

## WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

Week ending Friday 25 May

### Government announces new plans to reform strategic road network

Justine Greening MP, Secretary of State for Transport, has set out the first steps in government's programme for reforming the strategic road network, in a response to Alan Cook's independent review, published in November 2011. The programme aims to increase the quality and efficiency of the national network, offering a better service to motorists and business users. Central to the plan will be a 20 year strategy for the national road network and new performance targets for the Highways Agency to deliver against. The performance specification and the strategy will be published for consultation towards the end of this year. In addition, the Department for Transport has published the terms of reference for a feasibility study to look at innovative ways of attracting private sector involvement in the road network. The study will examine how these options would be financed and how they interact with existing motoring taxation, but will not consider road pricing. It will also determine the role of tolling in the provision of new infrastructure, but it will not consider tolling existing capacity. The study will provide a report to the Prime Minister in autumn 2012. (Source: DFT) <http://assets.dft.gov.uk/publications/roads-reform/government-response-cook-review.pdf>

### Government publishes draft Energy Bill and Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Bill

Government has published a draft Energy Bill and the Enterprise & Regulatory Reform Bill, outlined in the Queen's speech. The draft Energy Bill has been presented to the House of Commons Energy and Climate Change Select Committee, which will hold an inquiry into the draft Bill. Key measures outlined in the draft Bill include putting forward government's policy on Electricity Market Reform as well as establishing an energy focused Strategy Policy Statement, making the Office for Nuclear Regulation a statutory body and

provisions to enable the sale of the Government Pipeline and Storage System. The Enterprise & Regulatory Reform bill looks to:

- Create a single Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) by bringing together the Competition Commission (CC) and the competition functions of the Office of Fair Trading (OFT).
- Provide powers for the Green Investment Bank to operate, including funding and ensuring its operational independence from government.
- Provide measures around workplace dispute resolution
- Put forward measures following a review on directors' pay
- Extend the Primary Authority scheme to more businesses for access to reliable and robust advice.
- Bring forward a number of pieces of legislation for repeal (Source: Parliament.co.uk)

<http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm83/8362/8362.pdf>  
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/2012-2013/0007/13007.pdf>



### DECC introduces new FITs regulations

The Department of Energy and Climate Change has introduced regulations regarding the Feed-in Tariffs (FITs) scheme, following consultation with industry and consumers. The changes will come into effect from 1 August 2012 and include: tariffs for Solar PV installations to be reduced from 1 August; multi installation tariff increased to 90% of standard tariff;

reduction in tariffs over time in line with uptake of FITs scheme; an increase in export tariff from 3.2p to 4.5p/kWh; RPI index-linking of generation tariffs to be retained; scheme lifetime reduced from 25 to 20 years for new solar installations; and tariffs for installations which do not meet the energy efficiency requirements will mirror the tariffs for standalone installations. Government has also announced the launch of a solar PV cost reduction taskforce in partnership with industry to help drive down costs down faster while maintaining safety and standards. (Source: DECC) [http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/news/pn12\\_066/pn12\\_066.aspx](http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/news/pn12_066/pn12_066.aspx)

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## Historic vehicles to be exempted from the MOT test

Mike Penning MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport, has announced government's plan to exempt all vehicles of historic interest (vehicles manufactured prior to 1 January 1960) from the statutory MOT test, from 18 November 2012. The decision follows on from government's consultation into the issue earlier this year, and is aimed at reducing costs for owners of such cars. Announcing the plan, Mr Penning stated: "We are committed to cutting out red tape which costs motorists money without providing significant overall benefits. Owners of classic vehicles will still be legally required to ensure that they are safe and in a proper condition to be on the road but scrapping the MOT test for these vehicles will save motorists money". (Source: DFT) <http://www.dft.gov.uk/news/statements/penning-20120521a/>



## Week ahead

### House of Commons

The House of Commons is in recess and will return on Monday 11 June

### Lords Chamber

No relevant activity