

### SMMT – engine production driven by exports in 2015

Figures released by the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) show that engine production remained steady in 2015, with 2,368,477 units manufactured, down 1.1% on 2014. Overseas demand upholds the market, with 64%, almost two thirds, of engines exported. 152,212 engines were produced in December 2015, down 4.4% on the same period in 2014. Mike Hawes, SMMT Chief Executive, said, “Whilst engine production remains steady in the UK, with figures down just 1% compared to average annual production since 2009, the continued growth of the export market underlines the importance of demand from overseas. Over 1.5 million engines – 64% of total production – were exported in 2015, with the split between petrol and diesel almost equal.”

(Source: [SMMT](#))

### EFRA Select Committee: Oral Evidence session

The Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee will hold its final evidence session on Air quality on Wednesday 3 February at 2.15pm. The Committee concludes its air quality inquiry sessions with oral evidence from Defra and Cabinet Office Ministers charged with delivering policies to tackle air pollution. Key topics include how government links up air quality aims with policies for industry, agriculture and transport, including plans to require Clean Air Zones in some English cities. The Committee will take evidence from:

- Rory Stewart MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Environment and Rural Affairs
- Oliver Letwin MP, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Cabinet Office

(Source: [UK Parliament](#))

### Why Europe matters: UK automotive firms speak out on business benefits

British automotive firms have spoken out about why remaining in Europe matters to their businesses in a series of case studies published by The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT). “Voices on Europe” features six companies from across a broad spectrum of the automotive sector, all driving technological innovation. They range from research and product testing houses to mechanical engineering firms, specialist component manufacturers and bio-fuel companies, with operations across the UK. Each study gives tangible examples of how Britain’s EU membership has helped British business to grow. Mike Hawes, SMMT Chief Executive, said, “Britain’s membership of the EU is critical to the future success of the UK automotive sector in terms of jobs, growth and future investment. Our members have been clear that they consider EU membership to be best for business – and the six companies featured in these case studies provide real examples of not only how it has benefited them, but also its huge value for whole automotive industry and the British economy.”

(Source: [SMMT](#))



## Transport infrastructure skills strategy announced

The Secretary of State for Transport, Patrick McLoughlin, has announced details of the new transport infrastructure skills strategy. The strategy contains recommendations for both government and industry to act on. It outlines skills needed to deliver £61 billion in transport investment up to 2020. The recommendations include:

- delivering on government's ambition for 30,000 new apprenticeships over the next five years
- ensuring the right mix of apprenticeships is on offer for the transport sector
- meet the challenge of new technologies by upskilling the existing workforce
- encouraging greater diversity in the workforce
- promoting transport and engineering as a career of choice

(Source: [DfT](#))

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## Funding announced to put UK at forefront of research

Minister for Universities and Science, Jo Johnson, announced new funding to put the UK at the forefront of international research and inspire the next generation of world-class scientist. These include:

- doubling the [Newton Fund](#) for international research to £150 million per year by 2021, meaning a total investment of £735 million from 2014 to 2021.
- a new government partnership with the Wellcome Trust to deliver the £30 million Inspiring Science Capital Fund. Science centres and attractions across the UK will be able to bid into the fund to refresh and refurbish exhibitions and infrastructure to inspire young people from all backgrounds to engage with science and consider a STEM career.

(Source: [BIS](#))

## Funding to drive green car revolution across UK cities

Four cities have been awarded significant funds to promote green vehicle technology after successfully bidding for a share of a multi-million pot created to support the take-up of plug-in electric cars across the UK. Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin announced the winners of the [Go Ultra Low City Scheme](#). The winning cities will deliver a rollout of cutting edge technology, such as rapid-charging hubs and street lighting that double as charge points, along with a range of innovative proposals that will give plug-in car owners extra local privileges such as access to bus lanes in city centres. Around 25,000 parking spaces will also be opened up for plug-in car owners saving commuters as much as £1,300 a year. The funding has been awarded to cities which have designed schemes that will help encourage thousands of people to consider switching to a plug-in car. These proposals will support the UK's thriving green vehicle sector, improve air quality in urban hotspots and help the government meet its emission cutting targets. The £40 million announcement will also support highly skilled jobs in the automotive industry by encouraging the sale of thousands of extra plug-in cars, many of which will be built and tested in the UK.

(Source: [DfT](#))

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## Week ahead

### Commons Committees

Monday 1 February

- Transport Committee (4.10pm, Grimond Room) – Road Haulage Sector: Skills and workforce planning

Tuesday 2 February

- Business, Innovation and Skills Committee (9:30am, room 6) – Exports and the role of UKTI

Wednesday 3 February

- Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee (2:15pm, room 8) – Air Quality
- Treasury Committee (2:15pm, Wilson room) – Costs and benefits of UK's EU membership

### Commons Chamber

Tuesday 2 February

- Enterprise Bill: Second Reading