

WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

Week ending Friday 19 December

Budget 2015 date confirmed

Chancellor George Osborne has announced the date of Budget 2015 as Wednesday 18 March 2015. He made the announcement appearing in front of the House of Commons Treasury Committee. Budget 2015 will come a few weeks before Parliament rises ahead of the general election on 7 May 2015.

(Source: BBC)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-30518291>

November 2014 UK automotive manufacturing figures published

SMMT has issued its latest statistics detailing UK vehicle and engine manufacturing data for November 2014. In the last month, UK car manufacturing output fell by 0.2%, with 137,347 cars produced. The year-to-date remained stable at 1,419,427 units, a drop of 0.3%. Exports remained subdued due to economic uncertainty in export markets. In contrast, there was continued growth for the home market. UK commercial vehicle (CV) manufacturing fell just 0.7% in November with year-to-date figures demonstrating a fall of 21.6% affected by 2013 restructuring. A more positive 2015 is expected. 202,132 engines were built in November – a drop of 12.6% – as impact of retooling for new models continued. Year-to-date output is subdued with a 7.0% fall to 2,235,331 units.

(Source: SMMT)

<http://www.smmt.co.uk/2014/12/car-manufacturing-stable-home-market-outperforms-exports/>

SMMT urges London rethink on Ultra Low Emission Zone

SMMT has published an open letter to London Mayor Boris Johnson welcoming plans for an Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) in London by 2020. In the open letter, SMMT has called for a rethink of the current proposals set out by Transport for London (TfL) to enforce the latest emission standards for both petrol and diesel vehicles. This reflects the step

change in clean diesel technology, and helps to ensure similar schemes across the UK and Europe are harmonised. The UK automotive industry is committed to air quality improvement and carbon reduction and calls for more a more ambitious ULEZ. Mike Hawes, CEO of SMMT, added: “We need an integrated approach on air quality at local, regional, national and European level. Fleet renewal, or the uptake of new vehicles on the road, is critical in reducing emissions. Proposals such as London’s ULEZ can help deliver this goal. Air quality is often a local issue so we need a flexibility that allows for focused initiatives like the ULEZ but which sit within an overall framework of harmonised standards across Europe. The automotive sector must have certainty in policy direction so technology investments can be targeted on addressing key issues such as air quality and climate change.”

(Source: SMMT)

<http://www.smmt.co.uk/2014/12/auto-industry-urges-london-rethink-ultra-low-emission-zone-ulez/>



£6bn package for UK science and innovation

Government has unveiled its new plan to keep British science and innovation at the forefront of global excellence. The [Science and Innovation Strategy](#), formally announced by Universities, Science and Cities Minister Greg Clark, aims to build on the strengths of British science and enterprise, and sets out government’s priorities for investment and support to 2020/21, as well as the key principles that will

underpin science and innovation policy during the years ahead. Highlights of the strategy include:

- £3bn to support individual capital projects and institutional capital to maintain the excellence of laboratories at universities and research institutes
- £2.9bn towards large capital projects to support scientific 'Grand Challenges'
- Up to "235 million for a 'Sir Henry Royce Institute for Advanced Materials' based in Manchester
- £61 million for the High Value Manufacturing Catapult and an additional £28 million will create a new National Formulation Centre within the Catapult to drive innovation and develop the next generation of technology products

(Source: HM Treasury and BIS)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/our-plan-for-growth-science-and-innovation>



SME sized engineering firms funded to boost skills

Government has announced that small and medium sized engineering firms can apply for skills funding. Engineering companies with fewer than 250 employees will be able to apply for a share of the first £2.5 million of a £10 million match funding pot to develop innovative company-specific training. The new fund forms part of a £30 million initiative that sees government and employers join together to invest in engineering skills. Applications for funding will remain open until 27 February, or until funds are allocated. (Source: BIS)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/small-and-medium-sized-engineering-firms-funded-to-boost-skills>

Positive outlook for UK manufacturers

The Confederation of British Industry (CBI) has published its latest Industrial Trends Survey. It announced that activity in the manufacturing sector remained steady in December, and production is expected to continue rising in the next three months. The survey of 485 manufacturers found that total order books edged up slightly, remaining strongly above average. Amongst various sectors, growth in Motor Vehicles & Transport Equipment rose to a nine-month high. (Source: CBI)

<http://news.cbi.org.uk/news/solid-outlook-for-uk-s-manufacturers/>

Week ahead

House of Commons

- In recess until Monday, 5 January 2015

Commons Chamber

Thursday 8 January

- 9.30am - Business, Innovation and Skills questions

Friday 9 January

- 9.30 am – EU Membership (Audit of costs and benefits) Bill

Commons Committees

Tuesday 6 January

- Treasury Committee (10am, Grimond Room)
- Infrastructure Bill Committee (9.25am + 2.00pm)

Thursday 8 January

- Bill Committees: Infrastructure Bill Committee (11.30am + 2.00pm)

House of Lords

- In recess until Tuesday, 6 January 2015