

SMMT and ADS host Lib Dem Party Conference event

SMMT co-hosted a breakfast event with ADS at the Liberal Democrat Party Conference in Glasgow, offering stakeholders and politicians the opportunity to debate 'What Next for Industrial Strategy?' The event was chaired jointly by SMMT Chief Executive Mike Hawes and ADS Chief Executive Paul Everitt, with the keynote speech presented by the Rt Hon Dr Vince Cable MP, Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills. There were also follow-up remarks from Apprenticeship Ambassador to Business, Mr Gordon Birtwistle MP. Mike Hawes and Paul Everitt opened the event by noting the importance of support for industrial strategies and the mechanisms related to them, such as the Automotive Council and the Advanced Propulsion Centre (APC). They then highlighted the necessity of encouraging investment through increasing the competitiveness of the UK business environment, as well as the need to continue supporting ULEVs, and the importance of Europe to the automotive sector. Dr Cable began his keynote speech by noting his support for long-term thinking through industrial strategies, and commented on the success of the Automotive Council and the Aerospace Partnership. The Secretary of State also remarked on the success of apprenticeships, but stated that there was still work to be done on improving their quality and increasing SME engagement in this area. Regarding the issue of Europe, Dr Cable stated that the Liberal Democrat party position fully supports the UK remaining in Europe, but noted that it is essential that business make the case for European membership, as the automotive sector has done with the SMMT/KPMG EU report. Other key issues discussed during the breakfast included the importance of strengthening the supply chain, the importance of success for the Industrial Partnership bids, the need for business rates to be reformed so that they don't disincentive investment, the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), and the importance of learning lessons from the Scottish referendum in respect of the UK's relationship with Europe.

(Source: SMMT)

<http://www.smmt.co.uk/2014/10/liberal-democrats-set-support-long-term-automotive-strategy/>



September car registrations at record high

New car registrations

For the pivotal month of September the number of new cars registered reached 425,861, a rise of 5.6% and the biggest September for a decade. This increase marks the 31st consecutive month of growth, with the new '64' number plate boosting volumes. Registrations for the year-to-date have reached 1,958,196 – up 9.1% on the same period for 2013. Chief Executive of SMMT, Mike Hawes, said "September's strong performance underlined the continuing robustness of the UK new car market, particularly in the context of last September's bumper volumes."

Van and truck registrations

Commercial vehicle registrations for September are up by 10.8% to 54,497 units. So far this year 269,456 commercial vehicles have been registered; an increase of 12.6%. The van market continued to drive growth, up 18.1% for the year-to-date to 242,071 units, and up 14.15 in September to 49,123 units. On the other hand, truck registrations fell in September by 12.3%, with the year-to-date falling by 20.3%. Rolling year totals, however, remain strong due to the pre-Euro 6 rush at the end of 2013.

Bus and coach registrations

For September, bus and coach registrations were down by 23.9%. Coach registrations are strong, up by 3.3% for the month and 5.4% for the year so far.

During September, the purpose-built bus market fell by 26 units, with the year-to-date figures falling by 10%.

(Source: SMMT)

<http://www.smmt.co.uk/smmt-membership/member-services/market-intelligence/vehicle-data/monthly-automotive-data/>

£11 million of funding announced to prepare for hydrogen cars

Business Minister Matthew Hancock has announced up to £11 million of funding to help bring the arrival of hydrogen cars to UK roads even closer. Government and industry will prepare the UK for the roll-out of hydrogen fuel cell electric vehicles (FCEVs). The £11 million investment will help establish an initial network of up to 15 hydrogen refuelling stations by the end of 2015 and include £2 million of funding for public sector hydrogen vehicles.

. £7.5 million of the newly announced £11 million funding will come from government, with the remaining £3.5 million sourced from industry

. The funding will provide::

- £2 million of top-up funding to upgrade 6 to 8 existing hydrogen refuelling stations and take them from demonstrator projects to publically accessible sites.
- £3.5 million of funding to be matched by industry for 4 to 7 new hydrogen refuelling stations.
- £2 million of funding for public sector fleets to encourage deployment of around 40 hydrogen FCEVs in focused geographical clusters.

Speaking in Japan, Matthew Hancock said, "We want to make the UK one of the best places in the world to design, manufacture and sell ultra-low emission vehicles."

(Source: BIS)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/multi-million-pound-fund-to-get-hydrogen-cars-moving>

UKIP secures first seat in Westminster

Nigel Farage's UK Independence Party (UKIP) has gained its first elected MP, with ex-Tory MP Douglas Carswell winning the Clacton by-election by 12,404 votes. Mr Carswell knocked his old party, which held a 12,068 majority at the 2010 election, into second place, where they received 24.64% of the vote, compared to UKIP's 59.75%. In the second by-election held last night, in Heywood and Middleton after the death of the late Jim Dobbin MP, Labour

narrowly held onto the seat, with a reduced majority of 617. UKIP came in second with 38.69% of the vote, and the Conservatives third with 12.28%. In both by-elections, the Liberal Democrats struggled for votes, finishing behind the Green Party in Clacton, receiving only 1.37% of the vote, and finishing 4th in Heywood and Middleton with 5.12%.

(Source: BBC)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-29549414>



Week ahead

House of Commons

Tuesday 14 October

8:55am & 2pm: Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Bill General Committee – to consider the bill (The Boothroyd Room, Portcullis House)

Thursday 16 October

11:30am & 2pm: Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Bill General Committee – to consider the bill (The Boothroyd Room, Portcullis House)

10am: Political and Constitutional Reform Select Committee – The future of devolution after the referendum (MacDonald Holyrood Hotel)

House of Lords

Thursday 16 October

11am: Debate – The prospects for developing and manufacturing autonomous vehicles as part of the UK car industry – Lord Borwick/Baroness Neville-Rolfe