

[Biggest rise in food prices in 3 years from Brexit squeeze](#)

Food prices saw the biggest increase for three years in the year to March, figures from the Office for National Statistics have revealed.

[Green Party calls on Defra to publish 25-year plan for nature](#)



11 April 2017

The Green Party has responded to news that the BBC has seen a leaked copy of Defra's long-anticipated 25-year plan for nature. [1]

Jonathan Bartley, co-leader of the Green Party, said:

"With every day that passes, the need for a new Environmental Protection Act grows. We are in the middle of an air pollution emergency, 2016 was the hottest year on record. Species across the world are in decline, and valuable European environmental protections are threatened by Brexit.

"The need for a coherent plan for nature has never been greater and Defra should publish its 25-year plan immediately so the Government enters Brexit negotiations clear on what needs to be done to protect our environment.

"This is not a time for platitudes or shying away from what needs to happen. We need bold action not empty words. Defra's report should be proposing how we can keep fossil fuels in the ground, make the UK a world leader in renewable energy, ditch diesel and give farmers the real support and help they need to look after their environment." [2]

Notes:

1. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-39557565>

2. More information about Caroline Lucas' call for a new Environmental Protection

Act: <https://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/2017/02/14/report-environment-faces-cocktails-of-threats-from-brexit/>

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[Press release: Over £109 million of funding for driverless and low carbon projects](#)

- £109 million of government investment into cutting-edge automotive research and development (R&D) projects
- seven low carbon vehicle projects set to receive a share of £62 million funding, safeguarding 2,370 jobs
- first winners of connected and autonomous vehicles (CAV2) competition set to receive £31 million

Business Secretary Greg Clark and Transport Minister John Hayes have today (11 April 2017) awarded £109.7 million of government funding, alongside significant funding from industry, to help develop the next generation of driverless and low-carbon vehicles, as part of the Industrial Strategy and the government's Plan for Britain.

Seven innovative projects will share grants from the latest round of funding from the Advanced Propulsion Centre (APC), the joint industry-government programme to put the UK at the forefront of low carbon vehicle technology.

The projects, led by BMW, CNH Industrial, Ford Motor Company, Jaguar Land Rover, Penso Consulting, Westfield Sportscars and Williams Advanced Engineering, cover a wide range of new innovations which will help the UK to continue to build on its excellence and become a global leader in low-emissions technology, and safeguard 2,370 jobs in the UK.

Successful schemes include:

- the development of a high power battery suitable for high-performance vehicles
- a project to address gaps in and strengthen the UK supply chain
- the development of the fuelling system for a concept gas tractor
- technologies to reduce the weight and improve electrification in SUV vehicle platforms

A further 7 projects have won funding from the government's Office for Low Emissions Vehicles (OLEV) to advance the development of a range of ultra-low and zero emissions vehicle technologies in the UK. These projects will be led by Equipmake, Ford Motor Company, Great British Sports Cars, Jaguar Land Rover, Ricardo Innovations, Romax Technology and Wrightbus.

In a fresh commitment to supporting these innovative technologies, the

government is also announcing today that people buying an electric vehicle will continue to benefit from up to £4,500 off the cost of an ultra-low emission car, up to £2,500 off a hybrid and receive £500 towards the installation of a charge point in their home.

Business and Energy Secretary Greg Clark said:

Low carbon and driverless cars are the future and as a Government we are determined through the Industrial Strategy to build on our strengths and put the UK at the forefront of this revolution. Investment in this technology is an integral part of this Government's efforts, to ensure the UK auto sector remains competitive and world-leading.

The projects being awarded funding today will help extend our excellence in these cutting edge research fields, helping to safeguard jobs while ensuring the UK remains the go-to destination for automotive excellence.

Transport Minister John Hayes said:

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

This government is investing £109 million to support British businesses in developing innovative, important technologies which will greatly reduce our emissions footprint.

The number of ultra-low emission vehicles on our roads is at record levels and our renewed support for these exciting technologies is yet another significant milestone.

Ian Constance, Chief Executive of the APC, said:

The APC funding demonstrates the depth of low carbon development that is now possible in the UK. From powertrain, to lightweighting, to energy storage, these new projects will not only lower emissions but secure thousands of jobs, address supply chain gaps, and help the UK become a true global leader in advanced vehicle technology.

The government also announced the first set of winners of the second round of its connected autonomous vehicles competition, CAV2, with projects set to receive a share of up to £31 million, match funded by industry. Twenty-four projects demonstrated clear commercial value and identified technical solutions for CAV technology, including how these vehicles will work within the UK transport system. Further successful projects from this competition

round will be announced soon.

Funding is divided into four streams and ideas include projects using cars and pods platooning, or going in formation, to transport passengers from Stockport train station to Manchester Airport, create vehicles capable of driving in a range of road environments and technology which could make any car operate autonomously.

The CAV2 competition includes funding from the UK's innovation agency, Innovate UK, for four one-year research and development projects supporting CAV vehicle developments, specifically in the areas of energy reduction and air quality improvements. The government will launch its third CAV competition, CAV3, to fund further industry-led research and development projects later in the year.

