

WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

Week ending Friday 13 July

Business Minister speaks at SMMT Specialist Car Manufacturer event

SMMT has launched a report entitled "[Specialist car manufacturing – a uniquely British success story](#)", that demonstrates the value of the UK's low volume car manufacturing industry, highlighting some of the challenges these companies face and the opportunities for growth that can be achieved with industry, government and other stakeholders working together to support this critical sector. SMMT's report highlights how specialist car manufacturers inspire diversity in the marketplace, provide highly-skilled jobs, positively contribute to net exports and are often at the leading edge of product design and innovation. To launch the report, SMMT hosted a panel discussion featuring Michael van der Sande (Chief Commercial Officer, Aston Martin), Antony Sheriff (Managing Director, McLaren Automotive) and Roger Green (Marketing Manager, Radical Sportscars) speaking about engineering expertise, heritage and innovation within their own specialist manufacturing companies. The event was attended by parliamentarians, key stakeholders and the media. Following the panel discussion, Business Minister, Mark Prisk MP, delivered a speech in which he acknowledged the contribution of the UK's specialist car manufacturers to the UK automotive sector, and the potential business opportunities for the sector. (Source: SMMT)

<http://www.smmt.co.uk/2012/07/smmt-unveils-uk%e2%80%99s-global-leadership-of-specialist-car-manufacturing/>

All-Party Parliamentary Motor Group publishes report

The All-Party Parliamentary Motor Group, a cross-party group of MPs and Peers, has published a report calling on government to continue to work with the UK automotive industry to establish a long-term framework for growth and ensure companies can access the finance required to deliver growth opportunities. The report, [Delivering opportunities:](#)

[Automotive investment for growth](#), is based on the discussions of the All-Party Parliamentary Motor Group (APMG) with parliamentarians, ministers, officials, industry representatives and trade unions over the last year. The report welcomes investment in the industry over the last 18 months but stresses the need for a long-term growth plan, and makes four key recommendations to government:

1. Government should establish structured dialogue between the financial and automotive industries in order to enable businesses across automotive and manufacturing sectors to access finance.
2. Government should bring forward innovative support to allow smaller supply chain firms to take on apprentices and increase efforts to improve science, technology, engineering and mathematics education in schools.
3. Government should bolster its offer of support for low carbon R&D and incentives for charging infrastructure, and include opportunities for low carbon vehicle purchasing in its review of procurement.
4. Government should support the motorsport industry to create a technology roadmap and collaborate with other industries including aerospace, automotive and defence. (Source: APMG)

<http://motorappg.com/>



TSB provide long-term view of future funding support opportunities

The Technology Strategy Board (TSB) has published a delivery plan that aims to provide UK business with a clear insight on upcoming funding support

opportunities. UK companies, including those in the automotive sector, can see how up to £250 million of new government investment will lead to innovation projects and programmes designed to stimulate business growth. The aim of the newly published detail is to ensure that businesses have all of the information they need to make sufficient plans to access new government support from the TSB. The new plans are split into 12 thematic areas for investment and include five that address global challenges, including transport, energy, healthcare, built environment, and food. [The Delivery Plan](#) also outlines a package of support for SMEs operating in the UK and discusses the ongoing activity to establish seven new 'Catapult' centres across the country by 2013. Commenting on the news, Business Secretary, Vince Cable MP, stated: "Innovation is a key part of our plan for growth and the Technology Strategy Board is actively supporting industries where the UK is one step ahead of the competition". (Source: TSB) <http://www.innovateuk.org/content/featured-items/new-opportunities-for-uk-innovation.ashx>

MINI announces further £250m investment in UK

BMW Group has announced a further £250 million investment in its UK manufacturing operations by the end of 2015 at its plants in Oxford, Swindon and Hams Hall. This is to support the company's international growth strategy for the MINI brand with increasing volumes and up to 10 different models in the new line-up in the mid-term. Announced on top of the £500 million UK investment confirmed in June 2011, this brings BMW Group's total UK investment to £1.75 billion since 2000, safeguarding more than 5500 jobs across the MINI UK production network. The announcement was made during a visit to MINI Plant Oxford by Business Secretary, Vince Cable MP and Harald Krueger, Member of the Board of Management BMW Group. (Source: SMMT) <http://www.smmt.co.uk/2012/07/mini-announces-further-250m-investment-in-uk-manufacturing/>



CBI launches green growth report

The CBI has launched a report entitled '[The Colour of Growth: Maximising the Potential of Green Business](#)' that calls on politicians to adopt a smarter, more consistent approach to energy and climate change policy. The report illustrates that the UK has the ability to become a global front-runner in low carbon products and services, which could be adding £20 billion extra in annual GDP by 2015, but warns that government needs to take the right action to grasp this potential and avoid damaging the competitiveness of key industries. The report includes a case-study of Nissan's UK production of the LEAF model and lithium-ion batteries supported by a £20.7 million grant from the UK government, and also highlights automotive's collaboration with government through the Automotive Council – specifically noting the technology roadmaps as an exemplar for other sectors. (Source: CBI)

<http://www.cbi.org.uk/media-centre/press-releases/2012/07/green-or-growth-is-a-false-choice-%E2%80%93-cbi-chief/>

UK trade deficit narrowed to £2.7bn in May

Figures from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) show that the UK's deficit on seasonally adjusted trade in goods and services was £2.7 billion in May compared with a deficit of £4.1 billion in April. In addition, ONS figures showed that manufacturing output for May 2012 was up 1.2% on the month, but down 1.7% on the year, whilst production rose 1% on the month but was down 1.6% on the year. (Source: ONS)

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/index.html>

Week ahead

House of Commons

The House of Commons is on recess from Wednesday 18 July – Monday 3 September

Commons Committees

Tuesday 17 July

Business, Innovation and Skills Committee (11:39am Thatcher room) Bank lending and business growth
Witness: Rt Hon Vince Cable MP, Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills

House of Lords

No relevant activity