

WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

Week ending Friday 17 January

Chancellor delivers speech on UK membership of the EU

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne MP, has stated that the UK could be forced to quit the European Union if the organisation does not reform. In a speech addressing the think tank Open Europe and the Fresh Start group of MPs, set up by Conservatives keen for EU reform, Mr Osborne stated that it was essential to protect the collective interests of non-eurozone member states while the rest of the EU forged stronger links and that without such reform, the UK might face a choice between joining the euro or leaving the EU. However, the Chancellor also stated his belief that it is in no-one's interest for Britain to leave the EU and that "withdrawal from a Europe which succeeded in reforming would be bad for Britain. And a country of the size and global reach of Britain leaving would be very bad for the European Union." The Chancellor also highlighted the need for the EU to do more to ensure economic competitiveness with rivals like India and China. Commenting on the Chancellor's speech the CBI stated that Mr Osborne had set out a compelling case for EU competitiveness.

(Source: HM Treasury)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/extracts-from-the-chancellors-speech-on-europe>

Chief Executive and Chair appointed for Advanced Propulsion Centre

Government has announced that Dr. Gerhard Schmidt and Tony Pixton have been appointed as Chair and Chief Executive of the newly formed Advanced Propulsion Centre (APC). Dr. Gerhard Schmidt worked at BMW for 21 years in engine research and development and recently spent many years in the role of Chief Technical Officer at Ford. Tony Pixton brings 35 years of experience in the automotive industry to the role, with previous positions in product development at Ford and Volvo and most recently at Mazda in Japan. Commenting on the announcement, Business Secretary and Co-Chair of the Automotive

Council, Vince Cable stated: "With the right leadership, the new Advanced Propulsion Centre - which this government has funded jointly with industry - will enable businesses to make and test low carbon technologies and position the UK as a leading innovator in engine design. Tony Pixton and Gerhard Schmidt both have extensive experience in the car industry. Their expertise and knowledge of innovation in engine development will be invaluable to the APC." Part of the automotive industrial strategy, the APC will channel £1 billion of investment from government and industry over the next ten years to speed up the development of greener technologies for engines. Widely backed across the sector, including supply chain companies, the centre is expected to secure up to 30,000 jobs currently linked to producing engines and create many more in the supply chain.

(Source: BIS)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/chief-executive-and-chair-appointed-for-1-billion-advanced-propulsion-centre>



Mayor announces new London taxis need to be zero emission capable from 2018

The Mayor of London, Boris Johnson has announced plans that would require all new taxis presented for licensing in the capital to be zero emission capable from 1 January 2018, with the expectation that they will automatically operate in zero emission mode while in areas where the capital's air quality is at its worst such as parts of central London. The plan will be subject to a full public consultation later this year. The

news follows a pledge the Mayor made last year to introduce an Ultra Low Emission Zone in central London by 2020. Since then TfL has been exploring ways to introduce the scheme in 2020 and have focused on the development of options. Further engagement on the options for an Ultra Low Emission Zone will be undertaken this year. To assist taxi drivers and encourage the early adoption of the new greener vehicles before the 2018 deadline, the Mayor and TfL are now exploring a number of supporting measures with the Office of Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) and are in discussion with the Green Investment Bank around financial options to help the capital's transition to zero emission capable taxis. (Source: TfL)

<http://www.tfl.gov.uk/corporate/media/newscentre/29395.aspx>



EU to open up public procurement

Francis Maude, Minister for the Cabinet Office, has announced that the European Parliament has agreed a revised package of EU Procurement Directives, fought for by UK government in Brussels. The EU Procurement Directives provide for transparent, fair and competitive procurement across member states. The agreement forms part of the UK government's push to reform the European Union, making it more competitive, cutting EU red tape and helping UK companies make the most of the EU's single market. Key benefits from the new regulations include helping SMEs by encouraging buyers to break large contracts into smaller lots and capping turnover requirements for businesses. The simpler processes could also save SMEs up to 60% of bidding process costs, according to European Commission estimates. (Source: Cabinet Office)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/eu-to-open-up-public-procurement-following-uk-government-lobbying>

New congestion charge and low emission zone service provider announced

Transport for London (TfL) has announced that Capita Plc has been selected as the service provider for a new Congestion Charging and Low Emission Zone contract. The decision follows a 12-month competitive tendering process. Capita will be responsible for the day-to-day operation of the Congestion Charging and Low Emission schemes from October 2015, when the current contract with IBM expires. Capita will provide the IT, back office systems and customer contract centre for the Congestion Charge and Low Emission Zone schemes. The contract is for five years and includes an option to extend for a further five years. (Source: TfL)

<http://www.tfl.gov.uk/corporate/media/newscentre/29358.aspx>

Week ahead

Commons Chamber

Wednesday 22 January

Transparency of Lobbying, Non-party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Bill: Consideration of Lords amendments

Commons Committees

No relevant activity

Westminster Hall

No relevant activity

Lords Chamber

Tuesday 21 January

Transparency of Lobbying, Non-party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Bill: Third reading

Wednesday 22 January

2.30pm: Oral questions, to ask the government:
- When they will provide a timetable for the switchover of digital radio (Viscount Colville of Culross, CB)

Lords Committees

Thursday 23 January

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