

WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

Week ending Friday 9 September

New car, van, and truck registrations show positive growth in August

Figures published by SMMT show new car registrations increasing for the first time since July 2010, halting 13 months of decline, whilst van and truck demand remains strong, with registrations up 22.8% in August, and up 22% on the year-to-date. The new car market rose by 7.3% in August to 59,346 units, however registrations from January to August were still down 6.1% on 2010 figures. Paul Everitt, SMMT Chief Executive stated: "August represents a relatively small share of the new car market and the September new 61-plate registrations will be far more important for vehicle manufacturers and franchised dealers. The September new car market is always important for the UK motor industry, accounting for around 17% of the full year's registrations". (Source: SMMT)

<http://www.smmt.co.uk/2011/09/august-new-car-market-rises-for-first-time-in-over-a-year/>

<http://www.smmt.co.uk/2011/09/august-up-22-8-as-strong-van-and-truck-demand-continues/>

TSB and BIS to invest £10 million in low carbon vehicle technologies

The Technology Strategy Board (TSB) and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) have announced plans to invest £10 million in grants to projects that focus on achieving significant cuts in CO₂ emissions for vehicle-centric technologies in low carbon vehicles. Ultra lightweight engine designs, advanced battery management systems and the next generation of electric motors are among three of the sixteen collaborative research and development projects that will be funded, with the aim of on achieving significant cuts in CO₂ emissions for vehicle-centric technologies in low carbon vehicles. Commenting on the announcement, Mark Prisk, Minister for Business and Enterprise, stated: "This new government investment is part of our strategy to

put the UK at the forefront of low carbon vehicle technology and is another step for the UK towards a low carbon economy. Developing such highly innovative strategic technologies is vital if we are to mass produce low carbon vehicles in the UK and make this country a more attractive location for sustained investment by global vehicle manufacturers and suppliers". (Source: TSB)

<http://www.innovateuk.org/content/press-release/development-of-new-technologies-will-cut-vehicle-c.ashx>

Government outlines new measures to cut apprenticeship red tape

Government has announced a new package of measures aimed at making it easier for employers to take on large numbers of apprentices. Changes include the simplification of payments, streamlining of contracts and the elimination of a number of data returns and audit requirements. Business Secretary Vince Cable, stated: "Apprenticeships are proving an increasingly effective training route for young people and companies. They are a proven way to fill skills gaps in our economy. But for far too long too many businesses have been put off by overly complex procedures and unnecessary layers of paperwork. We've worked with business to cut bureaucracy and ensure the benefits for employers, learners and the economy are maximised". (Source: BIS)

<http://www.bis.gov.uk/news/topstories/2011/Sep/apprenticeships-red-tape-slashed>



Government responds to Transport Committee's "Cost of Motor Insurance" report

Government has published its response to the House of Commons Transport Select Committee's report on "The Cost of Motor Insurance". The report states that government agrees that the cost of motor insurance is a problem, and outlines steps that are currently being taken to address this issue, such as managing the cost of claims, fraud, driving uninsured and improving road safety. Commenting on this response, Committee Chair Louise Ellman MP stated, "It's clear that following our report the Government now accepts that it is has to act to help bring down the overall level of motor insurance premiums. We welcome this. However, there remain serious questions about what action ministers will now take - particularly to tackle the problem of referral fees". (Source: Parliament.uk) <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmtran/1466/1466.pdf>

Boris Johnson announces Olympic Park electric charging network

Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, has announced that a network of charge points is planned to support the Olympic and Paralympic zero-emission electric vehicle fleet. The charge points will ensure power supply for the London 2012 fleet of 200 BMW and Mini electric vehicles, in an attempt to create the most sustainable Olympic Games ever. After the games, the charge points will become part of Source London, an electric charging network throughout London, which has been established by Transport for London, in partnership with public and private partners. Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, stated: "It is great news that a network of charge points set to support the Olympic electric fleet next year, will go on to bolster Source London, creating a superb legacy for the Capital's growing army of eco-drivers". (Source: Source London) <https://www.sourcelondon.net/mayor-announces-olympic-park-electric-charging-network-creating-air-quality-legacy>

Week ahead

Commons Chamber

Thursday 15 September
Transport questions – 10:30am

Commons Committees

Wednesday 14 September
Environmental Audit Committee (10:00am, room 16)
Subject: Green economy

Westminster Hall

No relevant activity

Lords Chamber

No relevant activity

***To note:** Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne has announced that his autumn statement and response to the Office of Budget Responsibility's growth forecast will be delivered to the House of Commons on Tuesday November 29.*

