

WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

Week ending Friday 8 November

Government publishes call for evidence for £500 million ULEV funding

Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg has announced the publication of government's call for evidence on £500 million of funding for ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEVs) from 2015 to 2020. It was also announced that Elon Musk, Co-Founder and CEO of Tesla Motors, would be advising the government in a personal capacity on what further could be done to support the uptake of ULEVs in the UK. Nick Clegg stated: "The UK's automotive industry has undergone a renaissance in recent years and we have the potential to emerge as a trailblazer in the development, design and manufacture of green cars. We're doing well compared to our European competitors, helped by a buoyant UK car market. But, if we're to stay ahead we need to secure the UK's position as both a global leader in the production and adoption of low carbon vehicles. We need to see more people who live in Britain driving these cars and enjoying the lower running costs they can bring. The job now is making sure that we get the most out of every penny, so today (7 November 2013) I am launching a call for evidence from key players in the industry to find out how we kick start demand and make the UK the number one European destination for investment in ultra low emissions vehicles".

(Source: DfT)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/making-britain-number-one-for-ultra-low-emission-vehicles>



£75 million fund for APC pilot projects announced

Government has announced a £75 million fund to enable businesses to make and test low carbon technologies. The beneficiaries of the fund will be the pilot projects of the Advanced Propulsion Centre (APC), which was announced in July, and will channel £1 billion investment from government and industry to fund the development of new technologies over the next 10 years. The competition to find the pilot projects for the APC will be run by the UK's innovation agency, the Technology Strategy Board. To apply for a share of the £75 million APC fund, bidders must form a group which includes at least one vehicle manufacturer, an SME and at least one supply chain company. The competition, which will support a range of powertrain technologies, will open on the 2nd December 2013, with projects expected to begin from April 2014. Government has also announced funding of £1.5 million for a project that will test driverless cars in a pedestrianised area for the first time. The 'pods' will be able to carry 2 people and will be run on designated pathways in Milton Keynes city centre. It is planned that in 2015, an initial batch of 20 pods will be driver-operated and will run on lanes separated from pedestrians. By mid 2017, 100 pods that are fully autonomous will be running on pathways alongside people and will use sensors to avoid obstacles. The early collaborators on the project are engineering consultancy firm Arup, Transport Systems Catapult, The Automotive Council, and Cambridge and Oxford Universities. Commenting on the announcements, Business Secretary Vince Cable MP stated: "By 2050, very few - if any - new cars will be powered solely by the traditional internal combustion engines, so it is important that the UK car industry is at the cutting edge of low carbon technologies. The Advanced Propulsion Centre, launched as part of our Industrial Strategy, will help to position the UK as a leading innovator while securing jobs and strengthening supply chains".

(Source: BIS)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/75-million-to-build-cars-of-the-future>

Perkins Review of Engineering Skills published

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills has published the Perkins Review of Engineering Skills. A key theme of review's recommendations is further collaboration between industry and government to promote, raise awareness and facilitate the uptake of engineering careers. In response government is making available nearly £49 million in funding for engineering skills, which will be spent on the following initiatives:

- up to £30 million in funding in the new year for employers to address engineering skills shortages in sectors with specific needs
- an £18 million investment in a new elite training facility at the Manufacturing Technology Centre in Coventry. This is part of the High Value Manufacturing Catapult, which works with companies from start-ups to the likes of Rolls Royce in developing innovation and next generation technology
- £250,000 of seed funding to enable Tomorrow's Engineers to accelerate the nationwide rollout of its employer engagement programme aimed at encouraging children in school to consider engineering careers
- £40,000 to support the Daphne Jackson Trust to develop a new fellowship for people returning to professional engineering jobs after a career break
- a portal on the National Careers Service website matching businesses that want to promote engineering careers in schools with organisations that can deliver educational outreach activity.

(Source: BIS)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/employers-educators-and-engineering-professionals-called-on-to-encourage-more-people-into-engineering-careers>

October shows growth in new car, commercial vehicle and bus and coach registrations

Figures published by SMMT show that new car, commercial vehicle and bus and coach registrations all posted growth in October.

New Car

New car registrations reached 157,314 in October, an increase of 4.0%, posting the twentieth consecutive month of growth for the sector. In 2013 registrations are up 10.2% to 1,952,238 units. These sustained rises have been driven by robust private demand, a trend that has given confidence to raise the year-end

forecast to 2.25 million units – 10% ahead of last year.

Commercial vehicles

Commercial vehicle registrations rose 27.3% in October reaching 27,578 units. The overall commercial vehicle market is up 9.8% for the year-to-date, at 266,934 units. In October, van registrations rose 26.3% with 22,473 registrations and posted growth of 11% over the year so far with 227,477 registrations. Truck demand grew 32% in the month with 5,105 registrations; year-to-date volumes returned to growth, 3.2% ahead of 2012 at 39,457 units.

Bus and coach

Bus and coach registrations showed the third consecutive month of growth in October, up 13.2% to 550 units. However, registrations for the market remain down 11.0% for the year-to-date.

(Source: SMMT)

<http://www.smmt.co.uk/smmt-membership/member-services/market-intelligence/vehicle-data/monthly-automotive-data/>

Commission launched to address second hand car complaints

The Trading Standards Institute (TSI) and Minister for Employment Relations and Consumer Affairs Jo Swinson MP have announced an industry-led commission tasked to address second hand car complaints from consumers. Announced as part of National Consumer Week, the Commission brings together key representatives from consumer and automotive organisations as well as regulators and government. Participating organisations include: TSI, the National Trading Standards Board (NTSB), Citizens Advice, the AA, RAC, the Retail Motor Industry Federation (RMIF), Motor Codes and the Department for Innovation Business and Skills (BIS). TSI Chief Executive Leon Livermore said: "There's been a lot of research done over the past few years on the causes of these complaints and potential solutions. The commission will review the available evidence and come to a shared agreement regarding the right solution to those issues."

(Source: TSI)

<http://www.tradingstandards.gov.uk/extra/news-item.cfm/newsid/1311>

Week ahead

The House of Commons and House of Lords will be in recess from Wednesday 13 November until Monday 18 November.

Commons Chamber

No relevant activity

Commons Committees

Monday 11 November

Environmental Audit Committee (4:15pm, room 8)

Green finance

Westminster Hall

No relevant activity

House of Lords

Monday 11 November

Transparency of Lobbying, Non-party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Bill: Committee (day 2 of 4)