

Press release: Further boost for UK auto sector as PSA confirms new generation of vans to be built in UK

- Business Secretary welcomes announcement during visit to Vauxhall's Luton plant, where next generation Vivaro to be produced from 2019
- move ensures plant's long-term future, with a commitment from the company to invest further in the plant and safeguard 1,400 jobs
- agreement secured in part thanks to £9 million of government funding alongside local support and underlines success of UK's landmark Industrial Strategy Automotive Sector Deal

The UK's world-leading auto sector received a further vote of confidence today (Wednesday 4 April) as PSA announced it will produce the next generation Vauxhall Vivaro at its Luton site from 2019. The announcement is testament to the plant's highly-skilled workforce and will ensure manufacturing remains in the UK for years to come.

Business Secretary Greg Clark welcomed the decision during a visit to the plant in Bedfordshire today alongside PSA group Chief Executive Carlos Tavares, leader of Luton Borough Council Hazel Simmons and Union leaders.

As part of the announcement, Vauxhall has committed to invest further in the plant, supplementing £9 million of government funding to install a new manufacturing platform. The deal has been aided by a range of support from local government, including help with recruitment, skills and efficient energy.

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

Vauxhall's decision to invest in the United Kingdom is testament to the world-renowned expertise of the British automotive industry and workforce.

Through our modern Industrial Strategy, we are investing in the technological developments of tomorrow – ensuring we remain the natural choice for innovative firms to prosper.

The platform will allow the Luton plant to produce the next generation of Vivaro vans, with the aim of increasing existing output from around 70,000 vehicles per year to 100,000. The platform will also optimise manufacturing processes allowing the plant to bid for future vehicle lines as they become available.

Business Secretary Greg Clark said:

Today's decision is a vote of confidence in Vauxhall's high skilled workforce and the UK's world leading automotive sector. This investment in upgrading the production platform will safeguard and grow jobs, ensuring the future of the Luton plant well into the next decade and help ensure the plant is well positioned for future Vauxhall models to be made in the UK.

We have been clear in our commitment to the automotive sector which is why, through the Industrial Strategy, we established a landmark Automotive Sector Deal that will see us working with industry to put the UK at the forefront of new technologies.

Through our ambitious Industrial Strategy the government is building on our existing strengths. Our landmark [Sector Deal](#) in January between government and the automotive industry was a vital moment in establishing the UK's leadership in meeting the Future of Mobility and Clean Growth Grand Challenges. Today's announcement will help secure the jobs of more than 1,400 people in Luton and builds on the firm's strong association with the town for more than a century.

SMMT CEO Mike Hawes said:

This announcement is great news for the UK automotive sector and, especially, the Luton plant. The UK continues to be a centre of excellence for vehicle production thanks to our engineering expertise, high levels of productivity and a collaborative relationship with government which has enabled us to build a robust industrial strategy and a sector deal.

We will continue to work with policy makers to ensure the UK remains as competitive as possible now and in the future so we can continue to build on our long heritage in vehicle manufacturing.

The UK's automotive sector continues to thrive with the UK currently the fourth largest European car producer with the highest productivity among Europe's automotive producing nations. The sector generates £14.6 billion, representing 8.2% of the UK's total manufacturing gross value added. The sector deal lays the framework for further UK investment in our world-class automotive industry such as Toyota's announcement in February that they will build the next generation Auris at their Burnaston plant in Derby.

The UK's Industrial Strategy is a long term plan to build a Britain fit for the future through a stronger, fairer economy. Through this we will help businesses to create better, higher-paying jobs – setting a path for Britain to lead in the high-tech, highly-skilled industries of the future.

Press release: New Charity Investigation: The Islamic Educational Society of Blackburn

The Charity Commission, the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales, has opened a new statutory inquiry into The Islamic Educational Society of Blackburn ([526572](#)). The inquiry was opened on 26 February 2018.

The charity's object is to advance education in the Islamic community of Blackburn. On 15 February 2017 the charity was included in a class inquiry which the Commission opened to examine charities that had repeatedly defaulted on their accounting obligations. The charity submitted the outstanding documents to the Commission in May 2017 and, as a result, ceased to be a part of the class inquiry. However, despite receiving regulatory advice and being reminded to meet their legal duties, the trustees again failed to file the statutory accounting information on time for the financial year ending 31 December 2016.

As a result of the further failure of the trustees to fulfill their legal reporting obligations the Commission has now opened a new inquiry.

