

WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

Week ending Friday 27 June

New fund to encourage plug-in car use announced

Transport Minister Baroness Kramer has announced the next phase of support for plug-in car drivers to recharge their vehicles at home. In February 2013 the Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) launched a £13.5 million grant scheme subsidising householders wishing to install technology to recharge ultra low emission vehicles (ULEVs) at home. Government is working closely with industry to ensure the UK is a world leader in the sector, with almost £1 billion committed to its development and incentives to encourage uptake. The original funding for domestic charge points has now been fully allocated, and in order to ensure continued support for both consumers and the industry, a new grant scheme is to be put in place. The new scheme will see £9 million made available to:

- Any ULEV owner, and also drivers with regular access to one for work, to have a charge point installed at their home.
- Provide up to 75% of the total cost of the charge point and installation, up to a maximum of £900.

The new domestic charge point scheme will come into effect on 1 September 2014 and will run until 31 March 2015, or until the scheme budget has been exhausted. The previous grant scheme will expire on 30 June 2014; however interim arrangements will be put in place from 1 July until 31 August 2014 to facilitate existing installation orders. These interim arrangements will run along broadly similar lines to the existing scheme.

(Source: DfT)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-funding-to-encourage-plug-in-car-use>



£24 million Government tooling fund announced

Business Minister Michael Fallon has announced a new £24 million government fund to help component manufacturers design, develop and manufacture new tooling. Speaking at the SMMT's Meet the Buyer event in London, the Minister announced that the scheme is open to manufacturing companies seeking a loan of £50,000 to £1 million, although funding requests in excess of this will be considered. Applicants for funding for the manufacturer of tooling will need to show the following:

- That they have had difficulty in securing the required level of funding for the manufacture of tooling.
- That the final manufacture of the tooling and component will be located in England.
- That new jobs will be created and/or safeguarded by the toolmaker and component manufacturer.
- That a firm order for the tooling will originate from an original equipment manufacturer, a tier 1 supplier or from further along the supply chain with payment due upon satisfactory completion of the tooling.

Business Minister Michael Fallon said "This fund is a practical example of how we are working in partnership with industry to break down barriers to growth." The fund is now open for Expressions of Interest.

(Source: SMMT)

<http://www.smmt.co.uk/2014/06/new-government-fund-breaks-barrier-auto-supplier-growth/>

Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Bill introduced to Parliament

The Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Bill has been introduced to Parliament. The Bill aims to remove barriers to growth for small firms, to strengthen the foundations for a sustainable recovery, and to create jobs. Some of the key measures within the Bill include:

- Improving access to finance through increasing the availability and sources of investment for small businesses.
- Cutting red tape by ensuring regulations affecting business are reviewed frequently and remain effective.
- Enhancing the reputation of the UK as a trusted and fair place to do business by increasing transparency around who owns and controls UK companies; and helping deter and sanction those who hide their interest in UK companies to facilitate illegal activities or who otherwise fall short of expected standards of behaviour.
- Deterring employers from breaking National Minimum Wage legislation.
- Assisting small business expansion overseas by increasing the support available from UK Export Finance and widening its powers.
- Improving companies' payment practices.
- Providing new and improved information on learning outcomes by tracking students through education into the labour market.

The Bill also introduces measure to tackle the abuse of individuals on zero hours contracts, by bringing in a ban on the use of the exclusivity clause, ensuring employees are no longer tied down to one employer. Following on from the introduction of the Bill into Parliament, the British Business Bank and ICAEW have jointly published a new Business Finance Guide, which sets out the wide variety of sources of finance available to companies. Commenting on the new, free, guide, Business Secretary Vince Cable said, "Over two-thirds of small and medium sized firms only go to one finance provider, so it's important businesses know about the huge variety of options open to them."

(Source: BIS)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/small-businesses-at-the-heart-of-the-legislative-agenda>

Chancellor visits McLaren to support STEM

The Rt Hon George Osborne MP, Chancellor of the Exchequer, has visited the McLaren Technology Centre to support their involvement with the government's 'Your Life' initiative – a campaign aimed at boosting participation in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM). McLaren joins a list of other automotive companies such as BMW, Ford, Jaguar Land Rover, Nissan and Rolls Royce in supporting the project, hoping to boost the perception of science and engineering amongst young people. George Osborne said, "The Your Life campaign is part

of a long-term economic plan to support our high growth sectors across science, technology and engineering, by bringing together some of Britain's best businesses, institutions and government." Over 180 leading businesses and institutions have now signed up to the campaign, and have all pledged to highlight the career opportunities open to those studying STEM subjects, through creating entry level job opportunities and extending their outreach programmes.

(Source: HMT)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/mclaren-joins-the-drive-to-boost-participation-in-stem-subjects>



Week ahead

Houses of Parliament

Tuesday 1 July

10:00am Treasury Committee: SME Lending – Thatcher Room

10:30am House of Lords Science and Technology

Select Committee: 2025: Priorities for scientific research - Committee Room 4, Palace of Westminster

11:00am: Improving skills and training facilities in small cities and towns – Westminster Hall

3:30pm Business, Innovation and Skills Select Committee: Business-University Collaboration –

University of Warwick

Wednesday 2 July

11:30am: APPG on Engineering (AGM) – Room S, PCH

Thursday 3 July

11am House of Lords Debate: Strengthening the UK's manufacturing sector – Main Chamber