



Jonathan Murray, Policy and Operations Director, Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership reflects on ten years of the Cenex LCV event and how the industry has developed during that time

Having attended all of the LCV Events since the show's inception ten years ago, I have been able to witness first-hand how the UK's low carbon vehicle industry has moved out of the margins and – particularly recently – into the mainstream.

Ten years ago, sales of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) were a rare sight on Britain's roads but total ULEV registrations recently passed 100,000 and, for the first time, in July this year SMMT's sales statistics showed a 5.5% share for alternatively fuelled vehicles (AFVs), mainly electric vehicles and hybrids.

The policy agenda has changed considerably over the last decade. Rising global concern about climate change led to the passage into law of the UK's Climate Change Act under which emissions of the six main greenhouse gases must be at least 80% lower in 2050 than they were in 1990.

Much water has passed under the bridge since then and the journey has been far from smooth, but the 2015 Paris Agreement provided a vital landmark in terms of international collaboration, only for the global consensus to be challenged latterly by the new US administration. While the US may be threatening withdrawal from the Agreement, most analysts say that the trajectory towards lower carbon - across all sectors - is unstoppable.

While climate change policy has been under attack from some quarters, concerns about air quality have risen rapidly up the political agenda driven by growing awareness of the health impacts of pollution. This has been particularly important in the context of the automotive agenda as most of the

harmful pollution derives from the use of motor vehicles in urban areas. For the most part, strategies to mitigate air pollution also help in the battle against climate change. The LowCVP is working across a number of areas to help ensure that this continues to be the case.

In the 1990s and early 'noughties', the UK automotive sector was in a state of decline and a continuation of the trend was viewed by many as being inevitable. The UK supply chain had become hollowed out and environmental regulations were seen as a threat in some quarters.

Since then, and despite a major global recession and intense competitive pressures, the UK auto industry has defied some expectations and emerged stronger and more vibrant than ever. Sector turnover has climbed to over £70bn in 2016 compared with £46bn in 2003. It seems that a sustained and consistent policy focus on low carbon, supported by regulation at EU level, far from undermining the industry has actually contributed to the revival of the UK's auto sector.

In the early years after the inception of the LCV Event, the main focus of policy – both at national and EU-levels – was on passenger cars; understandable as these contribute most road transport-related CO₂ emissions, and 12% of total EU emissions from all sources. More recently, attention has moved to other vehicle types including buses, trucks and vans, driven partly by concerns about the contribution of these to urban air quality problems.

The LowCVP has been particularly active in policy actions to drive the development and uptake of low emission buses, helping to devise the criteria for the government's series of Green Bus

Funds and promoting the best available technologies to leading operators. The UK is now among world leaders in the adoption of low emission bus technology and the LowCVP is working to replicate this progress in the relatively neglected commercial vehicle sector.

While there has been significant change and much progress over the last decade, I suspect this will seem relatively sedate in ten years' time when we again reflect on developments.

Vehicle electrification is gathering pace and a number of countries, including the UK, have already made commitments to phase out conventional combustion engines within the next 25 years.

Growing vehicle automation, potentially moving to full autonomy, and the ubiquity, immediacy and reach of information technology promises a mobility revolution. Ride-hailing and self-driving technology, look likely to mean that ownership is increasingly replaced by 'mobility as a service' and that it will dramatically transform the ways we interact with, and perceive, our vehicles.

Do come and visit the LowCVP's 'Truckstop' at LCV2017 where we'll be showcasing some of the latest developments in low emission truck technology. Once again, we're also collaborating with other UK government-affiliated agencies and funding bodies supporting UK motor and fuels industry innovation in the 'UK Pavilion', which will be a centrepiece of the show in Hall 3. The UK Pavilion gives delegates the chance to learn how the UK's unique innovation support ecosystem fits together, from academia and research support through to commercialisation.

Enjoy the show!

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