



LowCVP's Andy Eastlake

Real-world and reliable testing can help air quality

Air quality has been rising up the political agenda since the Supreme Court ruling earlier this year and, since VW's software scandal hit the headlines, it's rocketed even higher.

While the LowCVP's primary remit has always been a focus on carbon emissions, we've always paid close attention to the impacts of road vehicles in terms of local pollution and often air quality can be a principle driver for a low carbon vehicle. The VW case is primarily concerned with NOx emissions, of course, but it has shone a light on testing processes and the relationships between manufacturers, emissions testing organisations and regulators.

It's vital that the test processes are representative of the real world, but they must be accurate and reliable in order for us all to make the best choices on policy, technology and vehicle purchase. That's why we've been working with our members, combining our expertise to make sure that we're all working from the best data, helping to avoid misconceptions and misrepresentations.

One of the outcomes of the diesel emissions scrutiny is likely to be an intensified focus on the part of car buyers and policy makers on Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) and how we evaluate their credentials. Electric vehicles produce no emissions at the point of use, of course, and their contribution to tackling climate change will rise as we progressively decarbonise the grid.

Local authorities are likely to be given more responsibilities for cutting local pollution, judging by the proposals in Defra's current consultation on measures to tackle air quality, so we can expect more local measures to encourage the uptake of ULEVs with low or zero emissions. Organisations with car fleets may also consider that the adoption of ULEVs is also likely to future-proof them against possible changes in regulation, as well as the right thing to do in terms of their corporate social responsibility (CSR).

I was particularly encouraged by an Institute of the Motor Industry (IMI) survey that I spotted this week. The professional body for the retail motor sector said its survey of 2,000 car owners study reveals a "dramatic" growth in interest in alternatively-fuelled vehicles and that demand looks set to "race ahead" in the next two years. The IMI's chief executive described the level of demand shown in the survey as 'astonishing'.

If you weren't already convinced, recent events show that now is the time to get serious about bringing more ULEVs into your fleet.

FURTHER INFORMATION

www.lowcvp.org.uk

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