

Press release: 1,000 jobs created at new £300 million factory for electric taxis

The Business Secretary Greg Clark and Transport Minister John Hayes welcomed the opening of a new £300 million electric taxi factory today (22 March) that will create 1,000 jobs in the Midlands.

The London Taxi Company factory in Coventry will have the capacity to assemble more than 20,000 vehicles a year.

Built with a £300 million investment from LTC's owner, Geely, the plant will include a new state-of-the-art research, development and assembly facility at Ansty Park, Coventry, to develop the new TX5 model, a zero emissions taxi, and other hybrid technology vehicles.

It has been supported by £16.1 million from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, through the Regional Growth Fund, which was awarded in 2015.

Business and Energy Secretary Greg Clark said:

Our iconic black cabs are famous across the world. The London Taxi Company's impressive new factory and R&D facility showcases the innovation that makes the UK a world leader in the development of new automotive technologies.

Through our ambitious Industrial Strategy, we are committed to building on our strengths and taking advantage of the opportunities the new low carbon economy provides.

The government is committed to improving the country's air quality and creating a low carbon economy, which is already worth over £46 billion.

Today, the Department for Transport is announcing a further £64 million of investment to promote the use of electric taxis.

This money will support 2 schemes:

- A £50 million Plug-in Taxi Grant programme. This will give taxi drivers up to £7,500 off the price of a new vehicle. Taxi drivers who switch to the new electric cabs could also save around £2,800 in fuel costs a year.
- £14 million of investment will deliver new dedicated chargepoints for electric taxis in 10 council areas.

Transport Minister John Hayes said:

This government is committed to improving air quality and reducing pollution in towns and cities, which is essential for people's health and the environment.

This is also great news for the economy as we invest in cutting edge technology and the next generation of transport and engineering professionals by creating thousands of new high-skilled jobs.

The £50 million PITG programme funding is part of the £290 million announced in the Autumn Statement to support electric vehicles, low emission buses and taxis, and alternative fuels.

The introduction of electric taxis could transform air quality in our cities, especially in London, where there are around 23,000 diesel black cabs with a further 15,000 operating across the country.

The £14 million provided by the Department for Transport to fund chargepoint projects for taxis is going to all 10 cities that bid for funding in its recent Taxi Infrastructure competition. These include:

- Birmingham (£2.9 million)
- Coventry (£1.2 million)
- London (£5.2 million)
- Nottingham (£700,000)
- Dundee (£515,000)
- The West Yorkshire Combined Authority (£1.98 million)
- Oxford (£370,000)
- Cambridge (£426,000)
- Wolverhampton (£478,000)
- Slough (£157,000)

These projects are expected to deliver around 400 rapid and 150 fast chargepoints which will enable the take-up of around 23,000 ULEV taxis nationally including supporting existing plug in private hire vehicles.



[Plug in taxi grant and dedicated chargepoints information sheet](#)

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[Climate change boosts deadly smog](#)

Buildings are engulfed by heavy smog in Urumqi. [Photo/Chinanews.com]

Global warming has boosted the frequency and severity of deadly air pollution peaks in northern China, according to a report in the Nature Climate Change journal.

“Climate change increases occurrences of weather conditions conducive to Beijing winter severe haze,” scientists involved in the research said.

In the capital and other major northern cities, the number of days each year with weather tailor-made for extreme smog rose from 45 to 50 in the period 1982-2015 compared to the previous three decades, a 10 percent jump, their study found.

The trend is set to worsen if warming continues unabated.

Persistent episodes of health-wrecking haze would become another 50 percent more frequent – and last nearly twice as long – during the second half of this century, the scientists found.

The main danger, experts agree, is particle pollution, especially toxic, microscopic flecks smaller than 2.5 micrometers in diameter – about 40 times thinner than a human hair.

The burning of coal, along with vehicle emissions and dust, are the main sources of these ultra-fine specks, which can cause severe respiratory problems and increase the risk of heart disease.

Small enough to enter human cells, they can also affect the immune and nervous systems.

In major cities across northern China, the number of days with “severe haze” jumped from 12 to 18 to 25 during the winters of 2014, 2015 and 2016 respectively.

Severe haze days happen when the concentration of small particles exceeds 150 micrograms per cubic meter of air.

