

WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

Week ending Friday 9 October

UK new car registrations: Highest September on record

New car registrations in the UK reached their highest-ever September total last month, according to figures released today by the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT). 462,517 cars were registered in September as buyers took advantage of a range of competitive deals on the latest 65-plate, making it the 43rd consecutive month of growth in the market. The total number of cars registered in 2015 so far is 2,096,886 – 7.1% higher than at the same point last year. It is the first time that the two million mark has been passed in September since 2004. Gains were made across all market sectors – private, fleet and business – while petrol, diesel, and alternatively fuelled vehicles (AFVs) saw increased demand. In line with typical performance so far this year, registrations of diesel and petrol cars in September grew 4.1% and 12.3% respectively, and AFVs recorded another strong month with volumes up 21.7%. This puts total year-to-date growth at 3.1% for diesel, 9.5% for petrol and 48.7% for AFVs. (Source: [SMMT](#))

CV and bus registrations post further gains

Commercial vehicle registrations

Continuing the trend running throughout 2015, commercial vehicle (CV) registrations once again posted a healthy rise in September, according to figures released by SMMT. Boosted by the new 65-plate, overall CV registrations were up by a fifth in the month, led by 24.8% increase in trucks, while van demand grew 19.6%.

Bus and coach registrations

September marked the fifth consecutive month of growth for the new bus and coach market, with the sector posting a 43.9% increase compared to last year's figures. Converted bus demand fuelled an overall sector growth, up 103.4% year on year. The purpose-built coach market benefited from the September plate change with a 25.8% boost.

(Source: [SMMT](#))

Transport Secretary – Statement on vehicle testing

Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin has highlighted the importance of protecting UK consumer interests in the wake of the admission by VW on its use of defeat devices at a meeting of European transport ministers in Luxembourg this week, stating that he would continue to press the European Commission to introduce real-world driving emissions tests as soon as possible. Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin said: "The needs of consumers must be at the forefront of action to restore public confidence in emissions testing (...). There now needs to be co-ordinated European work to establish trust in the testing process. As I highlighted to the Transport Council, driving emissions tests that reflect real-world performance must be introduced as quickly as possible. (...) In the meantime, I can confirm that the UK has now started its own testing programme." The UK will initially re-test Euro 5 category diesel cars previously type-approved by VCA that VW group has confirmed contain 'defeat device' software. This re-testing will involve both laboratory and real-world elements. These measurements will be used as a benchmark for further testing, with the final programme to be developed. (Source: [DfT](#))

SMMT hosts Conservative Party Conference Roundtable

The Society of Motor Manufacturers (SMMT) held its annual lunch at the Conservative Party Conference on Monday 5 October in Brighton. Political attendees included Damian Hinds MP, Exchequer to the Secretary, who gave the event's keynote speech. The discussion concentrated on growth and competitiveness and the Conservative government's vision for the automotive sector. The conference itself was marked by a number of strong speeches by those expected to run for leadership of the party when David Cameron leaves at the end of this term. George Osborne, Boris Johnson and Theresa May all set out their stall in a bid to establish themselves as the party's preferred candidate. (Source: SMMT, [BBC](#))

EU referendum: New 'exit' group launches its campaign

A new cross-party campaign aimed at taking the UK out of the European Union was launched this Friday. [Vote Leave](#) is made up of Conservative, Labour and UKIP MPs and donors. It is the second Eurosceptic campaign to launch ahead of the in/out referendum promised by the end of 2017. David Cameron hopes to reform the EU ahead of the referendum and will discuss his proposals with German Chancellor Angela Merkel when he hosts her at Chequers on Friday evening. Vote Leave, whose supporters include Labour's Kate Hoey and UKIP's Douglas Carswell, says it wants to negotiate a new deal based on free trade and friendly co-operation. The group is funded by people of different party affiliations, such as the City millionaire and Tory donor Peter Cruddas, Labour's biggest private backer John Mills and former UKIP treasurer Stuart Wheeler. Its core message is about sovereignty, with "take control" the main slogan - it is planning to spend about £20m. Ms Hoey called for an end to the "supremacy" of EU legislation over UK law, saying: "If we vote to leave, then the £350m we send to Brussels every week can be spent on our priorities like the NHS".

(Source: [BBC](#))

UK trade deficit narrows in August

The UK trade deficit was £3.3bn in August, a narrowing of £1.2bn from July, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) has said. But the deficit was larger than expected and is set to weigh on growth. The trade figures showed the UK's deficit in its trade in goods narrowed to £11.1bn in August compared with £12.2bn in July, although some analysts had expected to shrink further. The deficit of £11.1bn on goods was partly offset by a £7.9bn surplus on services. Exports increased by £0.8bn, boosted by cars. The UK's economy grew by 0.7% in the second quarter of the year, but growth is expected to have slowed in the current quarter.

(Source: [BBC](#))

Week ahead

Party Conferences

- SNP: 15 – 17 October in Aberdeen

Commons Committees

Monday 12 October

- Transport Committee (4.15pm, Thatcher room): VW Group emissions violations – witnesses include Mike Hawes, SMMT Chief Executive

Tuesday 13 October

- BIS Committee (9:30am, room 15): Government's productivity plan

Wednesday 14 October

- BIS Committee (9:30am, room 8) – Work of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

Thursday 15 October

- Environmental Audit Committee (9:30am, Wilson room): Diesel emissions and air quality

Commons chamber

Tuesday 13 October

- Immigration Bill: Second Reading

Wednesday 14 October

- Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill

Lords Committees

Monday 12 October

- EU Internal Market Sub-Committee (1:00pm, room 1)
- EU Select Committee (4:00pm, room 4)

Lords Chamber

Tuesday 13 October

- European Union Referendum Bill, 2nd Reading

