

Councils combine to tackle West Yorkshire's air pollution

West Yorkshire councils are working with local commercial fleet operators in a new scheme to improve air quality on local roads.

The consortium of five councils launched the ECO Stars fleet recognition scheme at Elland Road, Leeds on Tuesday 15 November 2016. ECO Stars is a free, voluntary scheme that provides recognition, guidance and advice on operational best practice to operators of goods vehicles, buses, coaches and commercial vehicle fleets. The scheme is being delivered by transport consultants TRL, on behalf of West Yorkshire's five local authorities.

The first fleet operators to sign up to the West Yorkshire scheme were welcomed to the launch event by Councillor Keith Wakefield, chair of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority Transport Committee. They included council fleets from Bradford, Leeds and Wakefield, Bradford and Leeds Teaching Hospitals, bus operators Arriva, First Group and Transdev and commercial fleet operators the Co-operative Group, JG Pears and DHL. Councillor Wakefield presented the scheme members with certificates recognising their initial star ratings.

Councillor Wakefield commented:

"Our City Region is key to the North's and the nation's success and West Yorkshire Combined Authority and its partners are committed to unlocking the Leeds City Region's full economic potential and make it the low-carbon 'growth engine' for the North.

"ECO Stars work has an important role to play in helping us to achieve our aims, which include a Low Emission Strategy and a Clean Air Zone for Leeds and a modern bus fleet that has a positive impact on health and environment with all vehicles meet at the latest environmental standard.

"We look forward to working with ECO Stars and our transport industry partners to achieve these ambitious targets."

The ECO Stars Fleet Recognition Scheme was originally set up in South Yorkshire, in 2009, when local councils wanted to tackle local air quality issues caused by transport. Seven years later ECO Stars has gone from strength to strength, with 23 schemes in the UK and several more in Europe.

Ann Beddoes, ECO Stars Schemes Manager, from Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, said, "I am delighted that West Yorkshire have joined the ECO Stars network and wish them every success in

their drive to reduce air pollution.

We hope that West Yorkshire's fleet operators will take full advantage of this opportunity to make a difference to their local environment while at the same time improving their bottom line."

More information on ECO Stars can be found at www.ecostars-uk.com.

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Notes for editors

The ECO Stars Fleet Recognition scheme is a free scheme that helps fleet operators improve their efficiency, reduce fuel consumption and emissions and make cost savings.

Originally conceived by councils in South Yorkshire (Barnsley, Doncaster, Sheffield and Rotherham), it has now been adopted by many other council areas in the UK as well as Europe. In total, individual schemes have more than 400 members with over 45,000 vehicles.

ECO Stars is currently managed by specialist transport consultants, TRL Ltd.

<http://www.ecostars-uk.com/>

About TRL

TRL is the global centre for innovation in transport and mobility. It provides world-leading research, technology and software solutions for surface transport modes and related markets of automotive, motorsport, insurance and energy.

Independent from government, industry and academia, TRL helps organisations create global transport systems that are safe, clean, affordable, liveable and efficient. Core areas of expertise include transport safety; vehicle engineering & simulation; investigations & major incident forensics; human factors & behavioural science; intelligent transport systems; infrastructure asset management; and sustainability & climate change.

Established in 1933 within the British Government as the UK's Transport Research Laboratory, TRL was subsequently privatised in 1996. Today, TRL has more than 1,000 clients across 145 countries, driving positive societal and economic benefit worldwide.

More information can be found at www.trl.co.uk

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