

WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

Week ending Friday 29 November

VOSA and DSA merged to create DVSA

Robert Goodwill MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport, has announced that the new agency formed through the merger of the Driving Standards Agency (DSA) and the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) will be named the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA). The decision to merge the two agencies was taken earlier this year following government's Motoring Services Strategy consultation. Government has stated that the creation of a single agency is intended to deliver the following strategic objectives:

- motorists and businesses will benefit from more convenient and cost effective motoring services - such as driving tests and goods vehicle testing
- delivery of the same high quality testing and standards services to motorists and businesses, but with greater efficiency
- delivering testing in a way which is more flexible and convenient for customers; this merger offers opportunities to explore and extend this in the future
- create opportunities to identify synergies between the two organisations and service improvements that could potentially enable a reduction in fees

The agency will begin to use its new name immediately with formal and full integration taking place over the coming months. Until the merger is complete on 1 April 2014, references to DVSA will also include a statement "incorporating DSA and VOSA". The current Chief Executive of both agencies, Alistair Peoples, will become the chief executive of the new single agency.

(Source: DfT)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/vosadsahtt>

Two weeks left to apply for Regional Growth Funding

Government has urged industry to apply for a share of £300 million from the Regional Growth Fund before the deadline at midday on Monday, 9 December 2013. Round five of the Regional Growth Fund builds on the

first four rounds of the £3.2 billion fund. So far over 400 projects and programmes are being supported across the country creating thousands of jobs. Round six of the Regional Growth Fund will be launched in the summer of 2014 - so any companies who will not be ready to apply by December can start planning for applications in 2014. In addition, Business Secretary Vince Cable visited British car maker Lotus in East Anglia to announce £10 million award from the Regional Growth Fund. The award will help create more than 300 new jobs, support research and development activities and train existing personnel. (Source: BIS)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/two-weeks-left-to-apply-for-regional-growth-funding>



Cross-party MPs call for ten year pro-manufacturing fiscal framework

A new report published by the All-Party Parliamentary Manufacturing Group warns that UK manufacturing is being prevented from becoming 'wholly competitive' by a national industrial culture that discourages companies from investing in vital long-term business drivers such as skills development and technological innovation. The report highlights many firms' reluctance to engage with available support packages and business development programmes as further evidence of manufacturing businesses disinclination to seek advice and collaborate in order to grow. The report calls on government to not only do more to create and foster a pro-investment culture in UK manufacturing, but to also restructure key interactions

between manufacturing businesses and policymakers and take steps to build competitive business practices into manufacturers' strategic thinking. In particular, the report urges government to lead a cross-party initiative, in consultation with industry, to establish a ten-year fiscal framework designed to encourage manufacturing businesses to adopt more ambitious growth strategies based on longer-term investment. Crucially, the report calls on all political parties to honour the framework regardless of the outcome of the next general election. The report further calls for the Department for Business Innovation and Skills to radically restructure its civil service manufacturing team, with vertical teams to better mirror and support supply chain sectors and ensure growth and stability of OEMs, with horizontal teams focused on size of company, rather than sector. Further recommendations include:

- All parties should commit to protect funding for the TSB, EPSRC and Catapult Centres to 2020.
- The Cabinet Office should coordinate, with the Department for Business Innovation and Skills, pilot projects looking at take-up of business support policies, in advance of the full roll-out of the Business Bank.
- Government should work more closely with trade associations in the manufacturing sector, particularly those with a strong core of SME members, in the initial design of policy programmes, and subsequently in marketing programmes to their members.
- The Department for Business Innovation and Skills should collaborate with industry on a national campaign for automation, with a focus on myth-busting, making the case for automation and job creation.
- UKTI should be more targeted in its approach, and collaborate with existing bodies to promote export training where appropriate.
- The Manufacturing Advisory Service should undertake a review of its strategic management advice, and expand its remit in this area with more targeted support. It should work with organisations including business schools, trade associations and Chambers of Commerce, and partner with the Design Council and UKTI amongst others, to link strategic business advice to structural evolution of the business.

UK-designed engine wins top innovation prize

Ford's 1.0-litre EcoBoost engine has been announced as the winner of the SMMT Award for Automotive

Innovation 2013. The SMMT Award for Automotive Innovation recognises the best of the UK's flair for world-class design, R&D and engineering with previous winners including bus manufacturer Optare, as well as Jaguar Land Rover and Gordon Murray Design. The Award was presented to Ford's Director of Global Vehicle Evaluation and Verification, Graham Hoare, by Nigel Stein, Chief Executive at GKN Driveline, at the 2013 SMMT Annual Dinner on 26 November. Oxfordshire-based YASA Motors won the 'highly commended' accolade for its compact but powerful YASA-400 electric motor, which was a major feature in the Jaguar C-X75 supercar prototype. The Award judging panel featured industry and engineering leaders: Mike Hawes, Chief Executive, SMMT; Dave Salt, Chief Engineer, GKN Driveline; Robert Lea, Industrial Editor, The Times; Jim Higginbotham, Managing Director, Large Corporate and Special Asset Finance, Lombard and John Laughlin, Programme Manager – Low Carbon Vehicles, Technology Strategy Board.

