

## WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

Week ending Friday 25 April

### UK car and engine production up in March 2014

Figures published by SMMT show that car and engine production both posted strong growth in March 2014, however, commercial vehicle output was down on the month.

#### Car manufacturing

UK car production rose 12% in March to 142,158 units, bringing 2014-to-date growth to 2.9%. Commenting on the figures, SMMT Chief Executive Mike Hawes stated: "After several years in the doldrums, European demand for new cars is now picking up with growth in the last seven months. This is a welcome boost for the UK's volume manufacturers for whom Europe is the key market. As new models are launched and investments realised, the sector remains on course for all-time record levels of output by 2017"

#### Commercial vehicle manufacturing

UK commercial vehicle production fell 17.7% in March to 6,604 units, down 18.2% on the year-to-date. This decline has been attributed to restructuring of some operations in 2013 and the pull-forward of demand in the heavy commercial sector. However, with the European market showing early signs of revival industry feels there is cause for optimism.

#### Engine manufacturing

Engine manufacturing output grows 4.5% in March to 229,959 units, finishing Q1 down 1.3% at 651,255. The production for export rose 9.5% in the month, offsetting 3.6% decline in the home market.

(Source: SMMT)

<http://www.smmt.co.uk/category/manufacturing/>

### First investment of Advanced Propulsion Centre announced

Dr Vince Cable MP, the Business Secretary, has announced the first round of investment from the Advanced Propulsion Centre (APC) on a visit to the Ford facility in Dunton. The APC will see government

and industry each invest £500 million in the sector over the next 10 years to research, develop and commercialise technologies for the vehicles of the future. The first round of investment announced by Dr Cable will see £133 million of funding for powertrain projects that aim to improve fuel efficiency and reduce carbon emissions. The four projects that have been awarded this funding are:

- Ford's £100 million upgrade of the EcoBoost engine, which will receive a £13.1 million grant.
- Cummins, along with a consortium of partners, will receive £4.9 million towards a project to introduce stop/start technology to buses, improving fuel consumption by up to 20%.
- GKN Land Systems and its partners are set to receive £7.5 million as part of a £16 million project to introduce Williams F1 technology into bus powertrains to avoid energy waste.
- JCB and its partner, Flybrid, will also be awarded a £3.3 million grant as part of a project to apply Formula 1 KERS technology in diggers; cutting carbon emissions and improving fuel consumption.

Dr Cable also announced that companies can shortly bid for a further £75 million from the APC with the launch of its second competition. The APC will now run bi-annual competitions which open in April and October each year. The APC was a key outcome from the Automotive Sector Strategy and BIS has recently published a progress report on Industrial Strategy, entitled "Industrial strategy: early successes and future priorities". This document can be found online [here](#).

(Source: BIS)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/vehicles-of-the-future-get-130-million-investment>



## TfL funds new project to improve blind spot safety

Transport for London (TfL) has announced funding for a new project which will independently test blind spot safety technology for Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs). The safety initiative will be carried out by the independent Transport Research Laboratory (TRL), and the project aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the full range of blind spot safety technology in spotting pedestrians and cyclists, including technologies such as camera monitoring systems, optical and radar detection systems and other sensors fitted to HGVs. The findings will then be used to create new and detailed performance criteria, such as the distance at which objects can be detected, how easily the equipment detects vulnerable road users, and how reliable the equipment is, to allow for independent testing and evaluation of products on the market today. Companies will be able to use the new standard testing criteria to make a more informed choice about the types of safety equipment they invest in for their fleet vehicles. Commenting on the announcement, Managing Director of Surface Transport at TfL, Leon Matthews, stated: "By funding this project, we can help companies make informed choices, encouraging the use of the best equipment available and helping to drive development into further improvements in the future."

(Source: TfL)

<http://www.tfl.gov.uk/info-for/media/press-releases?intcmp=4536>

---

## LowCVP launches call for evidence on investment in UK automotive sector

A call for evidence has been launched by the Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership (LowCVP) which will inform a study on investment in the UK automotive sector and analyse the impacts of policy aimed at delivering low carbon objectives. The aim of the project is to produce an evidence base for investment in the UK automotive sector and its supply chains over the last decade and to examine the impacts of low carbon-focused policies on investment decisions. Following a competitive tender process, the Automotive Industry Research Centre, Cardiff Business School (CAIR) and Consultancy E4tech have been selected to undertake this project. The study is supported by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and Greener Journeys, and

representatives from the SMMT, European Climate Foundation, Cambridge Judge Business School, and LowCVP. As one element of the research process for this project, LowCVP is supporting the researchers in announcing a call for evidence which will inform the study's outputs. The evidence required focuses on how public policy has impacted on investment in the UK low carbon vehicles and fuels sector over the last decade. The call for evidence can be accessed online [here](#).

(Source: LowCVP)

[http://www.lowcvp.org.uk/news/lowcvp-launches-call-for-evidence-to-automotive-investment-study\\_2970.htm](http://www.lowcvp.org.uk/news/lowcvp-launches-call-for-evidence-to-automotive-investment-study_2970.htm)



## Week ahead

### Commons Chamber

No relevant activity

### Commons Committees

Tuesday 29 April

Treasury Committee (9:30am, Wilson room)

SME lending

### Westminster Hall

Tuesday 29 April

2.30pm - 4.00pm: Proposed Government reforms to taxi and private hire vehicle regulation (Grahame M Morris, Lab, Easington)

### House of Lords

The House of Lords is in recess until Tuesday 6 May.