelvefold increase in demand for electric vehicle charging points since they were first installed last year, with 974 public charge sessions in September 2014 compared to 82 in September 2013 – the first complete month that charging stations were operating. Transport for Greater Manchester has overseen the installation of 300 charging points, including some rapid chargers, under the £2.1 million Greater Manchester Electric Vehicle (GMEV) scheme.

TfGM Transport Strategy Director Dave Newton said: "Electric vehicles help to improve air quality and reduce noise pollution and therefore create a better environment for residents and visitors to the region, so it is excellent news that there has been such a positive initial take up."

"We will continue to work with government and industry to consolidate the charge point infrastructure and encourage vehicle owners – both fleet and individual – to take advantage of the environmental and financial benefits that hybrid and all-electric vehicles bring."

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EMISSION TARGETS



European Court of Justice puts pressure on UK diesel emissions

The European Court of Justice has ruled that the UK government must work to reduce pollution from diesel vehicles. This follows revelations that levels of nitrogen dioxide, which is mostly produced by diesel engines, are illegally high in British cities. As a result, ministers may be forced to order a retrofit of anti-pollution measures on buses and lorries, ban the use of diesel cars in cities, and install diesel cars with emission-recording technology.

Alan Andrews, ClientEarth lawyer, said: "This ruling is a big victory for the millions of people who want to live healthy lives in the UK's towns and cities. This will force the government to finally take this issue seriously and come up with an urgent plan to rid our towns and cities of cancer-causing diesel fumes."

"The government has done next to nothing to try to achieve the target of cleaning up the pollution by 2015. The UK Supreme Court will now set a standard that the government must achieve – and that will mean the government driving down diesel emissions."

A Defra spokesperson said: "Air quality has improved significantly in recent years and average roadside concentrations of NO₂ levels have fallen 15 per cent since 2010. We have built on this by committing £2 billion since 2011 to increase the uptake of ultra-low emission vehicles, green transport initiatives and supporting local authorities to take action."

"The government is fully committed to ensuring compliance with EU air quality standards and we are revising our plans to reflect recent action so we can be compliant as soon as possible. This is a common challenge across Europe with 17 member states exceeding limits."

"This judgment confirms where limit values are exceeded, plans must be developed which ensure compliance in the shortest possible time – this has always been the government's position."

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FUEL ECONOMY

Report looks at real-world MPG

The EU-wide lobbying group Transport & Environment has published its 2014 *Mind the Gap* report looking at how real-world fuel consumption by motorists compares with miles-per-gallon efficiency claims made by vehicle manufacturers. The organisation says that car companies routinely exaggerate the efficiency of their models, claiming that the report's findings "highlights the abuses by carmakers of the current tests and the failure of EU regulators to close loopholes. Half of the official fuel efficiency gains made since EU laws were adopted in 2008 are hot air."

T&E says that the gap between real-world consumption and manufacturers' claims has widened from eight per cent in 2001 to 31 per cent in 2013 for private motorists. While the WLTP, a "more realistic and robust global test" is scheduled to be introduced in 2017, some EU countries have not

confirmed they will comply at this date due to "pressure from carmakers that want to be able to keep exploiting the loopholes in the current test rules until at least 2022."

T&E clean vehicles manager Greg Archer said: "The gap between real-world fuel economy and distorted official test results has become a chasm. The current test has been utterly discredited by carmakers manipulating official test results. Unless Europe introduces the new global test in 2017 as planned, carmakers will continue to cheat laws designed to improve fuel efficiency and emissions reductions. The cost will be borne by drivers who will pay an additional €6,600 for fuel over the lifetime of the car compared to the official test result."

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NOISE REDUCTION



DHL launches low-noise truck

Logistics company DHL has launched a new truck which they claim is up to 50 per cent quieter than standard diesel vehicles, making it suited for use in towns and cities. The truck, which is powered by compressed natural gas (CNG), was launched at the Quiet Cities summit on noise reduction in urban freight delivery.

Noise reduction is achieved by including a spark ignition 'Otto Cycle' engine, and the use of CNG and Bio-Gas to power the vehicle means it has a low carbon footprint, producing 68 per cent Particulate Matter (PM) and 39 per cent less Nitrogen Oxides (NOx) than a standard Euro 6 diesel vehicle.

Safety features include a low entry, high visibility cab which lowers the line and field of vision, glass panels on

the nearside door to extend driver sight, and a 360 degree camera with in-cab display and hard drive recording.

Claire Perry, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Department of Transport, said: "As cities and town centres become more populous, commercial transport companies face the difficult task of making journeys safer, cleaner and quieter. The new concept vehicle from DHL is a positive step in the right direction to addressing this issue and I encourage industry-wide adoption of the latest technology to ensure the highest standards of road safety."

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ALTERNATIVE FUELS

Bristol 'Bio-Bus' powered by human waste

A bus powered entirely by human waste and food leftovers has taken to the road in a first for the UK. The 40-seater Bio-Bus runs on gas generated from sewage and food waste at Bristol sewage treatment works – a plant run by Wessex Water subsidiary GENeco. It has a range of up to 300km on a full tank of gas, which takes the annual waste of about five people to produce.

