

WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

Week ending Friday 28 November

New powers for Scotland: Smith Commission Report

The Smith Commission, set up by Prime Minister David Cameron in the wake of the vote against Scottish independence, has published its report on further devolution of powers to the Scottish Parliament. The report contains recommendations that powers to set income tax rates and bands be wholly devolved. In addition, the report states that new arrangements should be made for how Motability will operate in Scotland for DLA/PIP claimants. The top level recommendations are:

- Scottish Parliament to be made permanent in UK law
- Full devolution of income tax (but not the tax threshold)
- Share of VAT revenues
- Devolution of Air Passenger Duty
- Allow 16 and 17 year olds to vote in Scottish Parliament election (in time for 2016 Holyrood elections)
- Further devolution of powers from Holyrood to local authorities and improved inter-governmental relations with Westminster
- Powers to create new benefits in devolved areas and make discretionary payments in any area of welfare

(Source: Smith Commission)

https://www.smith-commission.scot/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/The_Smith_Commission_Report-1.pdf

Government announces new proposals to tackle late payment

New proposals obliging large and listed companies to publish detailed information about their payment practices and performance have been unveiled by Business Minister Matthew Hancock. The new reporting requirement has been developed in response to feedback from an earlier consultation, where a clear majority supported increased transparency. The new proposals show how the government intends to use the prompt payment power

in the Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Bill which is currently going through Parliament. Reporting on a quarterly basis will be a mandatory requirement for all large and quoted companies. Government is currently consulting on the issue of business payment practices and policies. (Source: BIS)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-proposals-to-tackle-late-payment>



UKCES publish recommendations for employer leadership in skills

The UK Commission for Employment and Skills has published 'Growth Through People' a report looking in to the UK skills system which puts forward recommendations for action. The report calls for employers to lead the way, working with unions and the government, to ensure the UK has the skilled workforce needed. Five priorities for action over the next twenty years are set out:

1. Employers should lead on skills development and government should encourage greater collaboration between businesses, unions and the workforce
2. Improving workplace productivity is the route to pay and prosperity including better management, job design and increased employee engagement
3. More quality 'earning and learning' routes like apprenticeships
4. Bridge the gap between education and work, through better connected employers preparing people for work

5. Success should be measured by a wide set of outcomes, not just qualifications

(Source: UKCES)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/employer-leadership-in-skills-and-employment-is-vital-to-long-term-prosperity-and-growth>

Government publish report on the Sharing Economy

Government has published an independent report by Debbie Wosskow, exploring the social and economic potential of the sharing economy in the UK. The recommendations put forward in the report are:

- Government should update its procurement frameworks, so that sharing economy platforms are an option when travelling
- The Greater London Authority should be given powers to coordinate car club parking bays across London
- Government and regional transport authorities should work with car clubs to integrate them into public sector transport systems

(Source: BIS)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/unlocking-the-sharing-economy-independent-review>

Winning bidders for car club funding announced

Transport Minister Baroness Kramer has announced the winning car club schemes across England who will receive a share of £500,000 government funding. Over 50 new vehicles will now be available across car club demonstration projects in Derby, Nottingham, Norfolk and West Yorkshire. Membership of car clubs allows access to low carbon vehicles for short periods of time on a pay-as-you-go basis. Baroness Kramer launched a funding competition to support pilot projects earlier this year as part of the car club development programme. (Source: DfT)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/car-clubs-cash-awards>

Global Summit on Retiming Freight Deliveries

The world's first global summit on retiming freight deliveries was held on Wednesday 26 November in London. The summit aimed at bringing key players in the freight industry together to take a long-term look at how to efficiently manage freight deliveries in the future. A new guidance published during the summit is to pave the way for responsibly increasing the

flexibility of delivery times. With 90% of London's freight moving on the capital's roads, the summit focused on how this challenge could, in part, be addressed by retiming road deliveries and services to the right time of day or night. The summit included experts from across the industry and addressed the issues that face the changing nature of deliveries in urban areas today. (Source: TfL)

<https://www.tfl.gov.uk/info-for/media/press-releases/2014/november/london-hosts-quiet-cities>

Increase of HGV speed limits on dual carriageways

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport, Claire Perry, announced on Friday 28 November that the government intends to increase the national speed limit for heavy goods vehicles of more than 7.5 tonnes on dual carriageway roads from 50 mph to 60 mph. This complements the decision that the government has already announced to raise the national speed limit for HGVs over 7.5 tonnes on single carriageway roads, and is part of a wider package of associated measures that the government aims at bringing forward to continue to increase economic efficiency and remove outdated restrictions.

(Source: DfT)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/hgv-speed-limits-on-dual-carriageways>

Week ahead

Commons Chambers

Thursday 4 December

- 9.30am: Transport questions (topicals at 10.05am)

Wednesday 3 December

- Autumn Statement

Commons Committee

Tuesday 2 December

- BIS (9:30am, room tbc) - Government support for business

Thursday 4 December

- Political and Constitutional Reform Committee - The future of devolution after the referendum;

Lords Chamber

Monday 1 December and Wednesday 3 December

- Modern Slavery Bill: Committee