

Green number plates get the green light for a zero-emission future

- green number plates for electric vehicles to be introduced across the UK from autumn
- £12 million investment also announced for ground-breaking zero-emission vehicle research
- cleaner, greener transport will help people to travel safely and drive a green economic recovery as the country rebuilds

Green number plates are set to be rolled out from autumn, Transport Secretary Grant Shapps confirmed today (16 June 2020), under plans to drive a green economic recovery.

As part of the government's plans to achieve net zero emissions by 2050, drivers will be encouraged to make the switch to electric vehicles through the introduction of green number plates. The plates will make it easier for cars to be identified as zero emission vehicles, helping local authorities design and put in place new policies to incentivise people to own and drive them.

For example, drivers could benefit from local initiatives such as cheaper parking and cost-free entry into zero-emission zones where those with a green number plate will be recognised as eligible.

The plates will be identifiable by a green flash on the left-hand side and will be available for zero emission vehicles only.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

A green recovery is key to helping us achieve our net zero carbon commitments while also promoting economic growth.

Green number plates could unlock a number of incentives for drivers and increase awareness of cleaner vehicles on our roads, showing people that a greener transport future is within our grasp.

We're supporting small businesses to develop the transport tech of the future through a multi-million pound investment, ensuring that UK businesses remain at the forefront of low carbon innovation and research.''

This follows the [conclusion of a consultation](#), inviting comments from the public, local authorities and industry stakeholders from a range of sectors including motoring and consumer groups and vehicle manufacturers on how best to introduce green number plates.

To further accelerate the government's plans to drive a green recovery, £12 million funding for ground-breaking research into the zero-emission market has also been announced to develop greener vehicles and help improve vehicle charging technology.

The funding, made available through the Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) and delivered through Innovate UK, will see £10 million for a new [Zero Emission Vehicle Innovation Competition](#). This will invite applicants to bid for project funding to support advancements in both battery electric and hydrogen vehicles, as well as charging infrastructure.

OLEV is also providing £2 million to UK small and medium businesses to support their research into zero-emission vehicles in areas such as battery technology, which could be used by major vehicle manufacturers in future electric vehicle production.

The funding will help these businesses to drive local economic growth through research and development projects in areas including charging infrastructure and zero emission vehicles, which could in turn create over 6,000 skilled jobs.

[Government-funded Imperial College COVID-19 vaccine moves into first human trials](#)

Clinical researchers will begin human trials of a new coronavirus vaccine developed by researchers at [Imperial College London](#).

Beginning this week, the study will be the first time the vaccine has been trialled in humans and will test whether it is well-tolerated and produces an effective immune response against COVID-19.

This latest milestone follows [£41 million in government funding](#) towards the development of Imperial College London's vaccine. A further £5 million of philanthropic gifts, including from hundreds of members of the public, has accelerated the work. The trials will be the first test of a new self-amplifying RNA technology, which has the potential to revolutionise vaccine development and enable scientists to respond more quickly to emerging diseases.

The vaccine has undergone rigorous pre-clinical safety tests and has been shown to be safe and produced encouraging signs of an effective immune response in animal studies. Over the coming weeks, 300 healthy participants will receive two doses of the vaccine.

Many traditional vaccines are based on a weakened or modified form of virus, or parts of it, but the Imperial vaccine is based on a new approach. It uses synthetic strands of genetic code (called RNA), based on the virus's genetic material.

If the vaccine shows a promising immune response, then larger Phase III trials would be planned to begin later in the year with around 6000 healthy volunteers to test its effectiveness.

Ultimately, the researchers hope that if clinical trials are successful, the vaccine could provide protection against COVID-19 both in the UK and around the world.

Professor Robin Shattock, from the Department of Infectious Disease at Imperial and who is leading the work, said:

The COVID-19 pandemic has claimed thousands of lives and had a huge impact on daily life. In the long-term, a viable vaccine could be vital for protecting the most vulnerable, enabling restrictions to be eased and helping people to get back to normal life.

