

Business Select Committee publishes report on apprenticeships

The Business, Innovation and Skills Select Committee has published a report into government's apprenticeships programme. The report highlights areas that the Committee believes need reform, with key recommendations around defining an overarching strategy and clear purpose for apprenticeships. Other recommendations included calling for government to provide a simpler and more effective delivery system for apprenticeships, as well as detailed assessment of the impact that the funding structure has had on the take up of apprenticeships by age group. The report calls for the National Apprenticeship Service to be given statutory responsibility for raising awareness of apprenticeships within schools, as well as an urgent review of the objectives and priorities of the service with a view to justify a focus on achieving quality outcomes. Adrian Bailey MP, Chair of the Select Committee said: "The apprenticeship programme can play a key role in resolving some of this country's most pressing issues. It can help us to create a more skilled workforce, to increase employment and to generate sustainable economic growth. For these reasons, the Government has, quite rightly, made apprenticeships a priority and has devoted significant resources to help them thrive. But money does not guarantee success. The apprenticeship programme needs clarity, oversight and, in these straightened times, to demonstrate that it is providing value for money. There are many areas that require closer scrutiny, careful monitoring or even complete reform." (Source: Parliament)

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/business-innovation-and-skills/news/apprenticeships-chairs-comments/>

Vince Cable visits Toyota as new Auris production begins

Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills Vince Cable has visited Toyota's Burnaston plant in Derbyshire as the company began production of its all new Auris in the UK. Dr Cable said: "I'm delighted to

be here again in Burnaston today to mark the start of production of the latest Auris. It marks another significant milestone as Toyota celebrates 20 years of manufacturing here in the UK. Toyota's £185 million investment is good news for the UK supply chain and helping to improve skills and training. Eight hundred workers have already been recruited and offered Toyota production apprenticeships. The automotive industry is one of strategic national importance to the UK. The Automotive Council demonstrates how Government and business can work together to help promote manufacturing and growth. We want to develop this sort of partnership in more key sectors as part of our industrial strategy." (Source: SMMT) <http://www.smmt.co.uk/2012/11/business-secretary-welcomes-continued-toyota-investment-as-new-auris-production-begins/>



CBI publishes industrial strategy report

The CBI has published a report "Playing Our Strongest Hand: Maximising the UK's Industrial Opportunities", calling for government to implement an industrial strategy. The report calls for a joined-up approach to industrial strategy, as well as proposing indicative sector-specific action plans to make the most of the substantial opportunities for growth in seven key sectors: Aerospace, agri-food, automotive, chemicals and pharmaceuticals, creative industries, green technology and services, and knowledge-intensive business services. By maximising the existing strengths that the UK has in these sectors, CBI analysis indicates the potential for £30bn worth of

export opportunities by 2020. Katja Hall, CBI Chief Policy Director said: "The debate has moved on from whether the UK should have an industrial strategy, to what the right approach should be. It's not about picking winners and it's not about the government spending more money - rather, it's about tilting the playing field for those sectors where we have real advantages, potentially boosting our exports by up to £30 billion. The UK has a long, proud industrial heritage, and we still have a great many world-beating companies today." (Source: CBI)

<http://www.cbi.org.uk/campaigns/industrial-strategy/>



New £16.5m collaborative R&D fund announced

Government has announced £16.5 million of funding for research and development projects as part of the latest competition through the Technology Strategy Board, in partnership with the Office for Low Emission Vehicles and the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council. The competition will look to support R&D development in four areas: internal combustion engines, energy storage and management, lightweight vehicle and powertrain structures and electric machines and power electronics. (Source: BIS) <http://www.bis.gov.uk/news/topstories/2012/Nov/advanced-manufacturing-at-mira-technology-park-and-toyota>

New car registrations rise 12.1% in October

SMMT has published the latest vehicle registration statistics for October 2012. New car registrations in the UK rose 12.1% in October, increasing 5% over the year-to-date. SMMT noted that petrol, diesel and alternatively-fuelled vehicle markets posted strong growth, with most vehicle segments growing. IN terms of the yearly outlook, SMMT revised up its forecast for the full year to 2.013 million new car registrations, up

from 1.94 million in 2011. Paul Everitt, SMMT Chief Executive said: "It is encouraging to see the alternatively-fuelled vehicle market performing strongly, up 13% so far this year. Although the alternatively-fuelled vehicle sector represents only a small share of the overall market, it is vital that government sustains its consumer incentive programme and maximises the benefits available through the vehicle taxation system." Commercial vehicle registrations were down 8.1% in October, with the bus market posting a fall of 23.9% in registrations, despite a rising 44.9% over the year-to-date. (Source: SMMT) <http://www.smmt.co.uk/2012/11/resilient-new-car-market-growth-continues-in-october/>

Government announces fourth round of Green Bus Fund

Transport Minister Norman Baker has announced that government will launch a fourth round of its Green Bus Fund. £20 million will be allocated under the latest round which provides funding for bus operators and local authorities looking to buy low carbon and hybrid buses. The fourth round marks a total of £95 millions since the Fund's launch. Mr Baker said: "Cutting carbon emissions from transport is not a choice, it is a necessity and that is why I am prioritising green buses and giving operators and local authorities an extra £20 million to deliver on this." Details on the bidding process and eligibility will be published in due course. The Department for Transport also announced a new low carbon bus toolkit that aims to demonstrate the benefits and savings from low carbon buses for operators. (Source: DfT) <http://www.dft.gov.uk/news/press-releases/dft-press-20121106a/>

Week ahead

Commons Committees

Tuesday 13 November:

Energy and Climate Change Committee (3.15pm, Wilson room) - Investment in energy infrastructure and the Energy Bill

Westminster Hall

Tuesday 13 November

9:30am - 11:00am: Economy of the north east (David Miliband, South Shields)