

Reforms to apprenticeship scheme announced

Government has published 'The Future of Apprenticeships in England: Implementation Plan', announcing reforms to the apprenticeships scheme in England. These reforms are a result of the Richard Review and aim to place further emphasis on academic rigour in order to rival higher and further education. More than 60 companies have signed up to be 'Trailblazers' for the new apprenticeship scheme, with the automotive sector trailblazing an apprenticeship standard for an 'Automotive Mechatronics Maintenance Technician'. The new apprenticeships will aim to commence by the end of 2014 and the reforms will aim to:

- put employers in the driving seat of apprenticeships; in future, apprenticeships will be based on standards designed by employers, to meet the specific needs of their industry
- radically simplify the system; the new employer-led standards will be short and easy to understand - they will describe the skills and knowledge that an individual needs to be fully competent in an occupation
- increase the quality of apprenticeships; an apprentice will need to demonstrate their competence through rigorous independent assessment and more thorough academic assessment – including stepping up the maths and English requirements; apprentices will be graded – pass, merit, distinction – putting them on a par with full time education
- require a minimum of 20% off-the-job training - time away from their workstation to focus on training

Announcing the reforms at the MINI plant in Oxford, Prime Minister David Cameron stated: "The reforms we're announcing today will put employers in the driving seat and ensure that we deliver rigorous training that supports you and our economy for years to come".

(Source: BIS)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-announces-new-work-training-schemes-for-young-people-and-a-new-era-of-apprenticeships>

Business Secretary addresses All Party Motor Group breakfast

Business Secretary, Rt Hon Dr Vince Cable MP, has addressed the All Party Parliamentary Motor Group (APMG) on the issues of the automotive industrial strategy and the UK's place in Europe. Dr Cable praised the work of the Automotive Council in establishing an effective link between industry and government and noted that long-term thinking and collaboration are the two pillars that will help drive the Automotive Sector Strategy. Dr Cable also noted the importance of the EU for industry in terms of the single market but also due to its power and influence as a trading bloc, highlighting the ongoing Transatlantic Trade & Investment Partnership (TTIP) as a key example. Parliamentarians in attendance included Adrian Bailey MP, Chair of the BIS Select Committee, Andrew Miller MP, Chair of the Science & Technology Select Committee, Rt Hon John Spellar MP and Mark Prisk MP. Areas discussed included the repatriation of the supply chain, the importance of linkages between infrastructure development and alternative fuels development and the issues around skills shortages. APMG members visited the McLaren Technology Centre on Thursday 24 October. Commenting on the visit Richard Burden MP, Shadow Transport Minister and Chair of the Motor APPG, said, "Our cross-party parliamentary group meet to address issues of strategic importance to UK automotive industry and our visit to McLaren this week was the perfect example of that. We have not only seen why the McLaren Group is such a successful motorsport team, but why the Group is leading innovation in automotive production, engineering and manufacturing too.

(Source: SMMT)

<http://www.smmt.co.uk/2013/10/engineering-skills-high-mps-agenda/>

UK manufacturing continues 'solid' growth

The latest Markit/CIPS Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) for UK manufacturing has shown that the sector

continued to grow strongly in October, making a "solid start" to the final quarter of the year. The PMI was 56.0 in October, down slightly from September's revised figure of 56.3 but still indicating robust growth (a figure above 50 indicates expansion). The sector was helped by a rapid rise in export orders, which grew at the fastest pace since February 2011. Markit said manufacturing production and new orders grew strongly last month, leading to "further job creation". Commenting on the announcement, Rob Dobson, senior economist at Markit, stated: "Despite only accounting for less than 11% of the economy, the current strength of growth seen in manufacturing means the sector will still provide a major boost to the economy in October. The survey suggests manufacturing output is growing at a quarterly rate of around 1%-1.5%." Last week, official figures showed that the UK economy grew by 0.8% in the three months to September, with the manufacturing sector growing by 0.9%.

(Source: Markit/CIPS)

<http://www.markiteconomics.com/Survey/PressRelease.mvc/9620f11fc5c748d8aaf417b28e6f9b1b>



Foresight 'Future of Manufacturing' report published

The Foresight Programme, part of the Government Office for Science, has published 'The Future of Manufacturing: A new era of opportunity and challenge for the UK'. The report looks at how manufacturing is set to enter a dynamic new phase, driven by rapid changes in technology, new ways of doing business, global competition and potential volatility in resource prices and availability and puts forward a framework for government and industry action to ensure that the UK manufacturing sector is able to better compete and thrive. The report concludes that government will need to significantly strengthen its future approach to ensure a strong and

resilient manufacturing sector stating that government needs to act in three systemic areas to:

1. exploit new forms of intelligence to gain sharper insights into the sector and where value is being created
2. take a more targeted approach to supporting manufacturers, based on a system-wide understanding of science, technology, innovation and industrial policies
3. adapt and build innovative new institutional capability for the future

(Source: BIS)

<http://www.bis.gov.uk/foresight/our-work/projects/current-projects/future-of-manufacturing>

£1.4 million for local councils to cut bus emissions

Five local authorities have been granted a total of £1.4 million to reduce emissions created by buses. The funding, which was announced by the Department for Transport will enable the fitment of clean exhaust technologies to local buses. Falling under the Clean Bus Technology Fund, the grants range from £23,700 to £750,000 depending on the authority. This will see the application of Selective Catalytic Reduction technology to the exhaust systems of 92 buses to reduce harmful emissions.

(Source: SMMT)

<http://www.smmt.co.uk/2013/10/1-4-million-local-councils-cut-bus-emissions/>

Week ahead

Commons Chamber

No relevant activity

Commons Committees

Monday 4 November

Science & Technology Committee (4:10pm Thatcher room) Women in STEM careers

Wednesday 6 November

Public Accounts Committee (2:15pm, room 15) Supporting UK business exports

Westminster Hall

Thursday 7 November

1.30pm – 4.30pm: Debate on (i) Energy and climate change committee report on energy prices, profits and poverty; (ii) Transport committee report on cost of motor insurance: whiplash

House of Lords

No relevant activity