In addition to obtaining the overdue accounting information the inquiry will seek to ensure that the trustees comply with their legal duties to file future account submissions within the statutory deadlines and examine broader aspects of the charity's administration and management to ensure it is being properly managed by the trustees.

It is the Commission's policy, after it has concluded an inquiry, to publish a report detailing what issues the inquiry looked at, what actions were undertaken as part of the inquiry and what the outcomes were. [Reports of previous inquiries](#) by the Commission are available on GOV.UK.

Ends

Notes to editors

1. The Charity Commission is the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales. To find out more about our work, see the [about us](#) page on GOV.UK.
 2. Search for charities on our [check charity tool](#).
 3. Section 46 of the Charities Act 2011 gives the commission the power to institute inquiries. The opening of an inquiry gives the commission access to a range of investigative, protective and remedial legal powers.
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[News story: Dr Patrick Vallance takes up his appointment as Government Chief Scientific Adviser](#)

The role of the GCSA is to advise the Prime Minister and government on all matters related to science and technology and to ensure that policies and decisions are informed by the best scientific evidence and strategic long term thinking.

The GCSA is head of the Government Science and Engineering (GSE) profession and Co-chair of the independent [Council for Science and Technology](#) which provides high level advice to the Prime Minister.

Patrick Vallance said:

Harnessing the very best science and technology has never been more important to the UK's economy, future and citizens. Science and technology have a vital role to play at the heart of policy making and I look forward to working with colleagues to ensure the government has the best possible advice, from the best experts, based on the strongest evidence.

It is essential that we have world class scientists and engineers working in government. Excellence can only be delivered by a diverse and inclusive profession. It will be a key priority for me to ensure we go further to improve representation across the profession.

Before joining the Government Office for Science, Patrick Vallance was President, R&D at GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) from 2012. Prior to this, he was Senior Vice President, Medicines Discovery and Development and he joined the company in May 2006 as Head of Drug Discovery.

You can find a full biography for Dr Patrick Vallance at:
www.gov.uk/government/people/patrick-vallance

[Press release: Construction boss banned for moving £1m out of business](#)

to avoid paying debts

Paul Winskill (54) started Premier Asphalt Limited in 1985 and provided construction services for commercial buildings and roadworks across the country.

But the company ran into trading difficulties and after more than 30 years, Premier Asphalt entered into administration on 19 February 2016.

The administrators appointed to close the company reported to the Insolvency Service that the directors of Premier Asphalt had not fully co-operated with them and failed to explain why the company had paid out more than £1m in the two weeks prior to their appointment.

The Insolvency Service's investigation found that prior to entering into administration, a winding up petition was served on Premier Asphalt on 3 February 2016 as a trade creditor was owed more than £300,000.

But to avoid paying his debts, Winskill immediately transferred £1,044,794 to three other businesses, which were later discovered to be operated by Winskill although he wasn't the appointed director.

On 8 February 2018, the Secretary of State accepted a disqualification undertaking from Winskill, after he admitted transferring more than £1 million to the detriment of the company's general body of creditors. His ban is effective from 1 March 2018 and lasts for eight years.

Robert Clarke, Head of Insolvent Investigations North at the Insolvency Service, said:

Following extensive enquiries, we discovered not only had Winksill transferred more than a million pounds out of the company to avoid paying his creditors what they were owed, but the money was moved to other companies which we found that he was also running.

Directors who put their own personal financial interests above those of creditors damage confidence in doing business and are corrosive to the health of the local economy. This ban should serve as a warning to other directors tempted to help themselves first, you have a duty to your creditors and if you neglect this duty you could be investigated by the Insolvency Service and lose the privilege of limited liability trading.

Premier Asphalt Limited (CR0 No. 01922245) was incorporated on 13 June 1985 and latterly traded from Hanson Road Business Park, Hanson Trading Estate, Aintree, Liverpool, L9 7JN.

Mr Winskill had been a director of the company before 13 October 1991 and remained appointed until the company went into Administration on 19 February 2016 with an estimated deficiency of £6,102,275.

On 8 February 2018, the Secretary of State accepted a Disqualification Undertaking from Mr Winskill, effective from 1 March 2018, for a period of 8 years. The matters of unfitness, which Mr Winskill did not dispute in the Disqualification Undertaking, were that:

On 04 and 05 February 2016, at a time when Premier Asphalt Ltd was insolvent, I caused the company to make payments to three associated parties totalling £1,044,794 which were to the detriment of the company's general body of creditors.

