

WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

Week ending Friday 18 January

UK car manufacturing achieves record levels of exports

Figures published by SMMT show that in 2012 total vehicle output increased 8% to 1.58 million units, the highest level since 2008. Volumes sent overseas also increased, exceeding 1.2 million units, reaching record levels. Commenting on the figures, SMMT Chief Executive Paul Everitt stated: "2012 was a very good year for UK car production with record levels of exports and volumes at their highest since 2008. The outlook for 2013 remains positive with demand in many faster growing global markets offsetting the continued weakness in European economies. The £6 billion of investment committed to UK facilities, new model programmes and R&D signals a bright future and many new opportunities for companies in the supply chain. These remain extremely challenging times and it is essential industry and government continue to work together to secure long-term industrial growth." (Source: SMMT)

<http://www.smmt.co.uk/2013/01/uk-car-manufacturing-achieves-all-time-record-exports-in-2012/>

Fourth round of the Regional Growth Fund opens

Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg has announced the opening of a new round of the Regional Growth Fund, calling on businesses across the country to bid for the £350 million fund. The Deputy Prime Minister stated that 180 projects have started as a result of the Regional Growth Fund so far, and that projects from the first three rounds have pledged to create or safeguard a total of 500,000 jobs along with an injection of £13 billion private sector investment into the economy. Selected bidders from round three are currently agreeing terms and conditions for their final offers from the accelerated timetable which was announced in October 2012. This process and deadlines will be matched in round four and all offers will be confirmed within six months. Round four of the Regional Growth Fund will close to applications on 20 March at noon. Commenting on the announcement, Business Secretary Vince Cable stated: "The

additional £350 million for the Regional Growth Fund is a big boost for those parts of the country facing structural problems. The fund has already supported a variety of industries - from motor vehicles to life sciences. This goes hand in hand with our industrial strategy." (Source: gov.uk)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/press-release-more-cash-available-through-the-regional-growth-fund>



Westminster Hall debates West Midlands manufacturing

Gavin Williamson MP hosted a Westminster Hall debate on Manufacturing in the West Midlands on Tuesday 15 January. MPs discussed recent positive investment announcements from the automotive sector in the region, and praised the work of the Automotive Council, but noted that overall employment in manufacturing had declined from 3.6 million people in 1997 to 2.3 million in 2010. MPs noted the importance of building a skilled and qualified workforce to help grow the manufacturing sector, and highlighted the positive impact of Regional Growth Fund investments. Shadow Business Minister, Iain Wright MP put forward views on a modern industrial strategy, stating that it should involve greater collaboration between businesses and government "to identify the sectors in which we have a competitive advantage and the potential for high growth". Mr Wright went on to state that every department in Whitehall should be responsible for business. Business Minister, Michael Fallon MP responded to the debate stating that the West Midlands was "vital not only to UK manufacturing, but to economic growth

in the wider economy”, saying that government was not under any illusions about the scale of the wider challenges facing Britain given the crisis in the eurozone. Mr Fallon went on to note measures provided by government to boost growth in the 2012 Autumn Statement, highlighting the temporary increase in the annual investment allowance and increased funding for the Regional Growth Fund, and concluded his remarks by stating that government was “working hard to encourage and support British manufacturers and to create an environment in which they are free to thrive and compete in a global marketplace”. (Source: Parliament)

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmhansrd/cm130115/halltext/130115h0001.htm#13011547000001>

Jaguar Land Rover announces creation of new jobs and apprenticeship recruitment

Jaguar Land Rover has announced the creation of 800 new jobs at its Solihull site. Commenting on the announcement, Business Secretary Vince Cable, stated: “Jaguar Land Rover’s creation of 800 new jobs in Solihull to support new product development is a welcome boost for the UK automotive industry. With support from the Government’s Regional Growth Fund, it’s a clear demonstration of where the Government working in partnership with the private sector can make a real difference to the UK economy.” Jaguar Land Rover has also announced the launch of a campaign to recruit more than 150 apprentices to join its 2013 training programme. This will include approximately 90 advanced and 60 higher apprenticeships and is now open for applications, closing on 31 January. (Source: SMMT)

<http://www.smmt.co.uk/2013/01/jaguar-land-rover-announces-record-global-sales-and-800-new-jobs-in-the-uk/>

<http://www.smmt.co.uk/2013/01/jaguar-land-rover-recruits-more-than-150-apprentices/>



Week ahead

Commons Chamber

Tuesday 22 January

Adjournment debate: The performance of UKTI

Commons Committees

Monday 21 January

Transport Committee (4:05pm, Wilson room)

Land Transport Security

Lords Committees

No relevant activity

Westminster Hall

No relevant activity