

WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

Week ending Friday 2 August

Multi-million pound college investment to support British industry

Government has announced the second round of funding under the College Capital Investment Fund (CCIF). The £77.7 million of government funding through the Skills Funding Agency will be matched by a £91.1 million investment from colleges. This £168 million will enable more than 20 further education colleges to build modern facilities, many of which are for skills training in sectors vital for growing British industry including automotive, engineering and construction. The CCIF will provide over £550 million of funding in total between 2013 and 2015, with the third round of funding due to be considered in autumn 2013. Commenting on the announcement, Business Secretary Vince Cable MP stated: "Vocational education and skills are an important part of rebalancing our economy. They not only help with widening participation, but also help to provide a workforce best equipped for the modern world. There is a longstanding backlog in college building and refitting. We are investing to address this. These colleges will be able to provide good teaching facilities in all parts of the country, helping us to build the skills base across the country". Examples of the 21 successful bids submitted to the Skills Funding Agency, which conducted the assessment and moderation process, include: a new centre for engineering, manufacturing and advanced skills technology with industry standard workshops for learners to use at Fareham College worth up to £14 million, and a £3.06 million construction and motor vehicle centre at Myerscough College which will provide opportunities to extend skills in new technologies including hybrid and electric cars.

(Source: BIS)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/multi-million-pound-college-investment-will-support-british-industry>

Winning bids for chargepoint funding announced

Business Minister, Michael Fallon MP, and Transport Minister, Norman Baker MP, have announced the winning bids for the first round of the £37 million funding government committed in February to offset the cost of installing infrastructure for recharging electric vehicles. Train operators, local authorities and the wider public sector will be able to make bids for the second round of funding, the closing date for which is the 30 October 2013. Government funding will provide 75% of the cost of installing new chargepoints. The £37 million funding comes from government's existing £400 million commitment to increase the uptake of ultra-low emission vehicles and is available until April 2015. (Source: DfT)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/hundreds-of-new-chargepoints-for-electric-cars>



CBI publishes "Tomorrow's Growth" skills report

The CBI has published a skills report entitled "Tomorrow's Growth: New routes to higher skills". The report argues that relying alone on traditional university courses will not meet the growing demand for degree-level, technical skills in key sectors like manufacturing, construction, IT and engineering. The CBI states that there are not enough courses with business links; patchy understanding of student finance; and poor careers advice on options open to young people – arguing a new vocational UCAS-style

system could bridge the gap. The report further states that universities need to boost the number of employer-backed “sandwich” courses and compressed or part-time degrees, which give students practical work experience or allow them to support their studies and notes that businesses need to expand their commitment to high-quality training schemes – such as higher & advanced apprenticeships; work-based training; and fast-track schemes aimed at school leavers - alongside traditional degrees. Key recommendations from the report include:

- Build a vocational UCAS-style system – a single portal with information on the full range of business-backed university courses and industry-run training programmes alongside each other.
- Create more inspiring careers information and guidance by putting in place more support for schools to meet their statutory duties. Careers advisors need to help students navigate information about different vocational options open to them; costs; career prospects; and returns.
- Universities and colleges to get more commercial in their business-outreach teams to identify gaps in skills needs and design tailored curriculum and courses with employers.
- Route apprenticeship funding directly through employers and consider an apprenticeships tax credit run through the PAYE tax system – with only one in 50 apprenticeship starts at the higher-level, this will increase the demand for more advanced training.

(Source: CBI)

http://issuu.com/the-cbi/docs/tomorrow_s_growth_report/1?e=8763041/4232155

Government announces £25 million for advanced biofuels demonstration projects

Transport Minister Norman Baker has announced £25 million of capital funding to enable the construction of demonstration-scale waste to fuel and other advanced biofuel plants in the UK. The money will be used to underpin significant private sector investment in one or more demonstration-scale advanced biofuel plants in order to drive the development of the UK's biofuel industry. The Department for Transport will commission a feasibility study to report on the detailed design of the proposed competition including eligibility

criteria and funding scheme options, as well as ensuring the project complies with EU State aid rules. Further details on the competition, including the feasibility study, will be provided in the autumn alongside a range of potential measures to support the most sustainable fuels and spur further innovation in this sector. (Source: DfT)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/25-million-for-advanced-biofuel-demonstration-projects>



IMI secures £100k funding for auto-retail training

The Institute of the Motor Industry (IMI) has been allocated nearly £100,000 by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) for its programme of work aimed at setting a common standard for vehicle retailer management and leadership training. Now in its final year of funding, the programme aims to increase consistency and raise the game for new and existing managers in the motor industry. Commenting on the announcement, Steve Nash, Chief Executive IMI, stated: “It is vital for the future success of both individual businesses and the sector as a whole that we directly address the need to improve management and leadership standards by developing a comprehensive and coherent competency standard for the first time”.

(Source: SMMT)

<http://www.smmt.co.uk/2013/07/imi-secures-100k-funding-for-auto-retail-training/>

Week ahead

The House of Commons is on recess until 2 September.

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