

WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

Week ending Friday 27 February

£43 million for infrastructure and R&D plug-in vehicle funding

New chargepoints to support the growing popularity of plug-in vehicles will be installed across the UK after government set out £32 million of infrastructure support up to 2020. Homes, hospitals, train stations and A-roads will be some of the locations for further chargepoints to maintain Britain's position as a global leader in this technology. The infrastructure commitment will include:

- £15 million to continue the Electric Vehicle Homecharge Scheme – ULEV drivers will receive a 75% grant of up to £700 towards installation from 13 April 2015
- £8 million to support public charging infrastructure across the UK, which, alongside £15 million Highway Agency funding announced in Autumn 2014, will deliver chargepoints on major roads and across town and cities
- £9 million to address other infrastructure priorities

In addition, another £11 million of funding has been announced to boost the UK's position as a world leader in low emission vehicle technology innovation. The funding will be provided to 50 organisations, ranging from small businesses to major universities, working together on 15 research and development projects, which include:

- the creation of a novel recycled carbon fibre material that will bring lightweight, low-cost vehicle chassis structures to the mass market
- development of a zero emission electric bus with hydrogen fuel cell range extender
- a prototype zero-emission power and cooling system adapted from a cutting-edge liquid nitrogen powered engine that will dramatically reduce the CO2 emissions from refrigerated trucks and air-conditioned buses

(Source: DfT)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/43-million-for-infrastructure-and-research-and-development-plug-in-vehicle-funding>

New measures announced to boost British manufacturing

Ministers announced a package of measures to boost British manufacturing, including a £22 million grant to accelerate new house building technology and a [new action plan](#) to support growth in supply chains.

The supply chain action plan includes:

- Setting out how large employers can do more to support the skills of their supply chain by redirecting high calibre applicants they can't offer apprenticeships or jobs to themselves to their suppliers, as well as opening up training programmes and facilities to the supply chain.
- Tackling late payment and ending unfair practices such as charging to stay on supplier lists.
- Boosting innovation in the supply chain, by increasing the number of small businesses the High Value Manufacturing Catapult works with each year by 50%. The Catapult, which helps firms bring new concepts to market, will double the amount of collaborative R&D accessed by small businesses - to £120 million per annum - in five years.

The plan will see industry and government take action together to improve the competitiveness of the UK supplier base.

(Source: BIS)

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/407071/bis-15-6-strengthening-uk-manufacturing-supply-chains-action-plan.pdf



EEF – National Conference

As the 2015 General Election approaches, the Manufacturers' Organisation (EEF) brought together key representatives of manufacturing, politics and the media at its National Conference. Conference speakers included Leader of the Labour Party and the Opposition Ed Miliband MP and Minister for Business, Matthew Hancock MP. The event was used to discuss the importance of investment, innovation and skills to sustain current economic growth and improve UK productivity. EEF also announced their priorities for the next government ahead of the General Election and set the next government four key priorities to build on and secure the economic recovery, laid out in their business manifesto '[Securing a manufacturing renaissance](#)'. It outlines how government must work consistently across all departments, across all localities and with the UK's international partners to drive forward a programme for growth. The EEF also state that in order to achieve these ambitions, UK government needs to punch its weight at the heart of a reformed and economically successful European Union.

(Source: EEF)

<http://www.eef.org.uk/membership/networking-events/eef-national-conference-2015>

Changes to Prompt Payment Code announced

Business Minister Matthew Hancock has announced action to improve payment practices in the UK. In his speech at the manufacturers' organisation (EEF), he stated that the government-backed voluntary Prompt Payment Code will now promote 30-day terms as standard, with a 60-day maximum limit. Unless signatories can prove exceptional circumstances for longer terms, they will be removed from the code. The change will be enforced by the new Code Compliance Board, which will include people from business representative bodies which will investigate challenges made against to the Code by their suppliers. The Prompt Payment Code sets out fair and agreed practices for businesses to follow when dealing with, and paying, their suppliers. More than 1,700 businesses and public authorities have so far committed to these principles, which include paying suppliers within an agreed timeframe and communicating with them effectively. The change follows a Downing Street summit, attended by the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB), and the

Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and a meeting of the Prompt Payment Advisory Board, which was co-chaired by Matthew Hancock and Philip King, Chief Executive of the Chartered Institute of Credit Management (CICM). Businesses will be encouraged to start complying with the strengthened Prompt Payment Code in the coming weeks. The changes are linked to the reporting laws in the Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Bill. These new laws will force the UK's largest companies to publish their payment terms, with the aim of increasing transparency.

(Source: BIS)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/hancock-big-firms-should-pay-small-suppliers-in-30-days>



Week ahead

Commons Chamber

Thursday 5 March

- Transport questions (9:30am)

Commons Committee

Monday 2 March

- Third Delegated Legislation Committee (4:30pm, room 11) – Draft Renewable Transport Fuel Obligations (Amendment) Order 2015

Grand Committee

Monday 2 March

- Draft National Minimum Wage Regulations 2015: Consideration (3:30pm)

Lords Chamber

Wednesday 4 March

- Modern Slavery Bill: Third Reading