

WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

Week ending Friday 7 November

Party leaders deliver keynote speeches at CBI Annual Conference

The Confederation of British Industry (CBI) held its annual conference on Monday 10 November with David Cameron, Nick Clegg and Ed Miliband all delivering keynote speeches. Prime Minister David Cameron used his speech to assert the Conservative's position that an EU referendum would not damage the EU economy, stating that the UK was securing more inward investment than the whole of the EU despite his 2017 referendum pledge. The Prime Minister also stated that he would toughen migration controls despite concerns voiced by business and announced a £15bn "revolution" for the UK's road network, with 100 major motorway and trunk road upgrades by 2020 to tackle pinch points and problem areas – details to be announced in the December 3 Autumn Statement. Deputy Prime Minister and Leader of the Liberal Democrats, Nick Clegg, used his speech to warn that the UK would have no future outside the European Union and to highlight the role the Liberal Democrats have played in the Coalition government. Mr Clegg also emphasised the role business has to play in speaking out on how to boost living standards and highlighted eliminating the structural deficit, retaining the UK's open economic stance and investing in infrastructure as priorities for government policy in the coming years. Leader of the Labour Party, Ed Miliband, stated that the current economic recovery was "joyless" and that a future Labour government's pro-business agenda would put the interests of working people first. Mr Miliband also stated that he would not risk future jobs and prosperity by "playing political games" with the UK's membership of the European Union. Finally Mr Miliband stated that Labour was committed to maintaining the most competitive tax regime in the G7, as well as creating an independent commission for infrastructure and devolving powers to the UK's city regions on issues such as training and transport. (Source: CBI)

<http://news.cbi.org.uk/news/cbi-responds-to-political-party-leaders-speeches/>

Deputy PM launches one-stop job shops for 16-18s

Deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg, has announced that a new database of courses, opportunities and skills for 16 to 18-year-olds, similar to the UCAS system, will be in place for September 2015. Commenting on the announcement Mr Clegg stated: "Gone are the days when a vocational education is seen as the poor relation when it comes to choosing a career path. I'm delighted to be able to celebrate such a phenomenal rise in young people being given the opportunity to work as they learn. In fact we are just days away from being able to celebrate the 2 millionth apprentice starting work in England since 2010. Good quality apprenticeships give hard-working young people the chance to aim high for their dream job and play their part in building a stronger economy for Britain. Whilst it is truly exciting to be able to celebrate the tide turning with wider-ranging opportunities for our school leavers aside from university, we also need to do more to show young people all of the doors open to them. By giving every 16-year-old access to a one stop shop for the growing number of choices they have, more young people will be able to access the options available to them and make better informed choices about their career paths."

(Source: DPM)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/deputy-pm-celebrates-number-of-apprentices-doubling-and-launches-one-stop-job-shops-for-16-18s>



Deputy PM announces new plans to unlock manufacturing supply chain opportunity

Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg has announced that an action plan dedicated to boosting manufacturing supply chains to deliver a multi-billion pound lift for British industry will be put in place in the New Year. Mr Clegg stated that despite huge efforts by government and industry to work together and implement Industrial Strategies for key sectors like aerospace and automotive there is yet to be a coherent plan put in place for the vital networks of suppliers that are crucial to making and building things in the UK. The action plan, to be published from the New Year, will encourage and support UK manufacturers to work together with British companies to produce the parts they need, rather than relying on overseas manufacturers. The government will work in partnership with leading employers to develop the plan in keeping with its approach to Industrial Strategy.

(Source: DPM)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-plans-to-unlock-manufacturing-supply-chain-opportunity>



Bank of England quarterly inflation report published

Bank of England Governor Mark Carney and his Monetary Policy Committee produced their quarterly inflation report this week with the news that UK domestic demand has remained robust in recent times as supported by easier credit conditions and past rises in confidence. Inflation remains below its 2% target level with expectations for it to dip below 1% in the next six months before climbing again thereafter. Consumer Price Index (CPI) levels were 1.2% for September, down from 1.9% three months ago. This has largely been attributed to falling food and energy

prices. Expectations for the Bank rate to rise in the following months have been somewhat hampered in the face of falling inflation and weakening growth expectations. The global outlook has weakened with the Eurozone witnessing only modest growth in 2014, as well as slowing growth seen in China. Instability in the financial markets brought comment as October saw a period of substantial sell-off in the face of the ebola crisis, sanctions on Russia and the uncertainty over the political outlook in the EU.

(Source: Bank of England)

<http://www.bankofengland.co.uk/publications/Documents/inflationreport/2014/ir14nov.pdf>

Strategic Roads Reform update

The Infrastructure Bill is at a pivotal juncture in its progress with the final hearing due in the House of Lords next week (19th Nov). Following this the Bill will be passed immediately to the House of Commons for debate. The Bill will see an overhaul of the governance of the Highways Agency, and thus the Strategic Road Network. During the legislative process, parts of the road reform element have been firmed up with a stronger role for the monitoring body and clarification on issues such as the environment, safety cooperation and consultation.

(Source: DfT)

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2014-15/infrastructure.html>

Week ahead

Commons Committee

Tuesday 18 November

BIS Committee – Government support for business

Thursday 20 November

Liaison Committee – Evidence from the Prime Minister 2014-15

Westminster Hall

Tuesday 18 November

Role of Germany and the UK in the EU (2:30pm-4:00pm, Sir William Cash)

House of Lords

Wednesday 19 November

Consumer Rights Bill – Report stage

Wednesday 19 November

Infrastructure Bill – 3rd and Final reading