

PRESS RELEASE

Embargo: 00.01 7th July 2010

6 July 2010

Have they listened?

The South Wales Chamber of Commerce (SWCC) has today released its final National Recovery Plan for Wales (NRP) document – ‘A Private Sector Response’, but have WAG listened since launching the NRP in January?

Since launching the NRP in January this year to drive forward Wales’ economic recovery, the SWCC have developed a Task and Finish Group – a selection of influential private sector businesses from a variety of industries, hosted a conference to gather the opinion of businesses from different industry sectors and produced the final document which outlines a number of areas the private sector want to see improved and changed.

The Task and Finish Group developed a discussion document and outlined the following key priorities that were discussed at the conference that have now been fed into the final document:

- Business Champion
- Finance and funding
- Business advice
- Regulation and red tape
- Infrastructure
- International trade
- Procurement
- Knowledge and skills

David Russ, Managing Director of the South Wales Chamber of Commerce, said: “In light of the Deputy First Minister’s launch of the Economic Renewal Programme (ERP) it is clear the government have listened to the private sector on some concerns but not others. The joined up government approach the ERP has taken is certainly something that will make a significant difference in the way government departments do businesses, as opposed to working in isolation.

“However, the Deputy First Minister referred to internationalising our businesses and the public and private sector working together but did not set out a clear direction or strategy on how this would be achieved. We were very much part of the round table discussions and it is clearly going to be the private sector leading the economic recovery, yet there isn’t a clear distinction on how this will happen.

“There also isn’t any clear strategy on how the ERP will affect key economic indicators such as GDP and GVA – what are the predictions on how the ERP is going to benefit the economy. Where are the statistics?

“What we would have liked to have seen from the ERP is focus on driving entrepreneurship by introducing a Welsh Centre of Excellence for Entrepreneurship. Instead the Government said they should encourage entrepreneurship – what would have been useful is HOW the Government would encourage entrepreneurship.

“The Welsh Centre of Excellence for Entrepreneurship would focus on the gaps in knowledge of business owners - providing information to better understand business regulation and financial literacy. Also, to highlight Welsh business success stories on a local, national, regional and international scale.

“Current private sector consultations to the WAG are so fragmented the message is often diluted, the aim of the NRP was to bring the private sector together to collectively voice views and hammer home the knowledge and experience within the private sector that could contribute to many of the current economic problems we have in Wales.

“The NRP was also an opportunity for members from different private sector industries to contribute to the plan and aim to make a real influence to the ‘decision makers’.

However, some of our messages since January clearly haven't been considered when it is going to be the private sector who will lead the economic recovery. What we need now is greater clarity from the Government on how the items set out in the ERP are going to move Wales from the bottom of the economic ladder to the top. This will enable private sector confidence to grow towards the public sector, therefore, allowing businesses to keep investing and contributing towards a prosperous Welsh economy."

Ends

Notes for editors

The National Recovery Plan for Wales final document – 'A Private Sector Response' can be read in full attached to this document.

The South Wales Chamber of Commerce is the ultimate business network in South Wales and now incorporates the West Wales Chamber of Commerce. The chamber exists to provide a regional voice and offer support to businesses pan South Wales.

Since merging with the West Wales Chamber of Commerce, the South Wales Chamber of Commerce now represents over 1000 businesses and 100,000 employees.

For more press information please contact Laurian Corner at the South Wales Chamber on 01633 242715 or laurian.corner@southwaleschamber.co.uk