

WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

Week ending Friday 15 April

First round of the Regional Growth Fund completed

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills has announced the successful bids under the first round of the Regional Growth Fund (RGF). Round 1 of the RGF will see £450m of public money invested in 50 bids, generating £2.5bn of private investment across England. BIS believes this will create or safeguard 27,000 direct jobs and an additional 100,000 jobs in the supply chain and local economy. BIS has announced the Second Round of the RGF has now opened for new bids for the remaining £1bn of funding. Deadline for applications is 1 July 2011. In addition to projects and packages of projects, Round 2 is open to programme bids that demonstrate a clear over-arching investment strategy for a specific geographical area (like LEPs). If there is any remaining, unallocated funds at the end of Rounds 1 and 2, a third round may be considered. Successful bids include bids from several vehicle manufacturers such as General Motors, Nissan, Bentley and Jaguar Land Rover. (Source: BIS)

www.bis.gov.uk/news/topstories/2011/Apr/regional-growth-fund

Proposed changes to consumer labelling

Consumer Minister Edward Davey has announced new plans on how businesses will provide key information to their customers on how they use and buy goods and services. Within the plans, government has published details on reforming car labelling by supporting work to give consumers clearer information about the costs of running different cars. Government, in a document entitled "Better Choices, Better Deals: Consumers Powering Growth", want to help people get the best deal possible, and make business more dynamic in response. The DfT and the Behavioural Insights Team have been working on car labelling, with the aim of making the cost of running a vehicle much clearer to consumers. DfT has asked the Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership (LowCVP) to bring forward proposals aimed at helping to give consumers

much clearer information on how much it will cost them to run a car. Government believes it could help shift consumers' behaviour and deliver environmental benefits, for example by making it clear what cost savings are achievable when running more fuel efficient vehicles. The DfT will work with the LowCVP on monitoring and evaluating how effective any changes to the label are. Government wants to improve car labelling so consumers have more information about ongoing running costs and understand which cars are energy efficient. Government intends to have this concluded by December 2011 and the Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership will have responsibility over this area. (Source: BIS)

www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/consumer-issues/docs/b/11-749-better-choices-better-deals-consumers-powering-growth.pdf



Low carbon future mapped out for HGV's

A long-term strategy aimed at helping manufacturers of commercial vehicles and construction equipment move to low carbon solutions has been published. The roadmap outlines the drivers and timescales of technology development across the sector from delivery vans to bulldozers. These technologies include hybridisation, more efficient powertrains and alternative fuels. The roadmap is the work of the joint industry/government Automotive Council. It will be a key tool in determining research priorities as well as helping vehicle manufacturers and the supply chain draft long-term business plans. Business Secretary and Co-Chair of the Automotive Council Vince Cable

said: "Work on lowering carbon emissions from cars is well underway. Now we need to look at other parts of the sector and how they can help meet our long term obligations on CO₂ and air quality targets. This roadmap will help companies make the right investment choices as well as promote UK innovation and technology." (Source: Automotive Council) www.automotivecouncil.co.uk/2011/04/low-carbon-future-mapped-out-for-hgvs/

Launch of the new National Careers Service in September 2011

John Hayes, Minister of State for Further Education and Lifelong Learning, has announced the creation of a new National Careers Service. On 4 November 2010, the minister said that there would be an all-age careers service in England by April 2012, with new arrangements for careers guidance accessible from September 2011. The main features of the new National Careers Service are jointly split with the Department for Education. BIS will be responsible for funding of online and helpline service for adults and from September 2011, these will be linked to similar services for young people meaning there will be a single point of access for all users of each service. BIS will also continue to fund a network of public, private and voluntary sector organisations to provide face to face careers guidance to adults. Subject to passage of the Education Bill, from September 2012 schools will be under a legal duty to make sure their pupils have access to independent, impartial careers guidance. Schools will be free to make arrangements for careers guidance that best suit the needs of their pupils, engaging, where appropriate, in partnership with external, expert providers. To ensure the quality of careers guidance, BIS is working – with the support of the careers professional associations – to establish a standard, which will assure users that providers of careers guidance are delivering a high quality service. The BIS budget for information, advice and guidance services in 2012-13 is £84.4 million. This figure is subject to final confirmation when budgets for 2012-13 are agreed across BIS.

www.bis.gov.uk/news/speeches/john-hayes-national-careers-service-for-england



Week ahead

House of Commons

Easter recess – House returns on Tuesday 26 April

House of Lords

Easter recess – House returns on Tuesday 26 April