

NEWS RELEASE

24 January 2008

The LowCVP celebrates five years of progress towards cutting carbon from road transport

At the fifth anniversary of its establishment, the Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership is recalling the progress achieved during its first five years and drawing breath as it moves to tackle the greater challenges ahead.

In that time, the LowCVP has grown rapidly to include over 270 member organisations from sectors with a stake in cutting road transport carbon: motor and fuels companies, road user groups, academics, government representatives, environment bodies and others.

Since 2003 the Partnership has 'brokered' the introduction of a fuel economy label for new cars, taken a leadership role in establishing carbon and sustainability criteria for biofuels and overseen the successful introduction of Cenex – the new centre of excellence for low carbon and fuel cell technologies. The LowCVP has consistently provided valued advice to government on all aspects of low carbon road transport including the Low Carbon Transport Innovation Strategy (LCTIS) and the ongoing King Review.

Since the LowCVP's inception, climate change has moved to the centre of the political agenda. With road transport responsible for about a quarter – and rising - share of the UK's total CO₂ emissions, the existence of the Partnership has provided a focal point for actions and discussions in this critical sector.

Consumer awareness of the environmental impacts of their cars is an important driver of progress and will underpin new regulatory and other policy initiatives. Under Partnership auspices, the UK motor industry agreed to voluntarily introduce a consumer-friendly fuel economy label in 2006. The LowCVP has continued to monitor progress on the existence and effectiveness of the label which is now present in most UK new car showrooms. Research confirms that awareness and use of the label is growing amongst showroom staff and customers.

The introduction of biofuels under the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation (RTFO) is a highly significant element of national and international policy to cut carbon from road

transport. The Partnership has taken a lead in the development of carbon and sustainability reporting standards for biofuels to provide assurance that the fuels used contribute positively to climate change and broader environmental objectives. The LowCVP's work led to the guidance for companies published on 11 January by the Renewables Fuels Agency. The LowCVP's work on biofuels is receiving increased attention internationally.

In its first five years, the LowCVP also oversaw the establishment of Cenex – the centre of excellence for low carbon and fuel cell technologies. Cenex is now up and running, based at Loughborough University, and playing an important role in supporting low carbon innovation in road transport.

Through its comprehensive website and information services, including a rapidly growing monthly newsletter, the LowCVP is playing an increasingly important role in transferring knowledge of policy, technical and other developments to stakeholder organisations, as well as to a wider network.

Through innovative initiatives – for example, the 2006 policy 'Challenge' and the 2007 'CarsNotCarbon' marketing competition – the LowCVP also encourages stakeholders to 'think out of the box' and to come forward with new and radical solutions with the potential to accelerate the low carbon shift.

Speaking at a reception to mark the LowCVP's fifth anniversary at the House of Commons, Business Minister Stephen Timms said: "The LowCVP is an excellent example of a government and industry partnership. It has played a key role in supporting the UK's efforts to address climate change arising from road vehicles. The breadth of knowledge, expertise and interest has been a key factor in the success of the Partnership."

"The Partnership has also made invaluable contributions to policy development. For example, your inputs into the Low Carbon Transport Innovation Strategy have helped with the development of the Low Carbon Vehicles Innovation Platform. And you have provided informed comment to the King Review into Low Carbon Cars."

In a letter congratulating the LowCVP on its anniversary, transport minister Jim Fitzpatrick wrote: "There is now wide recognition that in climate change the global community faces a huge challenge and that the cost of not acting far outweighs the cost of taking action. There is also recognition that the road transport sector has an integral role to play, and it is important that it is part of the solution."

"Moving to a low carbon transport system that can support a strong UK economy is clearly a big challenge, but it is a challenge that unites Government with the Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership and its members."

Graham Smith, the LowCVP chairman and also senior vice-president of Toyota Motor Europe, said: "It is now clear that climate change is the main challenge of our time and that road transport has a key role to play in meeting that challenge."

“It is the engagement of representatives of the LowCVP’s growing membership that makes this the vibrant and effective community that it is. This involvement allows the Partnership to ‘punch’ much harder than its financial ‘weight’ and gives, I believe, good value to its funders by making an important contribution to policy making and other initiatives in this key area.

“The LowCVP has and will continue to play a role in accelerating the shift to low carbon vehicles and fuels and in stimulating opportunities for UK business in growing low carbon markets.”

ENDS

Notes to Editors

The Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership was established in January 2003 with funding from the DfT and the DTI (now BERR) with 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 is coordinated by a secretariat based in central London.

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.

For further information:

To arrange an interview with the LowCVP Director, Greg Archer, about the LowCVP’s first five years and future plans, or for other information, contact:

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