



## WEEK IN WESTMINSTER



Week ending Friday 19 November 2010

- 1. Government launches new skills strategy**
- 2. Prime minister appears before Commons Liaison Committee**
- 3. UK automotive production figures for October 2010 released**
- 4. Scottish government publishes low carbon strategy**
- 5. Business secretary launches new Entrepreneurs' Forum**
- 6. Week ahead**

### **1. Government launches new skills strategy**

Business secretary Vince Cable MP and skills minister John Hayes MP have launched government's strategy for skills and reform of the further education (FE) and skills system. The strategy sets out the vision for reform of the FE and skills system in order to improve the skills of the UK workforce, economy and engagement in learning. Government's reforms include: expanding the numbers of adult apprenticeships available, implementing the government's objective of an additional 75,000 apprenticeship places by 2014-15; fully funding training for young adults aged from 19 up to 24 undertaking their first full level 2 or first level 3 qualification when they do not already have one; initiating a demand-led growth and innovation fund of up to £50 million of government investment a year to support employer-led initiatives within sectors; replacing Train to Gain with an SME focused programme to help small employers train low-skilled staff; and help people who are on active job-seeking benefits to secure work through labour-market relevant training. Vince Cable said: "If we are to achieve sustainable growth, nothing is more important than addressing current failings in skills training, and this strategy reflects this Government's determination to do both." (Source: BIS) [bis.gov.uk/news/topstories/2010/Nov/skills-for-sustainable-growth](http://bis.gov.uk/news/topstories/2010/Nov/skills-for-sustainable-growth)

### **2. Prime minister appears before Commons Liaison Committee**

Prime Minister David Cameron has for the first time appeared before the House of Commons Liaison Committee. The Committee, made up of all Commons Select Committee chairs, meets twice yearly to put questions to the prime minister on key political and economic issues. The Comprehensive Spending Review and associated government cuts was the main focus of discussion, with other topics covering the low carbon economy and foreign affairs. Andrew Miller MP, chair of the Commons Science and Technology Committee asked the prime minister how government's plans on migration limits would affect the transfer of highly skilled workers. Mr Cameron said that he wanted to lead a "pro-science" government, but also said that government's policy on the issue badly needed to control immigration, indicating that criteria of the new immigration rules should be released next week. (Source: Parliament)

[www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/liason-committee/news/further-details-for-the-evidence-session/](http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/liason-committee/news/further-details-for-the-evidence-session/)

### **3. UK automotive production figures for October 2010 released**

SMMT has published October 2010 figures for UK automotive production. UK car production rose by 6.0% year-on-year and 31.1% year-to-date, with commercial vehicle output rising by 47.1% year-on-year, with a 39.0% rise over the year-to-date. Engine output fell 5.3% in October, but remains up 19.7% over the year-to-date. Paul Everitt, SMMT chief executive said: "UK vehicle production rose 8.8% in October and signals steady improvement in global vehicle markets and the strength of the UK product line-up. It is extremely important that government

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continues to champion the role of vehicle manufacturing in rebalancing the national economy and works with the automotive industry to create conditions for increased investment in R&D, skills and capital equipment. Industry's focus on low carbon technology and its global reach can help generate the private sector growth the country needs." (Source: SMMT)

[www.smmt.co.uk/articles/article.cfm?articleid=22715](http://www.smmt.co.uk/articles/article.cfm?articleid=22715)

#### **4. Scottish government publishes low carbon strategy**

The Scottish Government has published its strategy on a low carbon economy in Scotland. The paper, entitled 'A low carbon economic strategy for Scotland: Scotland - a low carbon society', outlines areas of key strategic importance for Scotland in enabling economic growth through a strategy of emissions reductions. The Scottish Government estimates that the low carbon vehicle market is worth £0.5 billion in Scotland, with significant opportunities to expand and deliver sustainable transport. The document states: "Sustainable transport offers a real opportunity to re-focus Scotland's expertise in high value manufacturing into a new, dynamic and rapidly growing market for low carbon vehicles." (Source: Scottish Government) [www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/331364/0107855.pdf](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/331364/0107855.pdf)

#### **5. Business secretary launches new Entrepreneurs' Forum**

Business secretary Vince Cable has announced a new Entrepreneurs' Forum to provide informal and personal advice on new business and enterprise policies. The announcement was made at the beginning of Global Entrepreneurship Week, seven days of events aimed at boosting enterprise and start-ups across the globe. The forum is part of government's agenda to engage with business figures to hear their views on encouraging enterprise and entrepreneurship as an alternative career. The business secretary said: "Start-ups create jobs, stimulate innovation and provide a competitive spur to existing businesses to encourage them to increase their productivity. I am delighted with the quality of the membership of my new forum and look forward to bouncing ideas off them and hearing their views." The forum will meet around four times a year, with a flexible schedule according to the material to be discussed. The first meeting is expected to take place early in the new year. (Source: BIS)

[bis.gov.uk/news/topstories/2010/Nov/global-entrepreneurship-week](http://bis.gov.uk/news/topstories/2010/Nov/global-entrepreneurship-week)

#### **6. Week ahead**

##### **House of Commons**

Tuesday 23 November: Business, Innovation and Skills Committee (10.30am, room 19), Government assistance to industry, evidence from: Forum of Private Business, Federation of Small Businesses, and CBI.

Wednesday 24 November: Environmental Audit Committee (2.45pm, Thatcher room), Green investment bank, evidence from: Bob Wigley, chairman, Green Investment Bank Commission, and James Cameron, vice chairman, Climate Change Capital.

Wednesday 24 November: Transport Committee (3.00pm, room 8), Transport and the outcome of the comprehensive spending review, evidence from: Rt Hon Philip Hammond MP, secretary of state for transport.

##### **House of Lords**

No relevant activity