

WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

Week ending Friday 6 September

Government unveils Ultra-low emission vehicle strategy

Transport Minister, Norman Baker MP, has launched 'Driving the Future Today', government's strategy on ultra-low emission vehicles. Running from 2015 until 2020, the Strategy is constructed of four pillars, which involve making ULEVs easier to buy, supporting necessary infrastructure, putting the right regulatory and fiscal structure in place, and boosting the ULEV supply chain. Key commitments in the strategy include:

- A call for evidence to be launched in due course to inform the development and spending priorities for the £500 million package of support for ULEVs from 2015-2020.
- Reconfirmation of plug-in vehicle grants to remain unchanged until May 2015 and a commitment that consumer incentives will remain in place beyond this date.
- An update to the update the Government Buying Standard for Transport by summer 2014 to encourage higher ULEV uptake in the public sector.
- Exploring options for government funding for hydrogen refuelling stations
- Maintaining a strong, clear and lasting set of tax incentives for ULEVs until at least 2020 and committing to involving industry partners in the process for subsequent development of the tax regime.
- Working through the Automotive Council to identify specific opportunities for the ULEV supply chain in the UK and discuss with industry how to best target ULEV R&D funding out until 2020.

Commenting on the announcement, Norman Baker MP stated: "These are exciting times for the motoring industry as ultra low emission vehicles are the future for road travel. Our vision is that by 2050 almost every car and van will be an ultra low emission vehicle with the UK at the forefront of their design, development and manufacture. This strategy moves us up a gear in pursuing that vision."

(Source: OLEV/DfT)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-drives-forward-plug-in-car-revolution>

Registrations for new cars, commercial vehicles and bus and coach up in August

Figures published by SMMT show that in August new car registrations registered their eighteenth consecutive month of growth, up 10.9% to 65,937 units. This was the fifth successive month of double-digit growth pushing the year-to-date market up 10.4% to 1,391,788 units. The commercial vehicle market also grew in August, up 14.8% at 13,451 units, however, year-to-date volumes were still down on 2012, at 190,159 units (-7%). The bus and coach market was also down on the year-to-date at 4852 units (-16.9%) but posted strong growth in August, up 56.9% to 488 units. (Source: SMMT)

<https://www.smmt.co.uk/members-lounge/member-services/market-intelligence/vehicle-data/monthly-automotive-data/>

BIS announces details of 2013 See Inside Manufacturing scheme

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills has announced its latest See Inside Manufacturing (SIM) scheme, which will give young people the chance to experience the manufacturing industry at first hand, in a programme that runs throughout October. SIM, which was first trialled with the automotive industry in 2011, gives companies the chance to open their doors to young people and give them a taste of modern manufacturing, as well as providing a valuable insight into future career opportunities in the industry. While aerospace and food & drink have since joined automotive in taking part in SIM, this year will see seven new sectors added to the tally of participants. These new sectors include nuclear, oil & gas, offshore wind, construction, life sciences, electronics and chemicals. (Source: BIS)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/more-manufacturers-open-doors-to-young-people>

Plans to improve cycling safety in London announced

Transport Minister, Stephen Hammond, London Mayor, Boris Johnson, and London's Transport Commissioner, Sir Peter Hendy CBE, have announced a series of measures to improve cycle safety in London. Measures include:

- DfT and TfL to establish new Industrial HGV Task Force to take direct action against dangerous HGV drivers, vehicles and operators.
- DfT to review exemptions to current HGV regulations.
- Call for European Union to speed up its review on the design of HGVs to increase drivers' visibility of vulnerable road users.
- DfT and the Driving Standards Agency issuing a call for evidence about how driver training could change.
- The Mayor is also asking Londoners for their views on whether he should use his powers to levy a substantial "safer lorry charge" on any HGV which is not fitted with basic safety equipment to protect cyclists.

(Source: DfT)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/dft-and-mayor-announce-plans-to-tackle-hgv-safety-and-support-londons-cycling-revolution>

Businesses urged to prepare bids for Regional Growth Fund Round 5

The Deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg MP, has announced that the fifth round of the Regional Growth Fund will formally open in October and has encouraged businesses to begin preparing bids. Round 5 will be focused entirely on private enterprise proposals, for high quality projects that can generate significant private sector investment and create sustainable jobs. Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) will be able to support their local economies by bidding into the Single Local Growth Fund, as announced by the Treasury in June this year. The fund will be looking for high quality bids for Round 5 so that it can continue to support a variety of projects, industries and local areas to boost economic growth and create jobs. Application forms for Round 5 will be available in early October and businesses will have until the closing date of 9 December to submit their bids. Any companies who will not be ready to apply for Round 5 will be able to apply for Round 6 which will be launched in the summer of 2014.

(Source: BIS)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/deputy-prime-minister-urges-business-to-prepare-bids-for-regional-growth-fund-round-five>



DfT Clean Bus Fund awarded

Eleven local authorities have been awarded grants from the Department for Transport's (DfT) £5 million Clean Bus Technology Fund, announced earlier this year. The funding will allow almost 400 buses to be upgraded, reducing pollution in towns and cities across England. More than 30 local authorities applied for the grants, and their bids were assessed under a number of criteria including impact on air quality, value for money, deliverability and ability to develop the retrofit industry. Winning schemes include a mix of proven technologies, such as Selective Catalytic Reduction and new technologies, like hybrid flywheel. (Source: DfT) <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/5-million-boost-to-cut-pollution-from-local-buses>

Week ahead

Commons Chamber

Monday 9 September

Transparency of Lobbying, Non-Party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Bill: Committee (day 1 of 3)

Commons Committees

Monday 9 September

Science & Technology Committee (4:15pm, room 15)
Climate: Public understanding and policy implications

Westminster Hall

Thursday 12 September

Backbench business debate on UK Trade & Investment: 1:30pm – 4:30pm

The House of Lords is on recess until 8 October..