

Prime Minister announces Supply Chain Finance agreement

Prime Minister, David Cameron, has met with the leaders of some of the UK's largest companies at Downing Street to discuss the role they play in supporting their supply chains. As a result of the discussion, a number of companies have agreed to actively evaluate the implementation of, or continue to offer, Supply Chain Finance. Supply Chain Finance (SCF) is a way for large companies to help their supply chain access credit and improve cash-flow. The scheme works by banks being notified by a large company that an invoice has been approved for payment; the bank is then able to offer a 100 per cent immediate advance to the supplier at lower interest rates, knowing the invoice will ultimately be paid by the large company. This has already been successfully implemented by companies including Rolls Royce and Jaguar Land Rover, and was a key recommendation included in the recent Breedon Taskforce on Non-Bank Lending. The Prime Minister also announced that government will look to offer this scheme to its own suppliers. Commenting on the agreement, Prime Minister David Cameron stated: "This Government is determined to back all those businesses who aspire to get ahead and take on more people. In the current climate, viable businesses can struggle to get the finance they need to grow – this scheme will not only help them secure finance and support cash flow, but will help secure supply chains for some of our biggest companies and protect thousands of jobs. It can be a win-win, with large companies and small suppliers both benefiting from this innovative scheme". SMMT has announced that it will bring together some of the UK's largest financial lenders and automotive supply companies at a specialist *Meet the Funder* networking event in November designed to enhance dialogue, strengthen relationships and increase lending in the auto industry. (Source: Number 10)

<http://www.number10.gov.uk/news/supply-chain-finance-scheme/>



HGV road user levy bill debated in the Commons

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport Stephen Hammond MP issued a Written Ministerial Statement (WMS) on the HGV Road User Levy Bill on 23rd October. The HGV Road User Levy Bill was then debated in the House of Commons. The WMS stated that the HGV Road User Levy Bill will introduce charges for all HGVs that weigh 12 tonnes and over for using the UK road network, with the key aim of the Bill being to ensure a fairer arrangement for UK-hauliers to help improve their competitiveness. The levy is designed to be cost neutral for UK hauliers, through offsetting reductions in Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) payments. Changes to VED will be included in the Finance Bill 2014. Subject to legislation being passed government plan to introduce the levy from April 2014. The legislation being introduced fulfils a commitment in the Coalition Agreement. (Source: DfT) <http://www.dft.gov.uk/news/statements/hammond-20121023a/>

Government publishes response to Transport Committee road safety report

Government has published its response to the House of Commons Transport Committee report into road safety. Transport Select Committee Chair Louise Ellman MP noted disappointment that the response did not accept the committee's recommendation to initiate an independent review of driver training, and

stated: 'The DfT has wasted an opportunity to demonstrate focus and leadership on road safety. Generalised talk about everyone playing their part to bring road casualties down should not be allowed to hide central government's responsibilities to keep local authorities, the police, other agencies and the public fully focused on delivering significant and sustained improvements in road safety'. (Source: [parliament.uk](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmtran/648/64804.htm))

Science & Technology Committee holds engineering skills evidence session

The House of Commons Science & Technology Committee has held an evidence session on engineering skills, focussing on bridging the skills gap and ensuring that future school leavers and graduates have the skills needed for the engineering and manufacturing industries. Witnesses Lynn Tomkins - Semta, Steve Radley - EEF, Richard Earp - National Grid, and Andrew Churchill - JJ Churchill raised the issue of needing to improve the UK skills base and help SMEs recruit through a variety of measures including increased and alternative funding models. University Technical Colleges were also discussed with witnesses agreeing that they were very useful for business, however, the English Baccalaureate proved less popular with concerns over the translation of learning in school to the real world. Witnesses again raised the issue of the downgrading of the engineering diploma, stating that this was a backwards step, and also noted the need to improve careers advice in schools, to help educate children on the prospects of a career in manufacturing. (Source: Parliament)

<http://www.parliamentlive.tv/Main/Live.aspx>

Semta launches Graduate Development Toolkit

Semta, the sector skills council for science, engineering and advanced manufacturing has launched a Graduate Development Toolkit to give employers and potential employees easy access to information. The web-based toolkit provides employers with guidance, processes and documents for the selection, recruitment, development and retention of graduates. This development is part of the Employer Investment Fund project designed by Semta and aimed a encouraging more Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) employers to recruit and develop graduates. Semta has also held an event in

the House of Lords to showcase the benefits of developing higher level skills in the workforce. The event was attended by representatives of small and medium sized firms from across the UK, with speeches from leading figures in advanced manufacturing, such as Jo Lopes, Head of Technical Excellence at Jaguar Land Rover, on how the skills agenda is evolving and making a real difference in the workplace. Commenting on the event, Lynn Tomkins, Semta UK Operations Director stated "Semta research indicates that industry needs to recruit and train 82,000 engineers, scientists and technicians across the UK by 2016, while 363,000 of the current technical workforce is qualified below world class standard and needs to be skilled up. Events like today provide a fantastic opportunity for businesses of all sizes to share experiences and learn what is available to ensure these targets can be met". (Source: Semta) <http://semta.org.uk/media/press-releases/giving-employers-and-graduates-tools-to-succeed>

Week ahead

Commons Chamber

Thursday 1 November

9:30am – Energy and climate change questions

Commons Committees

Wednesday 31 October:

Education Committee (9:30am, Wilson room)

Careers guidance for young people

Wednesday 31 October:

Environmental Audit Committee (2:10pm, room 6)

The environment in autumn statement 2012 (contains 'future of motoring taxation' section)

Westminster Hall

Tuesday 30 October

9:30am-11:00am – Business rates (Simon Danczuk, Lab)

Lords Committee

Wednesday 31 October

Agriculture, Fisheries, Environment and Energy

(10:30am, room 1) – EU energy: decarbonisation and economic competitiveness

Thursday 1 November

Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (10:30am, room 2) – Small and medium sized enterprises