

WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

Week ending Friday 6 May

More discounts for operators of vehicles affected by new LEZ standards

The Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, has announced that more major vehicle manufacturers have signed up to offer significant discounts for drivers of vehicles set to be affected by changes to the Low Emission Zone (LEZ) next year. This will enable further owners of larger vans and minibuses to avoid daily charges when changes to the LEZ come into effect in January 2012. 80% of vehicles affected by the LEZ for the first time in 2012 are vans and the deals in some cases amount to thousands of pounds off a new vehicle. Around 75,000 owners of HGVs buses and coaches will have to take action to meet tighter LEZ standards in January next year. HGVs, buses and coaches that are already affected by the LEZ will have to meet higher emissions standards in order to drive free of charge. The changes will broadly double the impact of earlier phases of the LEZ in reducing PM10 pollution. Whilst the new standards will quadruple the number of vehicles impacted by the LEZ, most vehicles driving in London already meet the new standards. In addition to buying a new vehicle, affected operators have a range of other options available to them, including buying a newer second hand vehicle or fitting an approved filter instead. The LEZ changes form part of a package of long-term sustainable measures to tackle pollution, including investment into 300 hybrid buses by the end of 2012, introducing a zero-polluting hydrogen bus route and supporting the uptake of electric and other low-emission vehicles. (Source: TFL)

www.tfl.gov.uk/corporate/media/newscentre/19936.aspx

Government publishes guidance for Agency Workers Regulations

Government has published guidance to assist employers and the recruitment sector prepare for the introduction of the Agency Workers Regulations. The

guidance, which has been produced in partnership with a wide range of businesses, trade unions and recruitment agency representatives, aims to help hirers and agencies understand the requirements of the Regulations. Additional guidance for agency workers will be published by government in due course. The Regulations implement the EU Agency Workers Directive as agreed in 2008 following social partner agreement between the CBI and TUC. These will come into force in the UK on 1 October 2011. They will give agency workers the right to the same basic employment and working conditions as if they had been recruited directly by the hirer - if and when they complete a 12 week qualifying period in a job. (Source: BIS)

nds.coi.gov.uk/content/Detail.aspx?ReleaseID=419366&NewsAreaID=2



New car registrations ahead of expectations despite challenging conditions

New car registration figures have been released by SMMT for April 2011. In April, the new car market fell by 7.4% to 137,746 units. New car registrations in April demonstrated continued stability in the marketplace, with demand remaining lower than in 2010, although slightly ahead of industry expectations. This was the 10th successive decline in volumes. The market was 1.5% ahead of forecast and on par with the 2010 market with scrappage volumes removed. Registrations over the first four months of 2011 were down 8.5% to 696,082 units. Despite economic and

supply chain uncertainty, SMMT's full year forecast remains at 1.93 million units. Fleet demand remains robust, up 6.5% in April, while diesel volumes also recorded strong growth. Diesel cars represented 52.7% of the total market in April and have shown year-on-year growth in every month of 2011. Alternatively fuelled car registrations rose by 48.1% in April. (Source: SMMT) www.smmt.co.uk/2011/05/new-car-registrations-ahead-of-expectations-despite-challenging-conditions/

Public go to the polls across the UK

On Thursday 4 May, a change in the voting system, the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish Assemblies and more than 9,300 council seats in 279 town halls across England were being decided upon. The Alternative Vote referendum asked the UK public if they want to keep the first-past-the-post system for Westminster election or switch to the alternative vote system where candidates would be listed in order of preference as opposed to a single vote being cast. Contests also took place to elect mayors in Leicester, Mansfield, Middlesbrough, Torbay and Bedford. Local election results are expected throughout the day on Friday 6 May and AV referendum results are expected late evening from 8pm onwards. Early results on the morning of 6 May indicate a static results for the Conservatives, reasonable Labour gains across England and Wales, SNP gains across Scotland with the possibility of forming a majority administration for the first time and Liberal Democrat losses in many northern England cities. (Source: BBC) www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-13284737

Second meeting of Cable's Entrepreneurs' Forum

Business Secretary Vince Cable has chaired the second meeting of his Entrepreneurs' Forum, a group which provides informal and personal advice on new business and enterprise policies. The forum is part of government's agenda to engage with business people to hear their views on boosting enterprise and promoting growth across the economy. Up to 17 entrepreneurs sit on each meeting of the forum and they were drawn together on the basis of experience they can bring to the development of enterprise policy. Following the first meeting of the forum in January, Action Groups have been established to look at three key areas for enterprise: ease of starting up; access to

finance; and employment regulation. At the second meeting, the outcomes from the Action Groups were discussed and practical steps and activities agreed ahead of the third meeting of the forum in September. Business Secretary Vince Cable said: "I greatly value the advice I receive from the members my Entrepreneurs' Forum, and our first meeting in January was extremely positive. I am now keen that we build on the enthusiasm and knowledge of the group to make a real difference to enterprise and growth in this country." (Source: BIS) nds.coi.gov.uk/content/detail.aspx?NewsAreaId=2&ReleaseId=419332&SubjectId=2

Week ahead

House of Commons

Tuesday 10 May
2.30pm Oral Questions
HM Treasury, including Topical Questions

Westminster Hall Debate

Tuesday 10 May
11am - 12.30pm Government policy on ultra low carbon emission vehicles - Andrew Selous, (South West Bedfordshire)

House of Commons Select Committee

Tuesday 10 May
10.30am Business, Innovation and Skills
Subject: The future of higher education
Witness(es): Higher Education Funding Council for England, Fair Access, and Universities and Colleges Admissions Service; Higher Education Policy Institute (at 11.45am)
Location: Committee Room 16, Palace of Westminster

Wednesday 11 May
9.30am Education
Subject: 16–19 participation in education and training
Witness(es): (at 9.30am) Deborah Roseveare, Directorate for Education, OECD; and Professor Lorna Unwin, Professor of Vocational Education, Institute of Education. (at 10.30am) National Apprenticeship Service; Laing O'Rourke; Kwik Fit; Humberside Engineering Training Association; and SEMTA
Location: Committee Room 16, Palace of Westminster

House of Lords

No relevant activity