

WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

Week ending Friday 7 February

January sees growth in new car and commercial vehicle registrations

Figures published by SMMT show that new car and commercial vehicle registrations both posted strong growth in January 2014, whilst the bus and coach sector fared less well despite a positive end to the year.

New car registrations

New car registrations were up 7.6% in January to 154,562 units with consumer confidence from 2013 continuing into the New Year. Within this figure alternatively-fuelled vehicle registrations increased 25% on January 2013. Looking ahead, the UK automotive industry expects to see moderate, sustainable growth in the 2014 new car market.

Commercial vehicle registrations

Commercial vehicle registrations grew 5.3% in January to 19,939 units with the rolling year total up to 328,299 units. Vans rose 12.9% on the back of robust business confidence, accelerating the 12 months to January by 13.2%. The truck market performed as expected following the move to Euro-6, with the rolling year still up 22.6% but January figures down 37%. Looking ahead, SMMT is confident that van registrations will continue to grow at a sustainable rate, while truck demand should level out over the full year.

Bus and coach registrations

The bus and coach sector started the year down just 3.4%, a drop of 17 units and broadly in-line with industry expectations for this year. Within January the purpose-built bus market showed more positivity with 5.3% growth, whilst purpose-built registrations remained stable at 0%.

(Source: SMMT)

<http://www.smmt.co.uk/smmt-membership/member-services/market-intelligence/vehicle-data/monthly-automotive-data/>



CBI: Smaller manufacturers plan investment boost

The CBI's latest SME Trends Survey has indicated that the UK's smaller manufacturers are planning to boost investment in the coming year. The survey of 335 small and medium-sized manufacturers revealed that total orders and the volume of output increased in the three months to January. Domestic orders rose, while export orders fell. However, in the coming quarter domestic and export orders are both expected to grow more strongly and production is set to rise again. Firms increased headcount modestly, while optimism about the business situation improved for the third consecutive quarter. Meanwhile, planned investment spending on buildings for the year ahead rose to record levels and that on plant and machinery strengthened further. Commenting on the report, Stephen Gifford, CBI Director of Economics, stated: "As the recovery takes hold, the investment cycle is starting to turn. It's encouraging to see smaller manufacturers planning to boost investment, particularly in their plant, machinery and buildings. Orders and output continued to grow at a healthy pace, although not as fast as predicted. However, firms remain optimistic about prospects, with growth in orders and production expected to accelerate.

(Source: CBI)

<http://www.cbi.org.uk/media-centre/press-releases/2014/02/smaller-manufacturers-plan-investment-boost/>

DfT: Reported Road Casualties in Great Britain Annual Report published

The Department for Transport has published its 2012 Reported Road Casualties in Great Britain (RRCGB) Annual Report. Key findings from the report include:

- a total of 195,723 people killed or injured in road accidents reported to the police, 4% lower than in 2011
- 1,754 people killed, an 8% decrease from 2011 and 23,039 were seriously injured, down 0.4%
- vehicle traffic levels remained broadly stable for the second year running, though there was a small fall of 0.4% between 2011 and 2012
- the number of fatalities fell for all road user types except pedal cyclists (up from 107 in 2011 to 118 in 2012) and bus and coach occupants
- pedestrian fatalities fell by 7%, motorcycle fatalities fell by 9%, car occupant fatalities fell by 9%, and goods vehicle occupant fatalities remained the same as in 2011
- the best current estimate of the total of number of road casualties in Great Britain annually, including those not reported to the police, is within the range 630,000 to 790,000
- the total value of prevention of reported road accidents in 2012 was estimated to be £15.1 billion (this includes an estimate of the cost of damage only accidents but does not allow for unreported injury accidents)
- provisional estimates for 2012 suggest that 280 people were killed in drink drive accidents, an increase of around 17% compared with 2011 and accounting for 16% of all road deaths in Great Britain

(Source: DfT)

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/245383/rrcgb2012-00.pdf

Markit/CIPS UK data shows strong UK manufacturing rebound continues

The seasonally adjusted Markit/CIPS Purchasing Manager's Index (PMI) report has shown that the UK manufacturing sector made a positive start to 2014 with rates of expansion in output and new orders remaining well above their respective long-run trends,

supporting a solid increase in payroll numbers. The PMI posted 56.7 in January, down from December's 57.2. Although the PMI currently stands at its lowest level in three months, it is still well above the series average of 51.3. The headline index has signalled an improvement in operating conditions in each of the past ten months. The strong upturn in manufacturing production was maintained in January, as companies scaled up output in response to stronger inflows of new orders. There were reports of improved demand from the domestic market and rising levels of new business from overseas. The latest expansion in new export orders was broad-based by source, with UK manufacturers mentioning improved demand from North America, mainland Europe, Asia, Brazil, Scandinavia and the Middle-East. Moreover, the ongoing improvement in global market conditions drove the rate of increase in new export business to a near three-year record. The ongoing rebound in the sector led to further job creation at the start of the year. January saw employment increase for the ninth successive month, with the rate of jobs growth remaining close to November's two-and-a-half year high.

(Source: Markit Economics)

<http://www.markiteconomics.com/Survey/PressReleases.mvc/1961e83a75274808a59a2fdff2cf4579>

Week ahead

Commons Chamber

Thursday 6 February

9.30am: Transport questions

Commons Committees

Monday 10 February

Transport Committee (4.05pm, Thatcher room)

Cycling safety

Tuesday 11 February

Consumer Rights Bill Committee (8.55am and 2.00pm, Boothroyd room)

To consider the Consumer Rights Bill

House of Lords

The House of Lords is on recess from Thursday 13 February to Monday 24 February