A disqualification order has the effect that without specific permission of a court, a person with a disqualification cannot:

- act as a director of a company
- take part, directly or indirectly, in the promotion, formation or management of a company or limited liability partnership
- be a receiver of a company's property

In addition that person cannot act as an insolvency practitioner and there are many other restrictions are placed on disqualified directors by other regulations.

Disqualification undertakings are the administrative equivalent of a disqualification order but do not involve court proceedings. Further information on director disqualifications and restrictions is available.

The Insolvency Service administers the insolvency regime, investigating all compulsory liquidations and individual insolvencies (bankruptcies) through the Official Receiver to establish why they became insolvent. It may also use powers under the Companies Act 1985 to conduct confidential fact-finding investigations into the activities of live limited companies in the UK. In addition, the agency authorises and regulates the insolvency profession, deals with disqualification of directors in corporate failures, assesses and pays statutory entitlement to redundancy payments when an employer cannot or will not pay employees, provides banking and investment services for bankruptcy and liquidation estate funds and advises ministers and other government departments on insolvency law and practice.

Further information about the work of the Insolvency Service, and how to complain about financial misconduct, is [available](#).

Media enquiries for this press release – 020 7674 6910 or 020 7596 6187

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on:

[Speech: Marking the anniversary of the Khan Sheikhoun attack: article by Alistair Burt](#)

A year ago today, in the early hours of the morning, Syrian aircraft dropped bombs on the town of Khan Sheikhoun. The sarin released by this bombing killed approximately one hundred people, including several children. We saw media footage of men, women and children convulsing in agony, some foaming at the mouth, as their bodies were poisoned by nerve gas.

As we know, the Khan Sheikhoun attack was not the first time that the Syrian regime used chemical weapons against its own people. In 2013, after hundreds were killed with sarin in an attack on Eastern Ghouta, Russia promised the world that Syria would abandon all of its chemical weapons. But this promise has not been kept. We can say with certainty, based on the findings of the UN-OPCW Joint Investigative Mechanism, that the regime used chlorine in Idlib: at Talmenes in April 2014 as well as in Sarmin and Qmenas in March 2015. And then the massacre a year ago today in Khan Sheikhoun.

In the five years since chemical weapons were first used in the region, international attempts to halt and bring crimes such as these to account have been consistently undermined and increasingly blocked by Russia. Again and again, they have used their power of veto to defend Assad's brutal regime in the United Nations Security Council. Last November, Russia blocked the renewal of the mandate of the Joint Investigative Mechanism, which the Security Council had set up to ensure those responsible for chemical weapons attacks in Syria were held accountable. Russia's response to Syria's continuing violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention has allowed these abhorrent attacks on the Syrian people to continue.

More broadly, Russia's disdain for the international system has grown ever clearer. Their brazen use of a chemical weapon on UK soil one month ago is a further case of their blatant disregard for the international rules-based system. The poisoning of Sergei and Yulia Skripal with a military grade nerve agent endangered anyone who chanced to be in the vicinity, with more than 130 people potentially exposed to the nerve agent, including a police officer who fell into a critical condition.

Russia has offered no explanation whatsoever as to how their nerve agent came to be used in this manner. Instead, as in Syria, we have seen the outpouring of disinformation designed to confuse and paralyse the international system and prevent the perpetrators of chemical weapons attacks from being held accountable. After Khan Sheikhoun, Russia repeatedly sought to undermine the OPCW – the very organisation set up to put an end to the barbarity of chemical weapons attacks. Russia unilaterally rejected the findings of the

OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism last year confirming Syrian regime use of sarin at Khan Sheikhoun. And on 22 March a senior Russian Foreign Ministry official rejected the idea that Russia would accept OPCW independent conclusions in examining the material from the Salisbury attack; only its own investigation would be acceptable.

Consensus already exists as to the abhorrent nature of chemical weapons. Only 4 states across the globe are not Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention. 192 states have come together to outlaw their usage; these are weapons that have no place in the world today. We must stand together against any attempt to dismantle an integral pillar of the rules based system. This kind of destructive and dangerous behaviour threatens us all.

Events in Khan Sheikhoun and across Syria have seen the world respond in horror. We call on states worldwide to make it clear that Russia should no longer endanger its fellow states recklessly in pursuit of its aims. There should be no more victims of chemical weapons attacks, whether in the warzone of Syria or in a sleepy English town. The rules-based international order and its institutions are too valuable to be put at risk in this way: we must act collectively to protect them and ensure no-one else dies in this most horrific and inhumane way.

Further information