The bus is operated by Bath Bus Company on its A4 service from Bath to Bristol Airport via South Bristol. It produces less emissions than a traditional diesel engine, which engineers behind the project believe will help improve urban air quality and provide a sustainable way of fuelling public transport in the future.

Collin Field, engineering director, at Bath Bus Company, said: "The timing of this initiative could not be more appropriate as we approach 2015, when the City of Bristol itself becomes European Green Capital.

"With so much attention being directed

towards improving air quality generally, the public reaction to the appearance of this bus on a service between a World Heritage City and an airport will further focus on the potential for this particular fuel."

As well as installing a gas refuelling plant for the bus, GENeco became the first company in the UK to start feeding gas generated from food waste and sewage into the national gas network this week, following the construction of a state-of-the-art gas plant.

The Bristol sewage treatment works uses a process known as anaerobic digestion to treat around 75 million cubic metres of sewage waste and 35,000 tonnes of food waste a year, generating 17 million cubic metres of biomethane in the process – enough gas to meet power needs of 8,300 homes.

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News in brief

Car production slows in October

Figures for October show that UK car manufacturing fell by 6.7 per cent to 150,060 units, meaning that year-on-year production has taken a slight dip (0.3 per cent) from 2013 levels. Commentators have pointed to global economic uncertainty as a contributing factor, but remain optimistic amid indications that production will reach record levels within the next few years.

SMMT chief executive Mike Hawes said: "The UK's car manufacturing industry is still in a strong position in spite of the growing uncertainty surrounding the global economy. Billions of pounds have been invested into UK facilities in the past two years, with several new models starting production this year and more in the pipeline. There is still demand for UK-built products given their reputation for quality, design and engineering excellence."

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Highways Agency explores wireless charging potential

The Highways Agency held a workshop in November where stakeholders' input was sought to help shape a project on dynamic wireless charging, which enables electric vehicles to receive their charge from road cables while driving. The organisation has commissioned a study to determine how feasible this project is and how wireless power transfer could operate on the strategic road network.

The Agency is holding talks with stakeholders including government representatives, road user groups, vehicle manufacturing associations, local authorities and energy suppliers. The supposed benefits of dynamic charging include extended range and smaller batteries.



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TAX

Higher BIK rate needed, OECD says

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has published new research suggesting that countries should tax company cars and diesels more heavily in order to bring down pollution rates and ease traffic congestion. Most OECD member countries only impose taxes on 50 per cent of the benefit to employees from company cars, and critics say that this makes contributes to a culture where employees use these vehicles more than is strictly necessary – in many countries, up to three times as much as people operating private cars.

The OECD study claims that under-taxing these vehicles creates an average annual subsidy of £1,260 per company car, ranging from £45 in Canada to £2,178 in Belgium. UK drivers were found to receive an average subsidy of £880 each year. The total cost across 27 OECD countries plus South Africa is estimated at

£21 billion in lost tax revenue. Furthermore, under-taxing carries additional costs in terms of climate change, local air pollution, congestion and road accidents, estimated at £91 billion. This is made worse by the fact that 33 of 34 OECD countries tax diesel at lower rates than petrol, as diesel contains approximately 18 per cent more carbon for litre than petrol.

Simon Upton, OECD Environment Director, said: "The cost of driving a car today does not properly reflect the impact on the environment and to society. Taxing diesel fuel and company cars correctly would help to fix this.

"Governments should stop offering financial incentives to drive cars and to run them on fuels with a heavy environmental footprint."

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ALTERNATIVE FUELS



UN report on biofuel use

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) says in a new report that biofuels now contribute to one per cent of energy use worldwide. 'The State of the Biofuels Market: Regulatory, Trade and Development Perspectives' is an updated look at the growth of the biofuels market, an area UNCTAD first reported on in 2006.

The report states: "While in 2006 the biofuel market was only starting to become truly international, by 2013 bioethanol

and biodiesel have already become established commodities traded daily in all continents."

UNCTAD calls for international strategies to prevent a technological gap between land-intensive first generation technologies and newer biofuels that require a lot of investment. The report concludes: "Biofuels will continue to provide different types of opportunities to different countries."

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LowCVP's Andy Eastlake Ultra Low Emission Zones in the spotlight

This month I was fortunate enough to be invited to participate in Michelin's Challenge Bibendum event held in Chengdu in central China.

Created more than 15 years ago, and since held twelve times on five continents, Challenge Bibendum's aim is to build international commitment to sustainable mobility.

Chengdu, believe it or not, has a population bigger than that of Greater London. Whilst the pollution challenge there is not yet as acute as in Beijing, the city certainly demonstrated how important the issue of ultra-low emission mobility is for the rapidly growing mega cities of the future.

The event brought together political, industry, scientific, and media representatives to discuss how to speed-up the transition to sustainable mobility. In the words of Michelin's Senior Vice-President Patrick Oliva, "Innovation in mobility is at the heart of growth and urban well-being."

