

£5 million scheme to reduce bus emissions announced

Government has announced a £5 million initiative, called the Clean Bus Technology Fund, which will allow local authorities across England to upgrade their buses to use greener technologies. The scheme is in addition to the £12 million funding recently announced for 213 new low carbon buses in the latest round of the Green Bus Fund. Local authorities in England (excluding Greater London) can bid for grants of up to £1 million to support upgrading buses with pollution-reducing technology on the routes where air quality does not meet European standards. Local authorities will be free to consider a variety of 'off-the-shelf' technologies such as fitting cleaner engines, exhaust after-treatment, conversion to hybrid or alternative fuels, or look to develop new technologies, providing they can demonstrate the high likelihood of success in improving air quality. They will be expected to work with the bus operators in deciding on routes and vehicles. Bus operators in turn may need to contribute to individual projects. Commenting on the announcement, Local Transport Minister Norman Baker MP stated: "Improving air quality is important for the coalition government. This £5 million scheme will help clean up emissions from older buses in some of our most polluted urban areas. It will lead to real improvements in air quality on some of our more polluted streets, as well as helping stimulate jobs and growth in the bus and retrofit industries. In addition it will give British companies the opportunity to market new technologies to overseas bus operators and government." (Source: DFT)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/5-million-scheme-to-reduce-bus-emissions>



TfL and the Mayor of London launch new road safety plan

The Mayor and Transport for London (TfL) have published "Safe Streets for London", a new road safety plan, covering the period until 2020, which sets out a path towards helping to reduce death and serious injury on the capital's roads. Using detailed analysis of how and why people are injured in road collisions in the capital, and which groups are affected, it looks to ensure that the right measures are being taken to reduce casualties. Through this approach, and working closely with the boroughs and the police, TfL aims to further reduce death and serious injury on London's roads by introducing and achieving a target of a 40% drop in KSIs by 2020. The report identifies 56 key measures to improve road safety including the creation of a London Vehicle Innovation Task Force that will consist of representatives from the motoring industry and work to identify, support and trial new systems such as advanced emergency braking systems for motorcycles and in-car driver feedback systems.

(Source: TfL)

<http://www.tfl.gov.uk/assets/downloads/corporate/safe-streets-for-london.pdf>

Government accepts all recommendations in Lord Young SME report

Prime Minister David Cameron has announced that all the recommendations made in a recent report by his Enterprise Advisor Lord Young on growing small businesses, will be accepted. These recommendations include:

- Legislating to abolish pre qualification questionnaires (PQQ) on contracts under €200k across the public sector, and setting "single market" principles which suppliers can expect when doing business with the public sector.
- A £30 million Growth Voucher programme to test how best to get support to small businesses in order encourage more to get specialist help on: expanding their workforce; marketing a business; financial management and growing online.

- A greater role for business schools in the local economy with the establishment of a new national “Supporting Small Business Charter” and accompanying award scheme to incentivise business schools to help SMEs grow.
- Better marketing of government schemes to support new and developing businesses by ensuring they are properly resourced and targeted at the small firms that need them most.

The recommendations from Lord Young’s report will also inform the work BIS is leading with the small business community to refresh the 2011 small and medium sized business strategy ‘Bigger, Better Business’. The publication, expected in the autumn, will look at making it easier for small and medium sized businesses to access the right support, and to improve the way government communicates with firms.

(Source: BIS)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-on-the-side-of-small-business>

Red tape freeze extended to more small businesses

Business Minister Michael Fallon MP has announced that the freeze exempting businesses with fewer than 10 employees from burdensome new regulations will now be extended to firms with up to 50 staff, and will continue from 2014. Under a rigorous cross-government assessment process, firms will also be exempted from new regulations if there is any evidence that they will result in disproportionate burdens that could impede growth. The new Small and Micro Business Assessment builds upon and strengthens the current Micro-Business Moratorium, introduced following Budget 2011. New proposals for regulation will first undergo an initial departmental impact assessment which will be considered by the independent Regulatory Policy Committee, before facing further challenge and scrutiny by the Reducing Regulation Committee (RRC), a sub-Committee of Cabinet. If at any stage, unnecessary burdens on small businesses are identified, proposals will only be cleared if an exemption is granted to smaller businesses - or if disproportionate burdens on small businesses are fully mitigated. Commenting on the announcement, Business Minister Michael Fallon MP stated: “. As Britain recovers, small businesses are leading the generation of ideas, the creation of new jobs and the shift towards a balanced economy. We cannot afford to hold them back with more rules and regulations. On my watch, new regulations will now only extend to small businesses if they are essential, justified, and where disproportionate burdens are fully

mitigated. And where regulation is not fit for purpose it will be reformed or binned.”

(Source: BIS)

<http://rnn.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/Press-Releases/Fallon-Red-tape-freeze-extended-to-more-small-businesses-68dc4.aspx>



New car demand tops pre-recession levels in May

SMMT has released its latest new car registration figures, showing that UK new car registrations grew 11% in May 2013, marking the market’s 15th successive month of growth and the largest May outturn in six years. SMMT Interim Chief Executive, Mike Baunton said: “The performance of new car registrations in May marks a significant milestone for UK automotive, with cars registered by private buyers rising more than 20%, bettering pre-recession volumes posted in 2007. While it is clear that buying confidence among UK motorists is very strong, continued economic uncertainty abroad, particularly in the rest of Europe, will mean that manufacturers remain cautious about performance in the second half of 2013.” Commercial vehicle registrations dipped 4.7% in May but the market remains up 8.3% for the year-to-date. (Source: SMMT)

<https://www.smmt.co.uk/2013/06/private-new-car-demand-tops-pre-recession-levels-in-may/>

Government announces £290 million for university and business partnerships

Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne MP, has announced £290 million of public and private investment in research projects between universities and industry. Government says that the investment for five new universities will drive innovation and growth. The projects that they will fund will tackle global

challenges such as developing advanced materials can cope under harsh conditions, including difficult to access oil and gas reservoirs. The announcement builds on the government's previous commitment to protecting and investing in science by ring fencing the science budget this Parliament, and increasing capital spending on science by nearly 7% in the same period.

(Source: BIS)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/290m-for-university-and-business-partnerships>

Week ahead

Commons Committee

Wednesday 12 June

Environmental Audit Committee (2:10pm, room tbc)

Progress on carbon budgets

Westminster Hall

No relevant activity