Business Secretary, Alok Sharma, said:

I am incredibly proud the vaccine being developed by Imperial College London is one of the world's front-runners. We are fully backing its research with over £40 million government funding, as part of our wider vaccines development programme.

The fast progress of Imperial's vaccine is testament to the ingenuity and tenacity of Britain's researchers. If these trials are successful a vaccine will not only help us tackle coronavirus but also emerging diseases now and into the future.

Kate Bingham, Vaccine Taskforce Chair, said:

I am delighted that Imperial College have so quickly advanced to the clinical trial stage. Their self-amplifying technology has the potential to be a real game-changer, not only for a COVID-19 vaccine but for the development of future vaccines. It's a great example of the world-leading life sciences sector in this country.

By backing Imperial College London and their alternative vaccine platform, we have enhanced the UK's vaccine portfolio, increasing our chances of identifying a successful vaccine.

Notes to editors

Key points:

- this is the first time the vaccine will be tested in humans
 - the vaccine is based on synthetic strands of RNA, rather than a part of the virus
 - the final vaccine consists of RNA strands packaged inside tiny fat droplets
 - when injected, it instructs muscle cells to produce virus proteins. It does not create copies of the virus and does not cause changes to the cell's own DNA
 - the vaccine will be trialled in 300 healthy volunteers aged between 18 to 70
 - participants will receive 2 doses of the vaccine (1 dose at 2 visits)
 - participants will not be intentionally exposed to live SARS CoV-2 virus at any point of the trial
 - Imperial has founded a social enterprise [VacEquity Global Health](#) (VGH) to distribute the vaccine. For the UK and low-income countries abroad, Imperial and VGH will waive royalties and charge only modest cost-plus prices to sustain the enterprise's work, accelerate global distribution and support new research
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[Foreign Secretary statement on sentencing of Paul Whelan](#)

Press release

Foreign Secretary, Dominic Raab, comments on the sentencing of Paul Whelan in Russia.



Following the verdict and sentencing of Paul Whelan today (15 June 2020) in Russia, the Foreign Secretary, Dominic Raab, said:

I am deeply disappointed by today's verdict and sentence against Paul Whelan. I have serious reservations about the legal process. We will continue to provide consular support to him and his family,

and press the Russian authorities to respect Paul's basic rights, which include a fair trial and appeal process.

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[Business Secretary leads economic recovery roundtables](#)

Business Secretary Alok Sharma chaired a series of [economic recovery roundtables](#) over the last week (10-13 June), bringing together businesses, business representative organisations, regulators and leading academics. Discussions focused on the measures necessary to support economic recovery and ensure we have the right opportunities in place for growth across the country over the next 18 months and beyond.

The organisations that participated in the roundtables are set out below, alongside the questions that participants were asked to address.

The outputs from these roundtables will feed directly into the government's work on economic recovery. This initiative builds on the close engagement between the UK's business community, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and across Whitehall as we have responded to the pandemic. In addition to the roundtables listed below, ministers are also engaging with trades unions representatives on these important issues.

BEIS has also been accepting written submissions from other parties and individuals interested in the initiative. If you or your organisation would like to submit your ideas and insights in relation to the below questions, please email economic.recovery@beis.gov.uk.

Green recovery

How to capture economic growth opportunities from the shift to net zero carbon emissions. Roundtable held on 10 June. The participating organisations were:

- Aldersgate Group
- Barratt Homes
- Cambridge Zero
- Carbon Trust
- Committee on Climate Change
- Corporate Leaders Group
- Energy Systems Catapult
- Energy UK

- Grantham Institute for Climate Change
- Green Finance Institute
- Green Alliance
- Humber Local Enterprise Partnership
- Make UK
- National Grid
- Octopus Energy
- Ofgem
- PassivSystems
- Pivot Power
- Scottish Power
- Severn Trent
- Shell UK
- Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders
- UK Green Building Council
- University of Oxford

The questions participants were asked to address included:

- which areas of infrastructure investment should we prioritise for early action to drive economic recovery and support delivery of net zero and our broader environmental objectives?
- what action should we take to align investment in the UK and globally with net zero and to protect natural capital?
- what are the key regulatory barriers weakening incentives to invest in net zero, and how do we address them?
- how can we more effectively support businesses across the economy in acting to access growing low carbon markets and support delivery of net zero? (e.g. innovation support, advice, regulatory barriers)
- how can we help the UK's carbon intensive sectors to transition to low/zero emissions while maintaining competitiveness?
- what actions should we take to ensure local and regional economies can effectively contribute to the net zero target?

