

## WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

Week ending Friday 10 January

### 2013 sees strong growth in UK new car and commercial vehicle registrations

Figures published by SMMT show that new car and commercial vehicle registrations both posted strong growth in 2013, whilst the bus and coach sector fared less well despite a positive end to the year.

#### **New car registrations**

New car registrations were up 10.8% on 2012 in 2013 reaching 2,264,737 cars registered, exceeding SMMT's 2.25 million forecast for the year. This was the highest annual registration total since 2007 with December showing the 22<sup>nd</sup> consecutive monthly rise in registrations. These figures firmly establish the UK as Europe's second largest car market and the only one to grow consistently throughout 2013. The 2014 market is expected to stabilise with sustainable growth of around 1% over the year.

#### **Commercial vehicle registrations**

Commercial vehicle registrations grew 14.7% in 2013 to 327,291 units producing the best performance in five years. Van registrations rose 13.1% over the year reaching 271,073 units and boosted by 32.5% growth in December. Truck registrations totalled 56,218 units in the year, up 23% as the move to Euro 6 fuelled growth.

#### **Bus and coach registrations**

The bus and coach sector had a tough year in 2013 competing against the Olympics inflated registrations of 2012 and ending the year 4.9% down at 7708 units. However, registrations posted growth for the fifth consecutive month in December, up 55.9% with the purpose-built sector growing 14.7% in the month but remaining down 3.3% over the year so far.

(Source: SMMT)

<http://www.smmt.co.uk/smmt-membership/member-services/market-intelligence/vehicle-data/monthly-automotive-data/>

### Government to consult on reforms to zero hours contracts

Government has launched a consultation outlining proposals to reform the use of zero hours contracts in the UK. Proposals include potentially banning the use of exclusivity clauses in contracts that offer no guarantee of work and new advice and guidance to improve transparency around the use of zero hours contracts for employers and employees. Commenting on the consultation, Business Secretary Vince Cable MP stated: "Our research this summer gave us a much needed insight into both the positive and negative aspects of zero hours contracts. Our consultation will now focus on tackling the key concerns that were raised, such as exclusivity clauses and how to provide workers with more protection. We don't think that people should be tied exclusively to one employer if it unfairly stops them from boosting their income when they are not getting enough work to earn a living. We also want to give employees and employers more guidance and advice on these types of employment contracts. Employers need flexible workforces and people should have the choice in how they work. But this shouldn't be at the expense of fairness and transparency". The consultation will run until 13 March 2014.

(Source: BIS)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ministers-to-consider-outlawing-exclusivity-on-zero-hours-contracts>



## TfL launches consultation on proposed changes to congestion charging scheme

Transport for London (TfL) has launched a consultation asking Londoners for their views on a number of proposed changes to the Congestion Charging scheme. In summary, the proposed changes are:

- Providing the option to pay CC Auto Pay accounts by direct debit
- Enabling discount applications and renewals to be made online
- Increasing the daily Congestion Charge (standard charge £10 to £11.50; If approved by the Mayor, the charge increase will come into effect from 16 June 2014)
- Changing the NHS Reimbursement Scheme to allow refunds for CC Auto Pay payments
- Providing the option for customers to amend the date of a pre-paid charge on the day of travel
- Minor Congestion Charge Scheme Order changes

The 10 week public consultation closes on Friday 14 March 2014. TfL will then prepare a report for the Mayor setting out the comments received during the consultation. The Mayor will then make a decision on whether or not to go ahead with the proposals with or without modifications.

(Source: TfL)

<https://consultations.tfl.gov.uk/roads/cc-changes>



## EEF Executive Survey 2014 published

EEF, the manufacturers association, has published a survey of senior executives which states that Britain's manufacturers are expecting an improved outlook in 2014 which should lead to growth in exports to

emerging markets and a turnaround in investment. The survey of 200 senior executives paints a more positive outlook than the muted picture of 2013, with growth expected in all markets and across all sectors and sizes of companies. Key highlights from the report include:

- Projected manufacturing expansion of 2.7% puts UK top of EU growth league
- Investment in new UK capacity in the pipeline
- Drive into new export markets will continue and a more stable eurozone will help too
- Rising energy costs seen as biggest risk, but global uncertainty is now business as usual
- Actions to improve productivity and increase flexibility will support growth and mitigate risks

Commenting on the report, Terry Scuoler, Chief Executive of EEF stated: "Manufacturers are telling us they expect to make a greater contribution to growth, investment and jobs this year. Innovation, energy and diversifying into new supply chain remain key opportunities but the UK and the eurozone are also looking better. However, global uncertainty and rising energy costs pose significant risks and, the challenge for industry and government this year will be to get industry's investment plans over the line".

(Source: EEF)

[http://www.dodsmonitoring.com/downloads/misc\\_files/EEF060114.pdf](http://www.dodsmonitoring.com/downloads/misc_files/EEF060114.pdf)

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## Week ahead

### Commons Chamber

No relevant activity

### Commons Committees

Tuesday 14 January

Energy and Climate Change Committee (9.45am, room 16) Low carbon innovation

### Westminster Hall

Tuesday 14 January

4.30pm - 5.00pm: Future of manufacturing in the UK (Iain McKenzie, Lab, Inverclyde)

Wednesday 15 January

2.30pm - 4.00pm: Future Government funding for Transport for London and station staffing levels (John McDonnell, Lab, Hayes and Harlington)

### Lords Committees

Thursday 16 January

External Affairs (EU Sub-Committee C) (10.00am, room 1) Transatlantic trade and investment partnership