

WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

Week ending Friday 6 June

DfT announces £5million for the Clean Vehicle Technology Fund

The Transport Minister Baroness Kramer has announced that towns and cities across England can bid for funding to make improvements to local bus fleets and other vehicles in order to cut pollution. The source of the funding comes from the Clean Vehicle Technology Fund, from which local authorities and other public bodies can apply to receive a share of the £5 million fund. Speaking about the incentive, Baroness Kramer said, "This £5million will mean less harmful exhaust fumes from buses, and other vehicles, in some of our most polluted urban areas. This funding will also secure jobs and growth in the industries delivering the technologies". Any one authority can apply for up to £500,000 worth of funding, which will then allow them to fit technology that treats exhaust fumes or converts vehicles to run on cleaner fuels. The scheme builds on the £7.3 million that was awarded last year across 26 local authorities through the same Clean Vehicle Technology Fund.

(Source: DfT)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/5-million-to-cut-vehicle-pollution>

2014 Queen's Speech delivered

The final Queen's Speech before the general election has been delivered, outlining the government's programme of legislation for the new parliamentary session and highlighting the key themes of long-term economic growth, creating a stronger economy and reducing the deficit. The two main Bills that will affect the manufacturing and automotive industries are the Infrastructure Bill and the Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Bill. The Infrastructure Bill aims to augment investment in infrastructure by allowing stable, long-term funding, delivering better value for money and relieving unnecessary administrative pressures. Government aims to do this by introducing measures such as transforming the Highways Agency

into a government owned company. The purpose of the Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Bill is to build a stronger economy by supporting small businesses and ensuring that they are not disadvantaged by those who don't play by the rules. The Bill aims to increase access to finance for smaller businesses, and ensuring that the red tape that affects small firms is regularly reviewed. It also aims to tackle abuses on zero hours contracts and the National Minimum Wage. During the speech, Her Majesty also outlined a number of other changes, such as reforms to apprenticeships, whereby the total number of apprenticeships will be increased to two million by the end of Parliament. The speech also outlined government's ambition for reforms to the European Union, calling for a stronger role being created for member states and National Parliaments, and the Scottish Parliament will be given new financial powers while government continues to make the case for Scotland to remain part of the EU.

(Source: gov.uk)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/queens-speech-2014>



UK car and commercial vehicle registrations rise in May

Figures published by SMMT show that May has seen a further increase in new car registrations, bringing the total up to 27 months of consecutive growth, breaking the record set in the late 1980s. The number of registrations increased 7.7% in May to 194,032 – the most since May 2004. Registrations for the year-

to-date passed the one million mark, up to 1,058,974 units – an increase of 11.6%. SMMT Chief Executive, Mike Hawes, commented on the figures, saying “The new car market has now grown in every month since March 2012 – the longest period of growth on record and a reflection of the UK’s ever-improving economic conditions.” Registrations for commercial vehicles also rose in May by 12.6%, up to 27,198; rolling year up 14.5% to 337,857. Van demand showed an increase of 18.4% after recording a decrease in April, with 24,283 registrations. Truck registrations however, remained subdued with volumes down in the month by 20%. The rolling year remained up 21.7% fuelled by late 2013 registrations ahead of the new Euro-6 legislation. The volumes for the bus and coach market remained stable for the year so far, however total registration declined 22 units in May. The purpose-built sector fell to 284 units in the month, with year-to-date volumes showing an 11% drop. The converted bus market displayed positive figures with numbers up 31.9% in May, and up 19.9% for the year-to-date.

(Source: SMMT)

<http://www.smmt.co.uk/2014/06/may-2014-new-car-registrations/>

CIPS survey shows upsurge in UK manufacturing

The Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply (CIPS) has noted that May saw the UK manufacturing sector maintain one of its strongest spells of output and new order growth in the 22 years of the Markit/CPIS Purchasing Manager’s Index (PMI) survey history. As manufacturers increased production to meet strong inflows of new work from both domestic and export markets, the benefits were also shared with the wider economy through job creation and rising levels of input purchasing. At 57.0 in May, the headline seasonally adjusted PMI posted close to April’s five-month high of 57.3 and again registered one of its highest readings in the survey history. Manufacturing production increased for the fifteenth consecutive month in May, reflecting improved order books and stronger economic conditions. Investment goods saw and especially marked acceleration in the rate of increase in new orders, representing a positive bounce following slower demand growth in March and April. New export orders also rose for the fourteenth successive month in May, and manufacturing employment increased for the thirteenth month running.

(Source: CIPS)

<http://www.cips.org/en-GB/News/news/UK-manufacturing-upsurge-continues/>

Transport Committee states transport infrastructure may suffer under new plans

MPs on the Transport Committee have warned that transport infrastructure in some parts of the UK may get left behind under the new system, which will be implemented from 2015, that will share out central government money for local major transport schemes. The committee has published its report ‘Local transport expenditure: who decides?’ which looked closely at the new decisions for transport spending from 2015. One of the main concerns is the spread of spending across the UK; less money is being spent outside London than in the capital. Louise Ellman MP, Chair of the Committee, said on this issue “IPPR says that transport infrastructure spending is £2,500 per head in London compared with £5 per head in the North East.” The Committee has called for the new funding arrangements to be reviewed by the end of next Parliament to ensure that they are efficient and effective in providing funding for the most urgent transport priorities.

(Source: HoC Transport Committee)

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmselect/cmtran/1140/114002.htm>

Week ahead

Houses of Parliament

Monday 9 June

2:30pm House of Lords oral question in the Main Chamber: Candidate for the President of the new European Commission.

Tuesday 10 June

10:00 Treasury Select Committee: SME Lending
2:30pm House of Lords oral question: Specific objectives for the reform of the EU

Wednesday 11 June

2:30pm European Scrutiny Select Committee: Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership
3:00pm House of Lords oral question: Proposals to reform or abolish business rates