Increasing opportunity

How to level up economic performance across the UK, including through skills and apprenticeships. Roundtable held on 11 June. The participating organisations were:

- Admiral Group
- Airbus
- Blackrock
- British Chambers of Commerce
- Cardiff Capital Region
- CBRE
- Centre for Cities
- Deloitte
- Drax
- Dynamo North East
- Facebook

- Invest Northern Ireland
- Joint Industry Board for the Electrical Contracting Industry
- Local Enterprise Partnership Network
- Local Government Association
- National Innovation Centre for Rural Enterprise
- Northern Powerhouse Partnership
- Pennon Group
- Scottish Council for Development and Industry
- Social Mobility Commission
- South Tees Development Company
- TalkTalk
- National Institute for Economic & Social Research
- University of Strathclyde
- Women on Boards

The questions participants were asked to address included:

- how can government and businesses work together to identify meaningful opportunities to invest across the whole of the UK?
- how can government work with business to strengthen local business networks and ecosystems?
- how can government target skills and employment support to best aid economic recovery and drive progression and productivity?
- what could be the most impactful priority for business and government to work towards in order to level up given the challenges presented by the current context?

Backing new businesses

To make the UK the best place in the world to start and scale a business. Roundtable held on 12 June. The participating organisations were:

- Bought by Many
- Boxpark
- Coltraco Ultrasonics Ltd
- Ecuity Consulting LLP
- Entrepreneur First
- Enterprise Nation
- Evergen Group
- Federation of Small Businesses
- Geovation
- IAND
- M Squared Lasers
- Macro Eagle
- Marshall Wace
- McKinsey
- Plexal
- Richer Sounds
- Scale Up Institute
- Unilink Group

The questions participants were asked to address included:

- what are the most significant barriers to starting and growing a business in the UK?
- what are the most critical factors for successfully growing a business in the UK?
- what specific actions should we take to ensure the UK creates a strong pipeline of investable start-ups that have the potential to grow?
- what more can be done to encourage businesses to invest in their own success?
- how can we support businesses through venture capital?

The future of industry

How to accelerate business innovation and leverage private sector investment in research and development. Roundtable held on 12 June. The participating organisations were:

- Association of Innovation Research and Technology Organisations
- AstraZeneca
- Bosch
- Bryden Wood
- BT
- Confederation of British Industry (CBI)
- CodeBase
- Google
- Innovate UK
- LocalGlobe
- National Physical Laboratory
- Ocado
- ORE Catapult Network
- Procter and Gamble
- Public
- Qinetiq
- Revolut
- Rolls-Royce
- SETSquared Partnership
- Syncona
- Teledyne E2V
- University College London
- Viscount Ridley

The questions participants were asked to address included:

- what are the systematic barriers to business innovation?
- what specific actions would enhance the adoption and diffusion of innovation across the full breadth of UK businesses?
- what more can government do to enhance access to the finance needed to support innovation?
- how can government better identify and support the key technological trends that will drive innovation-led growth and productivity in the

recovery

- how can we strengthen the support provided by publicly-funded institutions?

