

## WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

Week ending Friday 3 October

### SMMT hosts Conservative Party Conference event

This week SMMT hosted a lunch event at the annual Conservative Party Conference in Birmingham. Transport Minister John Hayes MP spoke at the event alongside SMMT Chief Executive, Mike Hawes. Mr Hawes began by outlining the success of the sector, welcoming the 30 months of consecutive growth that the industry has enjoyed, before outlining some of the challenges that the sector is still facing, namely skills, energy, attracting young people and women into manufacturing, investment and technology, and innovation. The Minister began his address by discussing his party's approach to continuing support and encouraging growth of the UK automotive industry, and stressed that it is essential for both industry and government to work together in future to ensure continued success, noting the necessity for a consensus around strategic issues. Mr Hayes continued by explaining the need for flexibility of public policy in adapting to rapid change, and preventing legislation from being restrictive to business, and stated that he recognised the need to establish certainty in the industry around investment, competency and human infrastructure, noting that the best way for government to achieve this would be by working alongside those at the heart of these key issues. The Minister concluded by discussing the importance of keeping costs low to maintain competitiveness within the UK automotive industry, as well as encouraging growth within the supply chain. (Source: SMMT)

<http://www.smmt.co.uk/2014/10/transport-minister-stresses-government-industry-collaboration-uk-automotive-success/>

### New National Minimum Wage comes into force

The new National Minimum Wage (NMW) rates have come into force as of 1 October 2014. Following recommendations in March from the independent Low Pay Commission (LPC), and a call from Business Secretary Vince Cable, the rate has risen to £6.50 per hour. From the 1 October the National Minimum Wage rates, as recommended by the LPC, are:

- A 19p (3%) increase in the adult rate (from £6.31 to £6.50 per hour)
- A 10p (2%) increase in the rate for 18-20 year-olds (from £5.03 to £5.13 per hour)
- A 7p (2%) increase in the rate for 16-17 year olds (from £3.72 to £3.79 per hour)
- A 5p (2%) increase in the rate for apprentices (from £2.68 to £2.73 per hour)

(Source: BIS)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/above-inflation-rise-for-national-minimum-wage>



### DECC appoints new Chief Scientific Advisor

Professor John Loughhead OBE FEng FTSE has been appointed as Chief Scientific Advisor for the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC). Currently, Professor Loughhead is the Executive Director at the UK Energy Research Centre (UKERC). He will take up this new role on 22 October 2014, and will continue part-time as Executive Director of UKERC until the end of 2014. Energy and Climate Change Secretary Ed Davey said, "New technology is the driving force that is moving us to a low carbon economy, powering new jobs and green growth... Professor Loughhead brings a depth of knowledge that will be invaluable in areas such as shale gas, as well as keeping the UK as an energy world leader and creating momentum towards a global climate change deal." A Chartered Engineer, Professor Loughhead graduated in Mechanical Engineering from Imperial College, London. He is also Past-President of the UK's Institution of Engineering and Technology, Fellow of both the UK and Australian Academies of

Engineering, Professor of Engineering at Cardiff University and Fellow of Queen Mary University of London.

(Source: DECC)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/decc-appoints-new-chief-scientific-advisor>

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## Parties focus on upcoming by-elections

Two by-elections are due to take place next week. On Thursday 9 October by-elections will take place in Clacton, following the defection of Conservative MP Douglas Carswell to UKIP, and in Heywood and Middleton following the death of Labour MP Jim Dobbin. It was announced at the UKIP party conference that Mark Reckless had also defected to from the Conservatives to UKIP, resigning as an MP to contest a by-election in Rochester and Strood. The date for this by-election will be confirmed when the House of Commons returns from recess on 13 October.

(Source: BBC)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-29394697>



## Ministerial change announced

Following the resignation of Brooks Newmark MP from government, Her Majesty The Queen has approved the appointment of Rob Wilson MP, Conservative MP for Reading East, as Parliamentary Secretary (Minister for Civil Society). In his new role Mr Wilson will be responsible for:

- The Big Society agenda
- National Citizen Service and youth policy
- Social action
- Civil society sector support
- Social enterprise and social investment

The Minister will also be responsible for UK statistics and will support the Minister for the Cabinet Office on public sector efficiency and reform.

(Source: Cabinet Office)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ministerial-change-september-2014>

## PM pledges tax cuts during party conference speech

In his closing speech at the Conservative Party Conference, Prime Minister David Cameron pledged to cut taxes for 30 million people should his party win the 2015 General Election. In his speech he stated that he would raise the tax free allowance from £10,500 to £12,500 by 2020. He also said that the threshold for the 40p income tax rate would be raised from £41,900 to £50,000 by the end of a five-year Conservative government. Further proposals announced by the Prime Minister included the protection of the NHS budget for England, a pledge of “English votes for English laws”, an increased focus on immigration, promising a place for every teenager on the National Citizenship Service and that the Human Rights Act would be scrapped. The issue of Britain’s future in Europe was also widely discussed during the conference, with both London Mayor Boris Johnson and David Cameron referring to their party’s commitment to bring about a referendum in the European Union.

(Source: BBC)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-29433919>

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## Week ahead

**The Houses of Parliament is in recess and will next sit on Monday 13 October**

**The House of Lords is in recess and will next sit on Monday 13 October**