Innovate UK Chief Executive Ruth McKernan said:

These successful industry-led R&D projects will further spearhead UK development of low emission, and connected and autonomous vehicle technology, building on our world-leading research and innovation capability in this area and the significant strength of UK businesses large and small in this field.

Today's announcements follow the launch of the first phase of government's £100 million CAV test bed programme at the end of March with a competition worth £55 million. In a speech to the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders Connected Conference in London, the Business Secretary outlined plans to create a cluster of excellence in CAV testing along the M40 corridor between Birmingham and London.

The test bed programme forms part of the government's Industrial Strategy commitment to develop world-class CAV testing infrastructure. The programme will use some of the UK's existing CAV testing centres to create a concentrated cluster of testing facilities in the UK's automotive heartland in the West Midlands, including; Coventry, Birmingham, Milton Keynes as well as Oxford and London.

Through the launch of the Industrial Strategy green paper and the Plan for Britain, the government has significantly increased investment in research and development and reaffirmed its commitment to ensuring the UK remains a world-leader in science and innovation ahead of the UK leaving the EU. This year OLEV will be publishing its long term strategy for the UK's transition to zero emission vehicles.

Government support

- APC – 7 projects with support up to £62 million
- CAV2 – 24 projects with support up to £31 million
- OLEV – 7 projects with support up to £16.7 million

Total combined support is £109.7 million subject to due diligence

Further information

The Advanced Propulsion Centre (APC)

www.apcuk.co.uk

The APC is a £1 billion, 10-year programme to position the UK as a global centre of excellence for low carbon powertrain development and production. It was formed in 2013 in a joint commitment by government and the automotive industry, through the Automotive Council, and aims to save 50 million tonnes CO2 by 2023.

APC facilitates partnerships between those who have good ideas and those who can bring them to market. The services provided by the APC enable projects which provide profitable growth and sustainable opportunities for the partners involved. Each programme enhances the UK's position as a propulsion nation and contributes to the country's economic prosperity.

So far, APC has launched and awarded 6 funding competitions to more than 100 organisations, with investment totalling £475 million. The awarded projects have safeguarded more than 14,000 automotive supply chain jobs and saved more than 20 million tonnes CO2.

The activity in this £1 billion project is delivered through a small team working across the UK from a central Hub located at the University of Warwick and regional Spoke locations.

APC projects awarded funding will be led by:

- BMW – South East
- CNH Industrial – East of England
- Ford Motor Company Ltd – East of England
- Jaguar Land Rover – West Midlands
- Penso Consulting Ltd – West Midlands
- Westfield Sportscars Ltd – West Midlands
- Williams Advanced Engineering – South East

Centre for Connected and Autonomous Vehicles (CCAV)

www.gov.uk/government/collections/driverless-vehicles-connected-and-autonomous-technologies

The Centre for Connected and Autonomous Vehicles (CCAV) is a joint unit of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and the Department for Transport. CCAV is a single point of contact for those in industry, academia and internationally set up to keep the UK at the forefront of the development of connected and autonomous vehicle technology. For further information and to stay updated on the latest news and government activity on connected and autonomous vehicles visit www.gov.uk and follow us on twitter at [@ccavgovuk](https://twitter.com/ccavgovuk).

CAV2 projects awarded funding

- HumanDrive
- 5*StarS: Automotive Cyber Security through Assurance
- Smart ADAS Verification and Validation Methodology
- Multi-Car Collision Avoidance
- Self-organising Wide area Autonomous vehicle Real time Marshalling
- CAPRI
- Project Synergy
- Connected Fully Integrated Driver Ecosystem
- Anytime, Anywhere Low Cost Localisation
- Vote3Deep
- Non-Intrusive Vehicle Monitoring System (NiVMS)
- Connected Autonomous Sensing Service Delivery Vehicles
- Using Machine Learning and AI to explore systems for costing and managing Mobility as a Service
- Cambridge Autonomous Bus System Feasibility Study
- Advancing UK Autonomous Vehicle Radar Sensing Technology
- Secure CAN with Q-PUF
- 5G Millimetre-Wave Connectivity to Cars
- Quantum-based secure communication for CAVs
- Project Alloyed
- Requirement Evaluation of CAV Location Performance and Platform Development
- City-Compatible Commercial Automated Ride Sharing
- Real Time NOx calculation in LCV and HGV diesel vehicles using OBD real time engine data
- ESCIPODS
- Autonomous and Connected vehicles for Cleaner Air

The announcement of CAV2 winners builds on the £20 million allocated to projects in the first competition, CAV1, and the further £19 million invested by government in 2016 in three driverless car trials in Greenwich, Bristol, Milton Keynes and Coventry.

[Press release: £50 million for satellite solutions to help developing countries](#)

The Agency's International Partnerships Programme (IPP) is a five-year, £152 million programme, designed to partner UK space expertise with overseas governments and organisations. It is part of the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF), which aims to support cutting-edge research and innovation that addresses the challenges faced by developing countries.

More than £70 million in funding has already been given to projects in partnership with the UK space industry, applying inventive satellite solutions to a range of areas such as deforestation, illegal fishing, marine pollution, disaster recovery, drought and flooding. The latest tranche of funding will focus on issues around health and education.