One of the key workshops I participated in, looked at Ultra Low Emission Zones (ULEZ). Much international interest is, of course, now focused on the latest plans and proposals for London's ULEZ which is seen to be at the leading edge in this area of policy.

There's no doubt that leading in a policy area can be very challenging and we may not get everything absolutely right first time. One of the key learning points, though, for me coming out from the international debate, was how the consultative and collaborative approach which has been adopted here in the UK can deliver both better technical and environmental solutions and ensure more robust implementation.

With TfL consulting on the ULEZ right now, I would urge you to make your views known. I'd also suggest you take the opportunity to engage through the LowCVP in the many other areas of discussion around low carbon mobility; through this very British approach it's clear we have the ability to be amongst the World's leaders in delivering sustainable mobility and seizing real advantage for local companies and for the UK as a whole.

FURTHER INFORMATION

www.lowcvp.org.uk and follow LowCVP on Twitter: @theLowCVP and @aeastlake



ELECTRIC VEHICLES

Survey finds majority favour conventional cars over electrics

A PricewaterhouseCoopers survey of 500 drivers indicates that only one in a hundred would consider buying an electric car when in the market for a new vehicle, and only 13 per cent would consider a hybrid vehicle.

The PwC survey suggests that consumers believe the burden of CO₂ reduction lies with carmakers rather than with their own purchasing decisions.

Phil Harrold, partner in the automotive practice at PwC, said: "Customers expect manufacturers to shoulder the burden of ensuring their next car has minimal impact on the environment, but they remain less likely to opt for hybrids or electric cars themselves."

"The demands and preferences of the drivers clearly highlight the dilemma faced by car manufacturers. Customers are conservative when it comes to their

choice of car, yet expect innovation from manufacturers to help protect the climate. The challenge facing manufacturers is to change the primary concern in buyers' minds from cost to conservation."

However, there have been more encouraging signs in recent months. As GreenFleet reported back in November, uptake of electric vehicles continues to grow month on month, with almost a third of all government-issued ultra low emission vehicle (ULEV) grants given out in the third financial quarter of this year. Over 5,000 grants were issued between July and September, representing an increase of more than 50 per cent from the previous quarter.

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CARBON REDUCTION

Hermes zero emission operations praised by Mayor of London

A Hermes initiative to slash emissions from its courier vehicles in central London has been welcomed by the Mayor of London, Boris Johnson. Using a 44-strong fleet of 100 per cent electric, zero emission vehicles, Hermes, the consumer delivery specialist, expects to save 146 tonnes of carbon a year, as well as reducing congestion in the capital.

Working in partnership with Gnewt Cargo, London's electric vehicle parcel delivery operator, Hermes aims to make carbon emission and NO_x savings of 100 per cent for 'last mile delivery' within the city. This represents the biggest commitment yet by a UK carrier to cut emissions in the city.

The initiative compliments the Mayor's

proposal to introduce an Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) in central London from 2020. Boris Johnson, said: "Hermes is setting a fantastic example for London's logistics companies, all of whom have their part to play in helping to improve London's air quality. It is an urgent challenge, which affects the health and wellbeing of all Londoners. Under the world's most ambitious and comprehensive set of measures, we have already taken thousands of the most polluting buses and taxis off the streets, and are planning the world's first Ultra Low Emission Zone in central London from 2020. By doing their bit, Hermes too is helping to create cleaner, greener, more breathable air for every Londoner."

News in brief

Audi A1 more fuel efficient

The German carmaker Audi has made newer versions of its A1 model more fuel efficient, achieving fuel economy of as much as 80.7 miles per gallon. The new iterations run on a 1.6 TDI engine that emits as little as 92g/km CO₂, down from the 99g/km emitted by 2010 models.



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First EV route planner launched

The new e.go Journey Planner tool has been launched in Belfast, which is said to be the world's first e-car journey planning tool. The tool is being piloted in Ireland and will enable users to receive suggested routes that consider electric-vehicle charging facilities, as well as information on the cost of the journey, CO₂ emissions and savings. The tool was launched by South West College and Action Renewables at the BATTERIE project closing conference held at Titanic Belfast. The BATTERIE European regional development-funded project has been established to improve the co-operation and links between various transport services across Europe, and to promote the application of smart technologies and usage of alternative fuels.

Electric vehicles for London's Royal Parks

The Royal Parks, the governing body that oversees the management of eight major London parks, has incorporated two Nissan Leaf electric vehicles into its fleet in a move that is intended to reflect a commitment to the environment. Royal Parks leased the vehicles from Alphabet on five-year contracts after a tendering process was coordinated by the Crown Commercial Service. Dave Jordan, assistant park manager, said: "Electric cars are ideal for us. They're quiet and of course they don't emit any fumes. The Leafs are based in Hyde Park and St James Park, where they are charged overnight. Their range is easily enough to cover journeys to and from the farthest parks we manage, Richmond and Greenwich."