

## WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

Week ending Friday 9 January

### 2015 General Election campaign begins

This week, the three main parties – Conservatives, Labour and Liberal Democrats – held events marking the start of the New Year and kicking off the start to their general election campaigns. Economic credibility and the future of the NHS appear to be the key battlegrounds. Leader of the Opposition, Ed Miliband, launched Labour's election campaign with a speech in Manchester and the Conservatives published a [‘cost analysis’](#) of the Labour Party's spending plans. Labour leader Ed Miliband said that the Conservative claims of £20.7bn in unfunded spending pledges by his party are "completely false". But Chancellor George Osborne said the document was based on "perfectly reasonable assumptions" and that the evidence showed that Labour are "a risk to economic recovery". David Cameron also indicated at the weekend that he would be "delighted" to hold the referendum on the UK's membership sooner if possible. He also refused to rule out the prospect of a coalition with UKIP. (Source: BBC)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-30658056>  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-3067711>

### £35 million fund to promote uptake of ULEVs

Cities across the UK can now take advantage of a £35 million fund to promote the uptake of ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEVs). Local authorities are invited to bid for a share of the £35 million 'go ultra low scheme' which they can use in a range of ways to support ULEVs, such as installing charge-points for electric cars and introducing low emission zones. Other measures they can use the fund for include changing planning rules to make it easier to install electric vehicle charge-points, trialling new technology and encouraging workplace schemes. Up to four cities with the best proposals stand the get a share of the fund.

(Source: Office for Low Emission Vehicles)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/multi-million-pound-fund-for-cities-to-take-driving-seat-in-green-car-revolution>

### UK new car registrations reach 10-year high in 2014

2014 saw 2,476,435 new cars registered in the UK – the most in a calendar year since 2004. The market grew 9.3% over the previous year, ahead of the EU average of 5.7% and the UK remains the second largest market in the EU (behind Germany), and recorded second-largest growth of the top five EU markets. Every month in 2014 saw an increase, with December's 8.7% the 34<sup>th</sup> consecutive month of growth. The plug-in car market also saw huge growth with volumes quadrupling from 3,586 in 2013 to 14,498 in 2014.

(Source: SMMT)

<http://www.smmt.co.uk/2015/01/uk-new-car-registrations-december-2014/>



### CV market returns to pre-recession level

In 2014, the CV market returned to pre-recession levels with a market growth of 11% to 363,155 units in 2014, the highest level since 2007. The van market led growth with up 18.7% to 321,686 registrations for the year, whereas truck registrations fell 26.2% throughout the year. The demand for the bus and coach market eased in 2014. Overall bus and coach registrations fell 4.6% in 2014. December's 26.1% decline was driven by drop in purpose-built and coach registrations. (Source: SMMT)

<http://www.smmt.co.uk/2015/01/cv-registrations-december-2014/>  
<http://www.smmt.co.uk/2015/01/demand-eases-for-bus-and-coach-market-in-2014/>

## Deputy PM signs Growth Deals

Deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg, signed a Growth Deal for Birmingham and Solihull on Thursday 8 January and will sign a second Growth Deal for Gloucestershire today, Friday 9 January. The Growth Deal will bring £357 million of investment to the Birmingham and Solihull region and another £62.5 million to Gloucestershire to support economic growth. In Birmingham, the Growth Deal will help to deliver at least 13,000 jobs, allow up to 4,000 homes to be built and up-skill 7,633 people by 2021, as well as generating up to £80 million in public and private investment. In Gloucestershire, the Growth Deal will help to deliver at least 5,000 jobs and will bring forward at least £80 million additional investment from local partners and the private sector. The Growth Deals are part of a £12 billion long-term programme to revitalise local economies.

(Source: Deputy Prime Minister's Office)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/deputy-pm-signs-357m-growth-deal-for-greater-birmingham-and-solihull>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/deputy-pm-signs-625-million-growth-deal-for-gloucestershire>

## Germany gives no ground to UK on EU migration

During her visit in London this week, Angela Merkel gave no new ground to Prime Minister David Cameron on curbing EU migration following talks in London, stating that abuse of welfare benefits by EU migrants could be dealt with by governments. However, the German chancellor reiterated her support for the UK remaining in the European Union. Speaking at a press conference with German Chancellor Merkel, the Prime Minister said he "profoundly" believed the EU needed to be reformed. (Source: BBC + EU Observer)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-30701604>

<https://euobserver.com/news/127134>

## Week ahead

### Commons Chambers

Monday 12 January

- Consumer Rights Bill: Consideration of Lords amendments

Tuesday 13 January

- Debate on a motion relating to a national policy statement on national networks

Friday 16 January

- Employment Rights Bill
- Energy (Buildings and Reduction of Fuel Use) Bill
- International Trade Agreements (Scrutiny) Bill
- Low Pay Commission (National Minimum Wage) Bill

### Commons Committee

Monday 12 January

- European Scrutiny Committee (4:00pm, Thatcher room) – 2014 Block opt-out decision: follow up
- Transport Committee (4:05pm) – Strategic river crossings

Tuesday 13 January

- Foreign Affairs Committee (2:30pm) – The UK's relations with Hong Kong
- Infrastructure Bill Committee (9:25pm and 2:00pm, room 12)

Wednesday 14 January

- Educations Committee (9:30am) – Apprenticeships and traineeships for 16 to 19 year olds

Thursday 15 January

- Infrastructure Bill Committee (11:30am and 2:00pm, room 12)

### Grand Committee

Wednesday 14 January

- Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Bill: Committee (day 3 of 7)

### Westminster Hall

Tuesday 13 December

- 4:30 – 5:00pm L Contribution of the direct selling industry to the UK economy

Wednesday 14 January

- 2:30 - 4:00pm: Government support for businesses in the North of England

### Lords Chamber

Thursday 15 January

- Debate on the natural environment and the need to reduce emissions, improve green transport and protect wildlife and green spaces

### Lords Committees

Wednesday 14 January

- Justice, Institutions and Consumer Protection EU Sub-Committee E (3:50pm, room 1) – The UK's opt-in and international agreements