

Visit to Millbrook Proving Ground

Date: 23 August 2017

Time: 11am – 2.30pm

Location: Millbrook Proving Ground, Station Lane, Bedford MK45 2JQ

Attendees:

Leonie Cooper AM, Chair, Environment Committee

Caroline Russell AM, Deputy Chair, Environment Committee

Keith Prince AM, Chair, Transport Committee

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM, Deputy Chair, Transport Committee

Secretariat staff, Environment Team Officers and TFL Staff also attended

Meeting:

Phil Stones, Head of Powertrain – Emissions and Fuel Economy

Rob Smettem, Head of External Affairs

Background:

Millbrook Proving Ground is a laboratory and test track facility for motor vehicles, used by the motor industry, regulators and TfL to assess many aspects of vehicle performance, including fuel consumption and emissions of carbon dioxide and of other pollutants (such as oxides of nitrogen and particulate matter) under different conditions. It is also a centre for the design, engineering and development of automotive systems.ⁱ

The visit:

During the visit, the Assembly Members and other attendees heard a briefing about Millbrook and then went on a tour of the labs and test tracks.

During the briefing, the Members heard that Millbrook undertakes emissions, safety, reliability, ride and refinement testing for private automobile companies as well as passenger and freight vehicles. They also had the opportunity to ask questions about concerns over how well emissions testing reflects real on-the-road emissions, and how exit from the European Union may impact regulations and future testing.

Among the labs toured were a chassis dynamometer which uses roller resistance to simulate inertia and air resistance, to enable testing of vehicle performance in controlled conditions in the laboratory. It uses a human driver who follows a set programme of acceleration and deceleration. Exhaust gases are captured and analysed. In one of the labs the Members viewed a bus being tested. A major worldwide standard bus test programme was devised at Millbrook and is based on a real TfL route through central London.

The Members then participated in a tour of the test tracks where they saw vehicles being tested on the road by using a portable lab on board. The tracks include an area with hills, and a track called Belgian pavé which emulates cobbled stone streets. It also has areas with potholes, and areas which test the impact of the tight steering, acceleration and braking typical of urban driving.

ⁱ [Millbrook Group brochure](#)