

WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

Week ending Friday 3 December

Chancellor delivers Autumn Statement

Chancellor of the exchequer George Osborne has delivered government's Autumn Statement to the House of Commons, outlining the Office for Budget Responsibility's (OBR) economic and fiscal outlook. The coalition government announced in September that it would replace the Pre-Budget Report with an Autumn Statement. The chancellor spoke of government's mandate to eliminate the fiscal deficit and reducing government debt as a key focus of its economic strategy. He said government had 'taken Britain out of the financial danger-zone and on the road to recovery'. The chancellor also made a number of policy announcements including new proposals on corporate tax reform, changes to Intellectual Property rules and a cross-government review, led by BIS and HM Treasury reporting for the next Budget (23 March 2011). (Source: Parliament)

www.parliament.uk/business/news/2010/11/autumn-statement/

Government launches growth review

Chancellor of the exchequer, George Osborne and business secretary, Vince Cable have announced a review of what all parts of government are doing to create the best conditions for private sector growth. Building on the action already taken by government and outlined in the paper, 'The path to strong, sustainable and balanced growth', business is being invited to take part in this work which will challenge every government department on the measures being taken to tackle barriers to growth. The growth review will start with an intensive programme of work, based on the evidence provided by business, to report by Budget 2011. Departments will be required to present Action Plans to a Ministerial Ad-Hoc Group chaired by the chancellor and business secretary, on what contribution they will make. Specific sectors and structural areas have been identified as a priority for the Government; over the course of the review, including advanced manufacturing plus highlighting

low carbon vehicles. The work will continue for the lifetime of this Parliament, ensuring all government departments think first and foremost about the impact of their policies on growth. George Osborne, said: "We have been clear that growth will be driven by the private sector. By working closely with business and industry in this intensive programme of work, Government can make sure that Britain is open for business." (Source: HM Treasury)

www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/growth_291110.pdf



'Low carbon jobs plus skills will result in economic boost' – Engineering UK

Engineering UK has warned in its annual report that engineering skills shortages threaten to leave the UK behind its international counterparts in the race to secure energy markets. The report launch brought together leaders from industry, education and government, including minister for business, Mark Prisk, to deliver a new partnership to address these challenges. *Engineering UK 2011: The state of Engineering* confirms that the engineering sector is at the forefront of rebalancing the UK economy and meeting climate change and renewable energy targets. Success is dependent upon both investment and on boosting the skill levels of UK workers. The report highlights discrepancies between the demand and supply of appropriately skilled technicians. At least 10% of technicians currently working within science, engineering and technology fields are under-qualified – at level two (equivalent to e.g. GCSE

grades A* - C, NVQ or BTEC Level 2) or below, where at least a level three (A Levels, NVQ or BTEC level 3) is needed. Business minister, Mark Prisk, said: "We need a new approach where industry, education and government works collaboratively to achieve this common ambition so I welcome this partnership to address these challenges. Government is committed to increasing the number of highly skilled workers. One of our first announcements was a commitment to create an additional 50,000 new adult apprenticeships by redirecting £150m from Train to Gain." (Source: Engineering UK)

http://www.engineeringuk.com/what_we_do/education_&_skills/engineering_uk_11.cfm



Week ahead

House of Commons

Monday 6 December

2.30pm: Home Office questions (topical questions at 3.15pm)

Main business

Opposition day debate (8th allotted day) on the unfair distribution and impact of cuts to local government funding

Commons Committees

Tuesday 7 December

10:15am Transport

Subject: Transport and the economy.

Witnesses: British Air Transport Association, Association of Train Operating Companies, UK Major Ports Group and Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport; RAC Foundation, ADEPT, and Stagecoach (at 10.50am); Professor Roger Vickerman, Royal Town Planning Institute and Local Government Association (at 11.40am).

10:30am Business, Innovation and Skills

Subject: Government assistance to industry.

Witnesses: Mark Prisk MP, minister of state, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Lords Chamber

Thursday 9 December

What steps they are taking to encourage economic growth (Lord Roberts of Conwy)

APMG event

APMG breakfast discussion on 'developing and delivering low-carbon technology: UK automotive, Tuesday 7 December 2010