

WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

Week ending Friday 10 May

2013 Queen's Speech

The Queen has delivered the 2013 Queen's Speech to Parliament, the third of the coalition government since the 2010 election. The speech set out government's programme of legislation for the new parliamentary session, which was outlined under the themes of building a stronger economy, reducing the deficit and promoting fairness. The speech stated that the first priority for the government through its programme is to strengthen Britain's economic competitiveness, and that government will support the growth of the private sector and the creation of more jobs and opportunities. Key bills in the speech included: the Energy Bill (a carry-over bill from 2012), which aims to reform the electricity market to deliver secure, clean and affordable electricity; the Draft Deregulation Bill, which lays out how government intends to reduce the amount of regulation with which businesses, individuals and public bodies have to comply, and the Draft Consumer Rights Bill, which proposes to establish a simple set of consumer rights to promote competitiveness and market growth.

(Source: www.gov.uk)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/the-queens-speech-2013>

Traineeships - Framework for Delivery paper published

The Department for Education and Department for Business, Innovation and Skills have published a Framework for Delivery paper on Traineeships following the input received into the Traineeships Discussion Paper published in January 2013. The paper states that the Traineeships programme will begin from August 2013 for 16-19 year olds, with a planned extension up to 24 year olds in future years. The programme itself will consist of a high-quality work placement (for between six weeks and five months), work preparation training (such as job search and interview skills), and English and maths learning. Traineeships will last six months and conclude with a guaranteed interview with the work placement host, either for a job or a reference from the work placement to develop the learner's CV. The paper notes that employers will be able to lead the

delivery of traineeships through the Employer Ownership of Skills pilot, through existing apprenticeship contracts with the Skills funding Agency, or through working in partnership with an existing education or training provider. In addition, employers are not required to pay young people for the work placement under the traineeship, with the programme coming under an exemption to the National Minimum Wage. Launching the paper, Skills Minister, Matthew Hancock, stated: "Traineeships will address the needs of young people and employers directly, providing an important link between school or college and apprenticeships or sustainable work."

(Source: www.gov.uk)

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/197566/Traineeships_-_Framework_for_Delivery.pdf



Growth continues in April new car market

Figures published by SMMT show that UK new car registrations rose 14.8% in April to 163,357 units, the strongest growth in 14 months. Registrations in the first four months of the year grew 8.9% to 768,555 units. The strong Q1 performance has led SMMT to revise up its full year market forecast to 2.106 million units, a 3% increase on 2012. The commercial vehicle market also increased in April up 30.9% to 24,370 units and was up 11.8% on the year-to-date. This growth was mainly fuelled by van registrations which rose 43% to 20,751 units in April. The bus and coach market fared less well in April, down 18.4% to 622 units. (Source: SMMT)

<http://www.smmt.co.uk/2013/05/market-continues-to-decline-for-bus-and-coach-sector/>

Global Investment Conference 2013 held

UK Trade & Investment have hosted the 2013 Global Investment Conference where financial leaders from around the world joined the Prime Minister to discuss how the UK can attract foreign investment. The key themes at the conference were international economic growth and global business investment in the year ahead. The event is due to be followed by the G7 Finance Ministers' meeting on, part of the UK's Presidency of the G8 in 2013, in which the government has put the focus on more free trade, fairer tax systems, and more transparency. Commenting on the Global Investment Conference, Trade & Investment Minister, Lord Green, stated: "Foreign investment creates hundreds of thousands of jobs and helps to increase the productivity and competitiveness of the UK economy. It's a vital strand of the Government's plan for growth. To retain the UK's enviable position as one of the most attractive global locations of choice, Britain will need to continue to work hard to attract high value foreign investment in the coming year and beyond."

(Source: UKTI)

<http://www.ukti.gov.uk/investintheuk/howwehelp/item/492840.html>



EFG lending scheme shows improvement

Figures show that bank lending to small and medium sized businesses through the Enterprise Finance Guarantee (EFG) scheme has begun to show improvement. The upturn comes after the government wrote to the banks and publicly named those failing to make full use of the scheme to get finance out to firms. Bank of Scotland, Lloyds and Santander have all reported significant increases in the use of EFG to support businesses seeking credit, with Q4 lending for

2012/13 at £91.7 million – the highest level since September 2011. To date, the EFG has resulted in over £2 billion being lent to over 20,000 small and medium sized firms. Commenting on the figures, Business Minister Michael Fallon stated: "Banks must continue to improve their use of EFG. Access to finance is a crucial issue to SMEs and economic growth will depend on businesses having the certainty that banks are lending. This increase needs to be maintained to improve business confidence and demonstrate that responsible lending can still take place." (Source: www.gov.uk)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/fallon-lending-boost-must-be-maintained>

Week ahead

Commons Chamber

Wednesday 15 May

Queen's Speech debate on economic growth

Commons Committee

Monday 13 May

Transport Committee (4:05pm, Thatcher room)

Access to transport for people with disabilities

Tuesday 14 May

BIS Committee (11:30am, room 18)

Open access

Wednesday 15 May

Education Committee (9:30am, Grimond room)

School accountability, qualifications and curriculum reform

Thursday 16 May

Environmental Audit Committee (10:35am, Thatcher room) - Progress on carbon budgets

Westminster Hall

Thursday 16 May (4:30-7:30pm)

Debate on the (i) Education Committee report on careers guidance for young people and the government's response (ii) Science and Technology Committee report on educating tomorrow's engineers and the government's response

House of Lords

Monday 13 May

3:00pm – Queen's Speech debate on business, the economy, local government and transport