

WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

Week ending Friday 17 July

London Assembly Environment Committee Report published

The London Assembly Environment Committee published its [report](#) on reducing diesel emissions. The report – “Driving away from diesel: Reducing air pollution from diesel vehicles” – examines London’s efforts to reduce pollution from diesel cars, lorries, buses and taxis, and makes recommendations to ensure NO2 compliance in London. Responding to the report, SMMT stated: “SMMT are pleased the London Assembly Environment Committee recognises the huge strides made by the automotive industry in reducing vehicle emissions. Modern diesels virtually eliminate particulate matter, while the latest Euro-6 vehicles also deliver significant NOx savings. In fact, real world TfL tests using the London 159 Bus Route show a 95% reduction in NOx from Euro-6 vehicles over their older counterparts. That’s an extraordinary achievement, and industry welcomes new testing for Euro-6 passenger cars in 2017 that better reflects the infinite variations of real world driving conditions. The London ULEZ will play a key role in driving the market for these advanced, low emission vehicles, and crucially the 2020 deadline gives consumers and businesses time to adapt. Industry is doing its job by developing the cleanest vehicles in history, and now policy makers must do their bit by encouraging their uptake, and by tackling congestion to keep them moving”. This week, the Mayor of London has also published a report, produced by Kings College London, which shows that nearly half the health impacts from NO2 are caused by air pollution outside London such as diesel fumes and industrial emissions transported from the Continent.

(Source: SMMT)

PM sets out plans to tackle gender pay gap

Government has taken forward plans to force large firms to disclose data on the gender pay gap among staff. [A consultation](#) on the measure - introduced in the final months of the coalition – was published this

week. David Cameron said the move would “pressure” firms into boosting women’s wages, as he vows to eliminate the gender pay gap “within a generation”. In November last year, Office for National Statistics figures suggested that the gender pay gap was at its narrowest since comparative records began in 1997. The difference was 9.4% in April compared with 10% a year earlier. The coalition legislated in the last Parliament to require firms with more than 250 employees to publish the average pay of male and female employees - with the measures to be introduced in 12 months. The consultation will look at the detail of how the new gender pay gap regulations will be designed - including what, where and when information will be published.

(Source: BBC)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-33515629>



Liberal Democrats: Tim Farron elected as leader

Tim Farron was elected as the new leader of the Liberal Democrats this week, following Nick Clegg’s resignation after the General Election in May. Mr Farron gained 56% of the votes, comfortably beating Norman Lamb, his rival for the position. Tim Farron joined the Liberal Party aged 16 and stood for Parliament four times before being elected in 2005. He did not serve in the coalition and was party president between 2011 and 2014.

(Source: Liberal Democrats)

<http://www.libdems.org.uk/tim-farron-elected-leader-liberal-democrats>

CBI Labour Market Update – July 2015

Marking a departure from the recent trend, data published this week by the CBI shows that employment has fallen for the first time in two years. There were 67,000 fewer people in work in the three months to May compared to the previous quarter. However, employment has broadly been rising since mid-2013, increasing by 265,000 in the last year alone. The fall in employment was driven by a decline in the number of people working for themselves, rather than for an employer. Self-employment fell by 55,000 in the three months to May compared to the previous quarter. Over the same time period, the number of people working for a business remained broadly unchanged (+5,000).

(Source: CBI)

<http://news.cbi.org.uk/cbi-prod/assets/File/July%20Labour%20Market%20Update.pdf>

Government strengthens strike laws

Government introduced a Trade Unions Bill which seeks to strengthen strike laws, ensuring the right to strike is balanced with the right of people to be able to carry out their daily lives and work. Under the current situation, a small minority of trade union members can cause fundamental disruption. The Trade Union Bill will address this imbalance by introducing:

- a 50% threshold for ballot turn-out
- an additional threshold of 40% of support to take industrial action from all members eligible to vote in the key health, education, fire, transport, border security and nuclear decommissioning sectors – including the Border Force

Government has stated that this should ensure strikes are the result of a clear and positive democratic mandate from union members.

(Source: BIS)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-legislation-to-make-strike-laws-fair-for-working-people>

Week ahead

Tuesday 21 July

Commons Chamber

- Finance Bill, second reading

Westminster Hall

- 4:30 – 5:30pm: UK's relation with the Euro area and further Euro integration

Commons Committees

- Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee (9:30am and 2:00pm, room 5) – EU Referendum Bill
- Energy and Climate Change Committee (11:00am) – DECC Priorities 2015
- Treasury Committee (2.13pm, Thatcher room) – Summer Budget 2015

Wednesday 22 July

Lords Chamber

- European Union Bill
- Debate on the report from the EU Committee on the proposal to establish provisional measures in the area of international protection for the benefit of Italy and Greece

Thursday 23 July

The House of Commons and House of Lords are on summer recess until 7 September