

WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

Week ending Friday 4 May

New car registrations rise 3.3% in April 2012

SMMT has published new car and commercial vehicle registration statistics for April 2012. New car registrations rose 3.3% in April to 142,322 units, which is the third, and largest, increase this year with January-April volumes up 1.4%. Private registrations grew 14.8% in April, continuing the sector's recovery. SMMT revised up its full year forecast to 1.95 million units, now higher than 2011 by 0.4%. The van and truck market was down 13.7% in April with 92,391 registrations, and the rolling year up 4.1% to 292,352. "A strong April new car market has raised confidence across the UK motor industry with registrations increasing 3.3%," said Paul Everitt, SMMT Chief Executive. "We are seeing a steady increase in consumer confidence with growth in private demand, boosted by the arrival of a raft of new products. SMMT has increased its full year forecast to 1.95 million units, putting the market marginally ahead of 2011, indicating a period of relative stability." (Source: SMMT) <http://www.smmmt.co.uk/2012/05/private-demand-drives-growth-in-april-new-car-market/>

Government announces public procurement initiatives

Government has announced two key initiatives to build on its long term plan to reform public procurement. Firstly, Cabinet Secretary Francis Maude and Business Secretary Vince Cable, have announced that data has been published on £70 billion of potential future contracts over the next five years, across 13 different sectors including 'vehicles'. This sector has been defined as 'potential opportunities valued at over £1m for purchase, lease and spot hire of vehicles including commercial vehicles 7.5 tonnes and above, fleet management and maintenance services'. Government hopes that the publishing of data on future contract needs will aid government and industry to work together to spot any skills and investment gaps so they can act to safeguard UK competitiveness and growth. Secondly, government and a number of public sector signatories, including the CBI, and the EEF, have

signed a 'Procurement Pledge', which states that signatories will: give potential providers greater certainty of future demand, work with potential providers to identify and address strategic capabilities in supply chains to ensure providers are prepared to meet this future demand, operate an open door policy for business so that a more strategic relationship with current and future providers can be developed, give all types of potential providers, including smaller providers, simpler, more streamlined procurement processes, back UK business when bidding for contracts overseas. In addition, government has also published an initial analysis on strategic capability, using construction and tunnelling as an example and identifying some of the skills and changes required to meet future demand. In future government will publish plans for other key sectors. (Source: Cabinet Office) <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/news/70-billion-potential-government-business-published-boost-uk-growth>



Parliament prorogues ahead of Queen's Speech

Parliament has formally closed its parliamentary session and is now prorogued ahead of the State Opening of Parliament and the Queen's Speech on Wednesday 9 May. Prorogation is marked by an announcement, on behalf of the Queen, read in the House of Lords, outlining all the major bills that have passed during the parliamentary session. Bills that have received Royal Assent include: Water Industry (Financial Assistance) Act; Protection of Freedoms Act; Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act; Scotland Act; and Sunday Trading (London Olympic Games and Paralympic Games) Act.

(Source: Parliament)

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/news/2012/april/lords-prorogation/>



Week ahead

House of Commons

Wednesday 9 May – Queen’s Speech

House of Lords

Wednesday 9 May – Queen’s Speech