

LOW CARBON VEHICLE PARTNERSHIP NEWS RELEASE

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Partnership stakeholders celebrate start of roll-out of ‘environment label’ for cars

A new colour-coded environment label for all new cars has begun to appear in new car showrooms. The consumer-friendly label will help car buyers assess the climate change impacts of different cars. The label will also show how car buyers can cut their running costs if they buy a lower carbon car.

Stakeholders in the Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership which ‘brokered’ the voluntary agreement to introduce the new label – motor and fuel companies, environmental organisations, road user groups, academics and representatives of central and local government (including Minister for Transport Dr Stephen Ladyman) - will gather to celebrate the start of the roll-out today in Guildford.

The location was chosen because the colour-coded label will be present in all car showrooms in the borough for the start of the roll-out period as a result of a joint initiative between the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT), Guildford Borough Council and LowCVP. The roll-out will take place at new car showrooms nationally between July and September this year. Some brands are already displaying the label in showrooms nationally.

The new fuel economy label is intended to be familiar to consumers as it mirrors important aspects of the design and colour-coding of the energy efficiency labels that now appear on most ‘white goods’, such as refrigerators.

The gradations on the label are also consistent with the CO₂ bandings used for Vehicle Excise Duty (‘road tax’) to ensure that the environmental message is backed up by a clear fiscal signal: *lower carbon emissions = lower road tax*. The label also provides clear running cost information showing that *lower carbon, ‘climate-friendlier’ vehicles are cheaper to run*.

Speaking at the roll-out celebration, LowCVP Chairman Graham Smith said: “I am delighted that the Partnership approach has delivered this important new initiative and that we can now celebrate the start of its introduction into car showrooms. In future, new car buyers will be offered a much clearer signal of the environmental - and associated tax and running cost benefits - of the cars on sale. ”

Attachment: A picture of the new colour-coded label is attached. Electronic versions representing a variety of different models are downloadable from the Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership website: www.lowcvp.org.uk

Other Pictures: The LowCVP web-site also has pictures of Secretary of State Alistair Darling launching the new label earlier this year: www.lowcvp.org.uk

Interviews: A range of LowCVP partner organisations will be available for comment at the roll-out event.

Notes to Editors

1. The new colour-coded fuel economy label will be introduced to car showrooms between July and September 2005. The roll-out is scheduled to be completed by the September new registration deadline. The new label enhances the pre-existing statutory label by incorporating clear colour coding as well as tax and running cost information.
2. The label is being introduced years ahead of likely EU legislation and is the result of a voluntary agreement by car makers following discussions with environment groups and other road transport ‘stakeholders’ under the auspices of the Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership (LowCVP).
3. The Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership was set up in January 2003 with funding from the DfT and the DTI and a mandate to accelerate the shift to low carbon vehicles and fuels. The establishment of a stakeholder partnership was one of the central actions arising out of the Government’s ‘Powering Future Vehicles’ strategy that identified greenhouse gas emissions reduction as a priority of future transport policy. The Partnership already comprises over 150 members representing government, the motor and fuels industries, vehicle users, environmental groups, consumer representatives and others. The Partnership is coordinated by a secretariat based in central London.
4. The road transport sector is responsible for nearly a quarter of the UK’s emissions of carbon dioxide, the main cause of climate change.
5. The main objective of the LowCVP is to contribute to the achievement of UK targets for carbon reduction from the road transport sector by:

- Providing a framework of communications to encourage stakeholders to engage proactively in the move to low carbon fuels and vehicles.
- Facilitating a forum in which stakeholders can work together to overcome market barriers.
- Enabling partners to initiate new policy ideas or discuss the feasibility of those already on the agenda
- To provide Government with independent feedback on the opportunities and obstacles in the move to new vehicles and fuels and on the progress and effectiveness of current Government programmes.

Through the partnership approach, UK vehicles, fuels and related industries should be better placed to seize market opportunities in a future in which environmental concerns are set to be a major priority.

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