

WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

Week ending Friday 16 November

Vince Cable visits McLaren Automotive

Business Secretary Vince Cable has visited McLaren Automotive to present the 2012 McLaren Manufacturing Challenge trophy. The McLaren Manufacturing Challenge is an annual competition that forms part of the government's 'See Inside Manufacturing' initiative, designed to showcase the range of career opportunities available and raise the profile of modern manufacturing industries. Schools across the country were challenged to come up with inventive designs for model cars that, just as in Formula 1, must comply with strict regulations, but be as fast as possible. The 2012 winning team, Reed's School, was presented their trophy by the Business Secretary and Ron Dennis CBE, Executive Chairman of McLaren Group. Dr Cable said, "Manufacturing is a highly-creative industry that offers rewarding and well paid careers. Working closely with leading businesses like McLaren through the 'See Inside Manufacturing' programme, we are demonstrating to young people first-hand what jobs in manufacturing and engineering are like today." Ron Dennis CBE said, "As a country we are blessed with intelligent and creative young people who are capable of becoming world leaders in whichever field they choose. Sadly, in the past, too few have chosen engineering or manufacturing. That's why we run the McLaren Manufacturing Challenge and support the government's efforts to improve the image of industry." (Source: SMMT) <http://www.smmt.co.uk/2012/11/uk-schools-%e2%80%98see-inside%e2%80%99-automotive-with-mclaren-2012-manufacturing-challenge/>

EEF publishes skills report

EEF, the Manufacturers' Organisation, has published a skills report entitled 'Skills for Growth: A more productive and flexible labour market'. This is part of EEF's industrial policy agenda, following a paper published in September 'The Route to Growth', which argued that government should adopt four key ambitions against which it should judge progress: More companies bringing new products and services to market; more globally focussed companies expanding in the UK; a lower cost of doing business;

and a more productive and flexible labour market. The report calls for a number of policy recommendations, based on the following skills benchmarks: 65% of school-leavers to achieve five GCSEs A*-C grades including English and maths; to see a 25% increase in Level 3 and above STEM Apprenticeships; and the proportion of hard-to-fill vacancies to drop to 20% in 2013 and be maintained at this rate. (Source: EEF) <http://www.eef.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/779379BD-3DC6-49D0-99AA-34D90921E602/21777/skillsforgrowth2.pdf>

Vehicle manufacturing rises 6.4% in October

SMMT has issued the latest automotive manufacturing statistics for October 2012. Car manufacturing rose 6.5% over the month and is up 9.7% over the year-to-date. Commercial vehicle output rose 5.0% but remained down 6.1% over the first 10 months of 2012. UK engine production was up 1.2% with output over the year-to-date down 0.2%. Paul Everitt, SMMT Chief Executive said: "Sustained, high-value investment in R&D, facilities and new products is paving the way to a prosperous future for UK automotive, but there remain significant challenges as European market demand remains weak. It is essential government continues to focus on boosting economic growth and enhancing UK competitiveness." (Source: SMMT) <http://www.smmt.co.uk/2012/11/smmt-uk-automotive-manufacturing-october-2012/>



Shadow Business Secretary delivers One Nation industrial strategy speech

Shadow Business Secretary Chuka Umunna MP has delivered a speech at Aston Business School outlining a 'One Nation' approach to industrial strategy. Continuing the theme and arguments made in the Labour leader Ed Miliband's Party Conference speech, Mr Umunna said that the economy should serve society rather than society at the service of the market, promoting the idea of responsible and productive capitalism. He stressed the importance of the relationship between government and markets, calling for government to play an active role in "securing the skills, the finance and the infrastructure that business needs." Mr Umunna credited the government with continuing the Automotive Council, saying: "I am not the first politician to bang on about the renaissance in our Automotive Sector, or to point to the £6 billion of new investment promised in the last two years alone. But it bears repeating, because it points towards what can be achieved when government engages with industry in a different way. Not to dictate, but to assist a sector in finding a vision for its own future, understanding what business is saying and how to help. Not to control but to coordinate. Not to step away, but to provide active support, and unblock blockages. Through the Automotive Council, the industry has found a way to collaborate on issues of joint concern away from the market while continuing to compete fiercely in domestic and global markets." (Source: Labour)

<http://www.labour.org.uk/chuka-umunna-speech-on-a-one-nation-industrial-strategy,2012-11-14>



Week ahead

Commons Committees

Tuesday 20 November:

Energy and Climate Change Committee (5.00pm, room 15): Investment in energy infrastructure and the Energy Bill, with Energy Secretary Ed Davey MP

Wednesday 21 November:

Science and Technology Committee (9.10am, Wilson room): Engineering skills

Commons Chamber

Thursday 22 November:

Backbench debate – Industrial policy and UK manufacturing industries