In January this year, a thick blanket of haze settled over the Beijing-Tianjin basin – home to more than 100 million people – for eight consecutive days.

For several days running, the density of particles 2.5 micrometers or less was higher than 500 micrograms per cubic meter, more than three times the World Health Organization's danger threshold.

"I would rank air pollution as the No. 1 or No. 2 concern of ordinary people in northern cities in China," said co-author Liao Hong, a researcher at Nanjing University's School of Environmental Science and Engineering.

A report by China's environment ministry last year showed that 265 of the country's 338 biggest cities failed to meet new health standards for small-particle pollution in 2015.

The perfect storm of geographic and weather conditions that favor lung-searing smog include sharp temperature differences between the lower and upper atmosphere, faint winds, and certain patterns of atmospheric flow.

The researchers, led by Cai Wenju of the Qingdao National Laboratory for Marine Science and Technology, combined these elements to create a "haze weather index" that they matched against 60 years of weather records.

Averaging across 15 climate models, they also calculated a sharp increase in the number of smog-inducing days from 2050 to 2100.

"In spite of stringent emission controls, severe haze days in Beijing have continued to increase, as clearly seen over the past three winters," said Zhang Renhe, a researcher at Fudan University. "A global effort to slow down global warming is also urgently needed to decrease the risk of heavy air pollution in Beijing."

Strict compliance of 'Flag Code of India, 2002' and 'The Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971'

The Ministry of Home Affairs has issued an Advisory to the Chief Secretaries/Administrators of all State Governments/UT Administrations,

I&B Minister meets Ethiopian

Communication Affairs Minister

India and Ethiopia have agreed to strengthen the cooperation in critical areas related to communication and outreach. The cooperation would be worked out through a policy and institutional framework in the various domains

Press release: Justice Secretary announces plans to create 5,000 modern prison places

- New builds to create up to 2,000 construction jobs and generate millions of pounds to British economy
- Builds on the government's commitment to create up to 10,000 modern places, aimed at reducing overcrowding and creating the right conditions for reform.

Justice Secretary Elizabeth Truss has today unveiled plans for the building of 4 new prisons in England and Wales – creating 5,000 modern prison places and replacing old and overcrowded establishments with new, fit for purpose buildings.

Sites in Full Sutton in Yorkshire; Hindley in Wigan; Rochester in Kent and Port Talbot in South Wales have been earmarked for development as part of the government's commitment to build up to 10,000 modern prison places by 2020, backed by £1.3 billion to transform the estate.

As well as creating modern establishments fit for the twenty-first century, the proposed new builds will also act as a boost to regional economies across the country – creating up to 2,000 jobs in the construction and manufacturing industries and new opportunities for local businesses.

Final decisions on the new prisons will be subject to planning approvals, as well as value for money and affordability.

Justice Secretary Elizabeth Truss said:

We cannot hope to reduce reoffending until we build prisons that are places of reform where hard work and self-improvement flourish.

Outdated prisons, with dark corridors and cramped conditions, will not help offenders turn their back on crime – nor do they provide our professional and dedicated prison officers with the right tools or environment to do their job effectively.

This significant building programme will not only help create a modern prison estate where wholesale reform can truly take root, but will also provide a thriving, economic lifeline for the local community – creating hundreds of jobs for local people and maximising opportunities for businesses.

Today's announcement comes weeks after the opening of HMP Berwyn – the new, modern prison in north Wales which will hold over 2,000 prisoners. The construction of this new prison has already contributed over £100 million to the local economy and created around 150 jobs and apprenticeships before doors have even opened.

In creating a modern prison estate, old and inefficient prisons will be closed and replaced by the new accommodation. A programme of valuation work will now begin to help inform further decisions about the estate. Announcements on prison closures will be made later in the year.

Today's announcement builds on ambitious reforms to improve safety in prisons, including an additional £100 million to bolster frontline staff by 2,500.

This wholesale, organisational reform will be supported by measures within the Prisons and Court Bill, which will set out a new framework and clear system of accountability for prisons, building on the wide-ranging reforms set out in the Prison Safety and Reform White Paper.

1. We will be applying for outline planning permission for new prisons in Yorkshire, the North West, Kent and South Wales.
2. A Written Ministerial Statement detailing further information will be published at 0930 Wednesday 22 March.