(Source: SMMT)

<http://www.smmt.co.uk/2013/11/uk-designed-engine-wins-top-innovation-prize/>



Automotive industry celebrates youth skills development

Influential figures from across the UK automotive industry gathered in London on Tuesday 26 November to celebrate the achievements of 31 young people in a groundbreaking initiative to enhance skills in the sector. The 'Working Assets' initiative, funded through SMMT's Charitable Trust and delivered by the Foyer Federation, offers young people who have faced challenging circumstances an exciting opportunity to develop their employability and life skills through working with automotive organisations. Residents of five Foyers across the country undertook work programmes at four SMMT members'

manufacturing operations, engaging in a range of activities to enhance their long-term employability. Hosting the participants were Ford's Technical Centre in Basildon, Essex; BMW's MINI plant in Swindon; Toyota's car factory in Burnaston, Derbyshire and Unipart Manufacturing in Coventry. Each young person took on a variety of activities including team-building, exposure to a professional environment in a manufacturing facility, and development of CVs. The projects were specifically designed to engage the participants with the challenges of modern manufacturing, as well as develop their capacity for teamwork – and, ultimately, to enhance their prospects for future employment in the manufacturing sector.

(Source: SMMT)

<http://www.smmt.co.uk/2013/11/automotive-industry-celebrates-youth-skills-development/>

Nissan and British Gas launch electric commercial vehicle trial

British Gas is piloting 28 Nissan e-NV200 vans this winter to determine the future viability of 100% electric vehicle technology as part of its 13,000 home service vans fleet. Nissan has been globally piloting the e-NV200 for two years ahead of the van going on sale to the public next year. The pilot of the Nissan e-NV200s is being conducted nationwide from November 2013 until April 2014 to assess how the vans perform in winter conditions during typical British Gas home services daily usage patterns. As part of a long-standing contract to manage the entire fleet for Centrica, British Gas' parent company, Hitachi Capital Commercial Vehicle Solutions' dedicated British Gas team has been involved with extensive testing to prove the concept and played a key role in rolling out to engineers and then providing on-going 24 hour support. Hitachi Capital has also undertaken IMI training to a high level in conjunction with Gateshead College and will be involved in generating accurate total cost of ownership modelling to compare this technology with conventional the internal combustion engine drivetrain. Gateshead College has delivered all of the training to the British Gas drivers to ensure they are fully briefed in how to drive and live with the 100% electric Nissan e-NV200.

(Source: Centrica)

<http://www.centrica.com/index.asp?pageid=1041&newsid=2960>

North East leading UK region for electric vehicles

The Energy Saving Trust has revealed that the North East is leading the way in electric vehicles, with official figures showing more per head than anywhere in the UK. Over the past two years, the North East has installed 1,163 charge points making it the largest regional network of electric vehicle chargers in the UK. In recognition of the North East's success and commitment to electric vehicles, the Energy Saving Trust and Washington based Zero Carbon Futures have organised a 'Plug-in your fleet' event on 3rd December 2013 at Gateshead College's Performance Track. High-profile organisations, such as the Energy Saving Trust and EDF Energy, will talk about organisations that are saving money on fuel and reducing emissions by switching to electric vehicles. Gateshead-based company Route Monkey will speak at the event demonstrating the positive impact of electric vehicles within their business.

(Source: Energy Saving Trust)

<http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/Energy-Saving-Trust/Press/Press-releases/North-East-leading-UK-region-for-electric-vehicles>

Week ahead

Commons Chamber

Wednesday 4 December

Opposition day debate: Business rates

Commons Committees

Monday 2 December

Transport Committee (4:05pm, Grimond room)

Cycling safety

Wednesday 4 December

Transport Committee (5:50pm, Grimond room)

Cycling safety – Witness: Robert Goodwill MP,

Transport Minister

Westminster Hall

Wednesday 4 December

9.30am - 11.00am: Cumulative electricity tax burden for energy intensive industries (Paul Farrelly, Lab, Newcastle-under-Lyme)

House of Lords

Thursday 5 December

External Affairs (EU Sub-Committee C) (10.00am, room 1) Transatlantic trade and investment partnership