

## WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

Week ending Friday 12 October

### Prime Minister Cameron delivers conference speech

Prime Minister, David Cameron has delivered his annual speech to the Conservative Party Conference in Birmingham. In the speech Mr Cameron vowed to 'get behind people who want to get on in life' to ensure Britain can 'rise' again. Mr Cameron admitted that the economic recovery in the UK was taking longer than initially expected, but stated that Labour offered no credible alternative using Ed Miliband's rhetoric against him by asserting that Labour are "a party of one notion: more borrowing". Following the Labour leader's lead, the Prime Minister's speech was light on policy proposals but rather focussed on his personal story and beliefs, what the government has achieved thus far in its term of office, and why he believes the Conservative Party is the right option for Britain. By contrast the Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne's speech did contain a number of policies mainly focussing on welfare reform, and the government's determination to cut a further £10 billion from the benefits budget to help lower the deficit. Mr Osborne suggested the government could implement a limit on the number of children in a family that could be supported on benefits, and also unveiled a plan for workers to give up a number of employment rights in return for share in their employer. The new 'owner-employee contract' would allow owners to award shares worth up to £50,000 to their staff, in return for the employee giving up their unfair dismissal, redundancy and training rights and also the right to ask for flexible working. (Source: Conservatives) [http://www.cpc12.org.uk/Speeches/David\\_Cameron.a.spx](http://www.cpc12.org.uk/Speeches/David_Cameron.a.spx)

### CBI report calls for 'Bold Thinking' for UK road network

The CBI has published a report entitled 'Bold Thinking: a model to our future roads', which argues that the UK needs a gear change in investment, performance and efficiency if it is to develop a road network fit for the 21st century, and with public finances constrained, government must show bold thinking in how to secure new sources of funding to

help support economic growth in the long-term. The report states that the UK economy is currently losing up to £8 billion each year from congestion on the roads, which could potentially rise to £22 billion by 2025. The CBI's recent infrastructure survey also showed that three in four businesses were not confident that transport networks will improve in the next five years. The CBI is therefore calling for the introduction of a Regulatory Asset Base (RAB) model to secure the private investment necessary to overcome the current funding gaps in the UK's road network, stating that a £10bn shortfall in funding for Highways Agency projects and the prospect of declining motoring tax revenue due to ever-increasing efficiencies in new vehicles makes the current model unsustainable. As part of this new model, the CBI is calling for a new governance structure for the UK road network - including the set-up of a new independent roads regulator - to raise the performance standards of UK roads, provide greater cost efficiencies and help improve the experience of all users. (Source: CBI) <http://www.cbi.org.uk/business-issues/infrastructure/bold-thinking-roads-report/bold-thinking-roads-report-in-full/>



### SMMT hosts Conservative Party Conference lunch event

SMMT has met with key Conservative Party politicians as the party gathered for its annual conference in Birmingham. Hosting a lunch event, SMMT outlined its recently launched industrial strategy paper that was used to focus discussion on government-led policies to ensure continued investment in the manufacturing industries. Gavin Williamson MP, PPS to Patrick

McLoughlin as Secretary of State for Transport, provided the opening remarks, reflecting on an earlier speech by the Transport Secretary who spoke of government's commitment to motoring and economic growth. Mr Williamson also expressed his personal experience and perspective on the automotive sector where Jaguar Land Rover is an important company in his South Staffordshire constituency. Also attending the roundtable were MPs Heather Wheeler, Chris White, Alun Cairns, Steve Baker, Robert Buckland, Bob Blackman and Caroline Nokes, and MEPs Sir Robert Atkins, Philip Bradbourn, Vicky Ford, Jacqueline Foster, Julie Girling and Emma McClarkin. In addition a number of GLA members and councillors were in attendance alongside key stakeholders and industry representatives. (Source: SMMT)

<http://www.smmt.co.uk/2012/10/final-fringe-event-held-at-conservative-party-conference/>



## Industry, government and academia combine to drive automotive innovation

Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) and Tata have succeeded in securing a £92 million joint industry, university and government boost for a new initiative, announced on Monday 8 October. Government's 'UK Research Partnership Investment Fund' (UK RPIF), launched at Budget 2012, was oversubscribed resulting in the latest round of investment announcements. The fund will contribute to a £92 million partnership between the University of Warwick, Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) and Tata Motors European Technical Centre (TMETC) for a new National Automotive Innovation Campus. The campus will develop new technologies to reduce dependency on fossil fuels and address a shortage of skilled R&D staff in the automotive supply chain. JLR and TMETC, working with Warwick Manufacturing Group (WVG) at the University of Warwick, envisage a 10-fold return on investment through improved products, processes and services. (Source: SMMT)

<http://www.smmt.co.uk/2012/10/industry-government-and-academia-combine-to-drive-automotive-innovation/>

## £170m road investment boost for local economies announced by DfT

The Highways Agency is to deliver 57 road improvements in a bid to boost the economy, reduce congestion and improve safety, Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin has announced. The £170 million investment is part of a £217 million programme to remove bottlenecks and keep traffic moving on England's motorways and major A roads. The economic benefit of these 57 schemes is estimated at around £3 billion. Many of the improvements will be delivered in 2013 and 2014, and they will all be completed by March 2015. The announcement brings the total number of schemes to receive investment from government's pinch point fund to 65. A third stage of projects will be announced next year. Commenting on the announcement, Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin stated: "These £217 million road improvements prove the Government's determination to accelerate growth and cut congestion. Keeping traffic moving is vital to securing prosperity. By removing bottlenecks and improving access to local enterprise zones, key international trading ports and communities, these road schemes will help get people to and from work and power the economy. They also have the potential to help deliver more than 300,000 new jobs and 150,000 new homes." (Source: DfT)

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/news/press-releases/press-dft-20121008a>

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## Week ahead

### Commons Chamber

Thursday 18 October

9:30am: Transport questions

### Commons Committees

Tuesday 16 October: BIS Committee (9:30am, Thatcher room) Progress on LEPs and the RGF

### Westminster Hall

No relevant activity

### Lords Committee

Tuesday 16 October:

Science & Technology Committee (10:30am, room 4)  
Public procurement as a tool to stimulate innovation