PDF, 4.72MB, 16 pages

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Universities and Science Minister Jo Johnson said:

“The UK space sector is thriving with innovative developments and technologies that can be used to solve some of the most pressing global challenges of our time.

“The International Partnerships Programme has already harnessed Britain’s world-leading expertise in analysing satellite data to make a real difference to a number of countries. The latest round of funding is exactly the sort of project our Industrial Strategy is looking to support – boosting the UK space sector and delivering benefits to millions around the world.”

Call 2 for funding opens today (11 April 2017) and will close on 5 September 2017. The assessment is due to take place in October 2017 and successful projects will begin by the end of the year.

During the first round of funding, announced in January 2017, 20 projects were selected to provide solutions for local issues in countries across Africa, Asia and Central and South America. All of the projects will have a sustainable impact in the country they are working with, which is a vital element of IPP.

The programme’s current projects include providing communications in remote areas for education in Tanzania, improving maritime safety for small fishing vessels in South Africa and Madagascar and reducing illegal logging in Guatemala.

Projects funded in Call 1 included:

1. Forests 2020: A £23.8 million project led by Ecometrica UK in conjunction with a large consortium of national and international partners to protect and restore forests across the globe.

The Forests 2020 project aims to help protect and restore up to 300 million hectares of tropical forests by improving national forest monitoring systems for the use of governments, universities and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in the 6 partner countries: Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Ghana, Kenya and Indonesia. By using freely available Earth Observation data to address critical gaps in current systems, Forests 2020 will improve partners' capacity to:

- measure forest change
- provide information on the risks and drivers of forest loss (such as forest fires)
- map suitable areas for restoration

It will also build in-country capacity for the international partners by improving digital infrastructure to manage forest data more effectively and establishing a network of Earth Observation Labs.

1. Satellite connectivity for Nigerian healthcare: A £6.1 million project between Inmarsat UK, InStat and the end customer, Nigerian Federal Ministry of Health, to extend health services to remote populations using satellite communications.

This project addresses a key development need for Nigeria by extending the reach of basic medical services into remote areas of the country (84 clinics in 3 states) using a satellite-based system. This will deliver professional training, data collection and disease monitoring in areas which are inaccessible by conventional methods.

It aims to reduce the mortality rate in rural Nigeria by providing access to better health information and training for health workers by:

- providing video-based training to health workers to an agreed government standard
- improving health systems management and governance using an information system application
- improving disease surveillance capabilities

KEZ CALLS ON RUTH DAVIDSON TO END 'RAPE CLAUSE' SILENCE

11 April 2017

Below is Kezia Dugdale's [Daily Record column](#) calling on Ruth Davidson to end her shameful silence on the Tories' disgusting 'rape clause':

“SHE is different to other Tories”.

It's a familiar refrain when people talk about Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson.

But if that really is the case, why hasn't Ruth spoken out against the disgusting 'rape clause' her Westminster colleagues have introduced to the tax credit system?

In a barbaric move that should shame and anger the Scottish Tory leader and every single Conservative MSP, victims of rape now must fill out an eight page form if they have a child conceived through such a sexual assault.

It's a policy that would have caused anger and astonishment if Margaret Thatcher had introduced it in the 1980s. But here in 2017, in an era when the fight for women's rights has made real strides, we have a female Prime Minister content to press ahead with a horrifically cruel and uncaring policy.

Months have passed since SNP MP Alison Thewliss first stunned us all by uncovering the details of the 'rape clause'.

As part of plans to restrict tax credits to families of just two children, the UK Government decided to force women to provide evidence of exceptional circumstances, such as rape, to claim the social security payment for a third child.

So now women who have been raped – possibly by their husbands – but who have perhaps not reported it to the police will have to sign a document saying their child is the product of rape.

Alison has led a powerful campaign against the heartless Tory government on this crucial issue, and has secured cross-party support. I have nothing but praise for her tireless campaigning, and she has and will continue to receive the support of Labour MSPs and MPs in the hope of forcing the Tories into a U-turn.

For Ruth Davidson has been silent on this issue. So today I make a direct plea to her: stand up for rape victims and tell Theresa May she is wrong.

You normally have the sharpest elbows when it comes to getting noticed, so don't remain silent when it comes to standing up to your own party.

Readers of this newspaper know just how keen the Tories are to attack our cherished welfare state.

The Daily Record has exposed time and again just how distressing the Conservative government's social security cuts can be.

The way to ensure that people's reliance on social security reduces is not to penalise the poorest but to ensure that work pays and living standards rise.

Labour is committed to rebalancing the UK's economy so that no one and no community is left behind, which is why Jeremy Corbyn has announced plans for a £10-an-hour minimum wage, which would benefit 430,000 workers in Scotland

alone.

And we must also ensure that everyone claims the social security payments they are entitled to – with over £2 billion presently going unclaimed in Scotland.

The Vow delivered huge new powers for the Scottish Parliament, and an opportunity to radically reshape our country to be a fairer nation, and it's time to see real action on this.