

WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

Week ending Friday 4 November

UK automotive sector benefits from regional growth fund

The second round of government's Regional Growth Fund (RGF), a £1.4bn fund designed to encourage enterprise, growth and jobs in the private sector and support areas and communities that are dependent on the public sector, has been allocated. Vehicle manufacturers and supply-chain companies including Bentley, Calsonic Kansei, Lotus, Universal Engineering and Zytec, have been confirmed in a list of over 100 companies from across the UK that will receive government support. The £950m second wave of funding follows the initial round of announcements made in April this year. Organisations are awarded funding based on the potential for job creation and local community-based sustainable economic growth. Of the 201,000 jobs created or protected, around 37,000 will be directly created jobs, and more than 164,000 will be in the supply chain. Government investment will support nearly £6 billion of private investment secured by the successful projects. (Source: BIS)

<http://www.bis.gov.uk/news/topstories/2011/Oct/950-million-investment-to-boost-local-economies-and-jobs>

UK new car registrations up 2.6% in October

Figures published by SMMT show UK new car registrations in October rose by 2.6% to 134,944 units. Registrations in the last three months have increased by 0.9% versus 2010, whilst over the last six months they were down 1.5%. This period of relative stability follows a weak start to the year that has left registrations over the year-to-date down 4.5% to 1,688,038 units. The market remains on track to achieve SMMT's full year forecast of 1.923 million units, and the market is expected to stabilise in 2012, at 1.96 million units. The commercial vehicle market grew by 10.7% in October to 23,580 units and up 19.5% on the rolling year to 295,978 units. (Source: SMMT)

<http://www.smmt.co.uk/2011/11/october-new-car-registrations-up-as-market-stabilises/>

DECC consultation on Feed-in Tariff scheme launched

The Department of Energy and Climate Change have announced a consultation on the Feed-in Tariff (FITs) scheme for solar PV, as part of a two stage comprehensive review of the FITs scheme. The consultation proposes new multi-installation tariff rates for aggregated solar PV systems, i.e. where a single individual or organisation owns or receives FITs payments from more than one PV installation, located on different sites. The new tariff rates would apply to all new PV installations that are part of an aggregated PV scheme and have an eligibility date on or after 1 April 2012. The new tariffs are set at 80% of the standard tariffs for individual installations. The consultation also proposes a new energy efficiency requirement that would mean from 1 April 2012 a property would have to reach a certain level of energy efficiency to receive the proposed new tariff rates. This could include reaching a minimum C level certificate of Energy Performance or taking up all the measures potentially eligible for Green Deal finance, depending on the outcome of the consultation. As a transitional arrangement, installations with eligibility dates between 1 April 2012 and 31 March 2013 would have 12 months from the eligibility date to comply with the energy efficiency requirement. The consultation will close on 23 December 2011. In addition the Environmental Audit Committee and Energy and Climate Change Committee are calling for evidence on the scheme, with a view to hearing oral evidence in late November. (Source: DECC)

http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/consultations/fits_comp_rev1/fits_comp_rev1.aspx



DFT launch consultation on historic vehicle MOT exemption

The Department for Transport has announced a consultation proposing that historic vehicles should be exempted from the MOT test, as part of government's deregulation agenda. The "Historic Vehicles MOT Exemption Review" classes a "historic vehicle" as one manufactured prior to 1 January 1960. The consultation states that these vehicles are worthy of exemption as they are not covered by the EU Directive on roadworthiness test, which only subjects post-1960 registered vehicles to a compulsory roadworthiness test, and due to the fact that: "Pre-1960 manufactured vehicles are largely well maintained by their owners". The consultation states that the estimated 162,000 pre-1960 manufactured vehicles make up less than 0.5% of the approximately 32.7m licensed vehicles in GB that are required by law to have a MOT test, and that two-thirds of pre-1960 manufactured vehicles are driven less than 500 miles a year. The consultation closes on 26 January 2012. (Source: DFT)

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/consultations/dft-2011-27>

Business Minister Mark Prisk delivers speech on better regulation

Business Minister Mark Prisk MP has delivered a speech to the Local & National Regulators annual conference, calling for a more mature relationship between business and regulators. Mr. Prisk emphasised the need for a more accountable and transparent system of local regulation and a simpler regulatory landscape, highlighting the importance of regulation in creating economic growth. Proposals included: more use of co-regulation, where business shares a degree of regulatory responsibility (for example through industry bodies setting professional and working standards), greater 'earned recognition' - where regulators recognise business activities that support compliance and reduce intervention, creating a stronger incentive for private sector led compliance, a role for Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) to improve the transparency and accountability of local regulation - bringing business and regulators together to look for ways to reduce unnecessary burdens, and clearer more straightforward guidance - so that

businesses, particularly SMEs, have greater access to clear guidance on what they need to do to comply.

(Source: BIS)

<http://nds.coi.gov.uk/content/Detail.aspx?ReleaseID=421830&NewsAreaID=2>

UK GDP increases 0.5% in the third quarter of 2011

Figures published by the Office of National Statistics show UK GDP increased by 0.5% in the third quarter of 2011. Output of the production industries also increased by 0.5% in the third quarter of 2011, compared with a fall of 1.2% in the previous quarter. However figures from the Markit/CIPS Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI), show that UK manufacturing in October dropped to a 28 month low, registering just 47.4 on the index (any figure above 50 indicates growth). (Source: ONS)

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/gva/gross-domestic-product--preliminary-estimate/q3-2011/stb-q3-2011.html>



Week ahead

Commons Chamber

Thursday 10 November

Transport questions – 11:05am

Westminster Hall

No relevant activity

Commons Committees

No relevant activity

Lords Chamber

No relevant activity

Lords Committees

No relevant activity