

Transport Secretary visits Commercial Vehicle Show

The Secretary of State for Transport, Rt Hon Patrick McLoughlin MP, has visited the 2013 Commercial Vehicle Show, held at the NEC between 9-11 April. Organisers of the show, the SMMT, Road Haulage Association and IRTE Services Ltd, hosted a roundtable discussion with the Secretary of State, attended by a number of key industry representatives. The variety of issues discussed was wide-ranging covering areas such as: the use of alternative fuels; capital allowances; creating incentives for haulage companies to expand their operations; and the challenge of encouraging young people into the industry. Discussions also included reducing corporation tax, the image of the workforce and road safety, particularly in relation to other road users. The Minister also toured the show, meeting key company representatives from a diversity of manufacturers in the commercial vehicle industry, highlighting the importance of the sector to the UK economy. Commenting on his visit, Mr McLoughlin stated: "It's been fantastic to come here to the Commercial Vehicle Show and see some of the cutting edge technology at work in today's logistics industry. It's also given me the opportunity to hear direct from operators, manufacturers and engineers, and that is invaluable, given the huge importance of haulage and logistics to the nation's economy". Rob Fello MP, Chairman of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Freight Transport also visited the show.

(Source: SMMT)

<http://www.smmt.co.uk/2013/04/transport-secretary-visits-commercial-vehicle-show/>

New car registrations rise 5.9% in March

Figures published by SMMT show that new car registrations rose 5.9% in March to 394,806 units, with total Q1 registrations also showing an increase, up 7.4%. March marked the 13th consecutive month of growth in new car registrations, with volumes the highest since 2010 when the Scrappage Incentive Scheme supported the market. The uplift in the

market follows strong demand in private registrations, which were up 11.2% in Q1. Commercial vehicle registrations also showed a marked increase in March, up 8.1% to 48,675 units, and up 7% on the year-to-date at 78,942 units. However, truck registrations remain down, declining 15.1%, to 4,991 units in March and down 16.7% for the year so far. The bus and coach sector also fell in March, down 22.8% to 1,035 units, and down 17.3% in Q1 to 1,937 units. Commenting on the figures, SMMT Interim Chief Executive, Mike Baunton stated: "UK new car registrations out-performed expectations in March, the first month of the new 13-plate. Despite ongoing economic concerns, consistent monthly growth in the market is an encouraging sign of returning consumer confidence as motorists are attracted to forecourts by new models and the latest technologies".

(Source: SMMT)

<https://www.smmt.co.uk/members-lounge/member-services/market-intelligence/vehicle-data/monthly-automotive-data/>



First phase of new business bank launched

Business Secretary Vince Cable has launched the first phase of government's new business bank, with £300 million to be co-invested alongside private sector investment to address long-standing gaps in the SME finance market. This money is the first deployment from the £1 billion of new capital allocated to the business bank in the 2012 Autumn Statement. It aims to build on the Business Finance Partnership to leverage at least the same amount in private sector

investment. The focus is on promoting greater diversity of debt finance available to SMEs by encouraging the growth of smaller lenders and new entrants in the market. Investments will be made via new and existing lending channels on a commercial basis. Commenting on the launch, Dr Cable stated: "Small and medium sized businesses are still telling me that access to finance is their number one problem, preventing them from investing and growing. That's why through the business bank we are developing a range of measures to provide businesses with the power to choose the type of finance that suits them. Today's £300 million boost shows we are serious about increasing competition and diversity in the business lending market. Establishing a lasting business bank institution is a long-term project, but getting this money reaching SMEs as soon as possible is the first step".

(Source: BIS)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/300-million-boost-for-sme-lending>

Government publishes skills strategy paper

Government has published its new skills strategy, entitled 'Rigour and Responsiveness in Skills' setting out its plans for reform of the skills system. The document details government plans to: raise standards by making the system more professional and intervening in poor provision; create traineeships to prepare young people for work; reform and improve the quality of Apprenticeships; make qualifications relevant and valued; use funding to make provision more responsive; give employers and individuals the information to make the right choices. Government is also currently consulting on how to reform the apprenticeships scheme, in the light of the recent response to the independent Richard Review of Apprenticeships. (Source: BIS)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rigour-and-responsiveness-in-skills>



Review to boost growth opportunities for universities and businesses launched

Universities and Science Minister Rt Hon David Willetts MP, has launched a review to boost growth opportunities for universities and businesses. The independent review will be led by Sir Andrew Witty, CEO of GlaxoSmithKline and Chancellor of the University of Nottingham. It will offer practical steps for building relationships between universities, local businesses and local business bodies, including Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). The review will take into account recent developments including the government's response to Lord Heseltine's report 'No Stone Unturned', the industrial strategy and the approach to EU structural funds, including 'smart specialisation'.

(Source: BIS)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/universities-and-business-to-build-local-growth-opportunities>

Fallon appointed as new Energy Minister

Michael Fallon MP is to join the Department of Energy and Climate Change as Minister of State for Energy and Climate Change, as John Hayes leaves the department to take up the role of Minister of State without portfolio, based in the Cabinet Office. He will also become a member of the Privy Council. Michael Fallon is to carry out the post in addition to his current role as a Minister of State at the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

(Source: BIS)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/fallon-appointed-as-new-energy-minister>

Week ahead

The House of Lords is in recess until April 22 2013

Commons Committees

Monday 15 April

Communities and Local Government (4.00pm, Grimond room) – Decentralisation report

Transport (4.15pm, Wilson room)

Access to transport for people with disabilities