

From: South Wales Chamber [rachel@centreforbusiness-co.ccsend.com] on behalf of South Wales Chamber [info@southwaleschamber.co.uk]

Sent: 21 December 2009 13:16

To: Natalie Taylor

Subject: December - Volume 3: Policy Update

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Greetings!

Welcome to the final policy eshot of 2009. Please take some time to go through the information contained under the four key issues on which our lobbying and representation is based.

If you have any queries please contact **Natalie Taylor** on **01633 242722** or email: policy@southwaleschamber.co.uk.

FINANCE AND TAXATION



→ State of the Nation

The results of the latest quarterly economic survey will be published in the New Year and a new event for the Chamber's calendar will be held to coincide with this on **12th January** at the **Miskin Manor Hotel**.

Professor Brian Morgan of the University of Wales Institute Cardiff will be explaining what the results mean for Wales, plus the South Wales Chamber's National Recovery Plan will be launched.

[Book places](#)

→ Pre-Budget Report

The South Wales Chamber of Commerce has commented on the following announcements:

- We believe the Government has recognized that help for small businesses is essential during this economic downturn. We welcome the announcement of freezing the rate of small business corporation tax at 21%, and extending the £1.3 billion Enterprise Finance Guarantee for a further 12 months.
- A 0.5% increase to National Insurance Contributions in 2011 is a major issue for business. This announcement will not encourage job creation within small businesses and tackle the escalating problem of unemployment in Wales.
- We believe that the announcement of public sector cuts will have a detrimental affect on private sector finances.

- The South Wales Chamber of Commerce was hoping for the announcement of a strong, reliable and optimistic National Recovery Plan that outlines how the budget deficit will be halved leading us into an optimistic 2010.

→ Business Rates

Small Businesses in Wales will soon be faced with the burden of increased business rate bills. Our members are concerned that the new valuations for April 2010 are based on property prices as in April 2008, a year when property was booming! Some rates will fluctuate from 15% to an astonishing 50%, small businesses will be left with the burden of finding the extra income; we hope this will not result in redundancies and even more closures of small businesses.

A letter of concern has been sent to the Deputy First Minister and Minister for Finance to outline the issues that small businesses are facing as a result of increased rates bills. Included in the letter is a list of recommendations that we hope will be addressed by the Welsh Assembly Government.

[View Letter](#)

→ VAT Online Service

From April 2010, HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) plans to phase out paper VAT returns.

Under Government proposals:

- From 1 April 2010 all VAT registered businesses with an annual turnover of £100,000 or more (excluding VAT) will have to file their VAT returns online and pay electronically.
- From 1 April 2010 all businesses newly registering for VAT, whatever their turnover, will be required to file their VAT returns online and pay electronically.
- Paper returns will still be an option for those remaining VAT registered businesses with a turnover under £100,000 but this will be reviewed before 2012 when it is expected that all VAT registered businesses will have to file their VAT returns online and pay electronically.
- You can also find out more about filing your VAT return online at www.hmrc.gov.uk/vat/vat-online/index.htm.
- HMRC's Carter Programme was established to ensure successful implementation of the recommendations Lord Carter made in his 'Review of HMRC Online Services'.

EMPLOYMENT



→ Pay and work rights helpline and website

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) has

recently launched an awareness raising campaign to inform workers of their rights on pay, deductions and working hours.

As part of the campaign, the SWCC are promoting the [Pay and Work Rights Helpline](#) - this enables workers and employers to call in confidence for information and advice on the minimum wage, the right not to have to work more than an average 48 hours a week as well as for information on employment agencies or gangmasters.

In addition, BIS has produced the [Pay and Work Rights Frequently Asked Questions](#) to help workers understand their rights.

INFRASTRUCTURE



→ High Speed Rail

The BCC'S national [High-Speed Rail Report](#) was created in conjunction with a number of affiliates Chambers. The chapter for Wales can be viewed on page 18 and 19.

→ Infrastructure Survey

In January 2010, members of the SWCC will receive an online Infrastructure survey. This survey is part an Infrastructure campaign managed by the British Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with the SWCC.

ENVIRONMENT



→ Green Fleet Review

The Energy Savings Trust is able to offer the Green Fleet Review in Wales as a result of WAG funding until 2011/12. The review is fully funded and eligibility is based on fleet size.

Reviews can be made across a wide cross section of organisations in both the public and private sectors with fleet sizes from 55 to over 24,000 vehicles. To qualify you need 50 'vehicle-equivalents' of 3.5 tonnes or less (cars, 4x4s, pickups, motorbikes and most vans). The review takes a very practical approach to reducing the many impacts of running a fleet of vehicles, with the aim to not only cut carbon but also costs.

If you require further information please contact the Energy

	Savings Trust on 02920 468340.
	To comment on any of the topics included, please contact us: policy@southwaleschamber.co.uk or call 01633 222664. Seasons Greetings, The team at South Wales Chamber of Commerce

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