The UK open for business

How to win and retain more high value investment for the UK. Roundtable held on 13 June. The participating organisations were:

- Adam Smith Institute
- Airbus
- Caterpillar
- Centre for Economic Performance, London School of Economics
- CK Hutchison Holdings Ltd
- Deloitte
- EY
- GIC
- Google
- Griffin Growth
- Iberdrola / Scottish Power
- Institute of Directors
- Lord Mayor of the City of London
- Marks & Spencer
- National Institute of Economic and Social Research
- Smith and Nephew
- Synthomer

The questions participants were asked to address included:

- what aspects of the UK offer should we focus on enhancing?
- are there any particular types of investor, project or investment that business and government should prioritise for investment in the UK?
- what specific approaches would help 'land' more investment deals for the UK?
- how can access to finance support inward investment, and what role can government play in facilitating this?
- how could we more effectively retain and expand existing UK investors' presence?

[Foreign Secretary's statement on coronavirus \(COVID-19\): 15 June 2020](#)

Good afternoon and welcome to today's Downing Street press conference.

Let me start with the daily update on the latest data on coronavirus:

Today, we had 1,056 new cases. There are 395 people in critical care. And 38 people have very sadly died.

I think it's also worth noting the week on week data, which compares Friday 5 June with Friday 12 June, just to give a sense of the trend and the progress we are making.

There were 109 fewer daily cases. There were 161 fewer patients in critical care in our hospitals. And 155 fewer deaths.

That's important progress on the week before as we continue, step by step, and week by week, to bring the incidence of coronavirus down.

In addition, as of today, there have been 6,866,481 tests for coronavirus have now been carried out or posted out in the UK. This includes 93,163 tests carried out or posted out yesterday.

This is the progress, the evidence, the basis, on which we are able to progress along the roadmap, which the Prime Minister set out on 11 May.

We're taking steady steps at each stage and our progress is based on strict conditions, and we're very carefully monitoring the virus.

Thanks to the hard work of the British people, that we've seen the level of the virus brought down substantially.

At the same time, we're watching the impact of every change that we make very closely so that we can monitor the trends and make sure that every step we take is as safe as possible.

On Saturday, we took measures to allow individual prayer at places of worship.

And in order to support the loneliest and most vulnerable in our society we've also allowed single-adult households to form 'support bubbles' with one other household. All those in any support bubble are able to act as if they live in the same household. Including spending time in each others' homes without the requisite social distancing measures applying.

I know these modest steps will provide enormous relief to many people, who have been isolated from their loved ones for weeks on end now.

And today, we're taking further steps to reopen British high streets, to get our economy motoring again, to protect jobs and livelihoods.

We will also allow outdoor attractions to open, where people can stay in their cars, like safari parks and drive-in cinemas.

As we explained back on 11 May, these are modest and careful steps.

But with each step we take, we can monitor their effect on the transmission of Covid -9 in the country, keep the virus under control as we open up step-by-step, and build public confidence in the transition that we're making.

I say that because we can't pretend that the virus has gone away or we've eliminated the virus. We know from the science, as well as international experience, that there is a risk of a second spike if we're not very careful at this moment in time.

So we need to keep up social distancing. We need to keep building up and reinforcing our test and tracing regime. And we need continue our steady progress in repressing the virus as we try to get life back to something like normal.

BEIS and the Treasury are working closely with businesses large and small, right across the country, so that they are able to meet the Covid Secure guidelines before they reopen.

To give you a sense of what that will look like in practice, in local shops as we've already seen with essential retail, you'll see one-way floor markings and signs, you'll see hand sanitising stations, and there will be limits on the number of people in any one shop at any one time. So it's very much a managed process.

Starting today, we've also made it mandatory to wear a face covering when using public transport. And we also advise people to use a face covering in any place where they can't be sure they'll be able to adhere to social distancing guidelines.

At the same time, we continue to incrementally bring more of our children back to school. We started with primary schools, welcoming more children back on 1 June. And today, secondary schools will start to provide some face-to-face time between teachers and students in years 10 and 12.

So that's where we are as of today. And as I said, we'll monitor the effect of these changes very carefully

That's the way we can keep the downward pressure on coronavirus and build up public confidence, so we are in the best position that we possibly can be to take the third step, along our road map, which will happen no earlier than 4 July.

We're sticking to our plan, we're making good progress every week, and we'll only take the necessary next steps when we can be confident it's safe to do so.