

## Scotland's Small Business Fortnight

Issue 83 | Wednesday 8 February 2012

*Keeping you informed of the key small business stories and what the Federation of Small Businesses has been saying about them*

### Procurement paper kicks off debate

The [Jimmy Reid Foundation](#) this week published a report looking into public procurement policy in Scotland. Making the case for more small businesses to win Scottish public contracts, Andy Willox OBE, the Federation of Small Businesses' (FSB) Scottish Policy Convenor, said:

"The FSB is right behind any moves to use the Scottish public sector's buying power to benefit our local economies and we've been expressing our dissatisfaction about the aggregation agenda for some time. While we may not agree with every element of this report, we believe that it makes a good contribution to a debate Scotland needs to have."

Our comments were carried in the [Scotsman](#), on the [BBC website](#) and the [Daily Record website](#). You can also hear us talk about procurement in Scotland on [BBC Radio Scotland's Scotland at Ten programme \(about 1 min in\)](#).

If you do have a problem with a public sector process, you can seek advice on the procurement rules which must be followed by public bodies in Scotland and information on how contracts are advertised and awarded through the [Single Point of Enquiry](#). In addition, the [Supplier Development Programme](#) has a host of upcoming events that might help you with public sector work.

### Shop unit figures provide food for thought

New statistics on shop unit vacancy rates from the Local Data Company have, this week, provoked more discussion on the future of our high streets. Hear us talk town centres and high streets on BBC Radio's Scotland's [Good Morning Scotland \(1hr 45 minutes\)](#) and the [STV news \(7 minutes\)](#). Keep an eye on this issue during the upcoming local authority election campaign.

### FSB leads way on ferry issue

The FSB last week called for a rethink over plans to exclude heavy goods vehicles from a discount scheme for island ferries – read about it in the [Press and Journal](#). Watch this space for more action in this area!

### Issues to watch out for....

Next week, the big banks will be talking about their Project Merlin figures. Have you recently struggled to get finance or did you find getting investment or working capital from the banks easier than you did in the past? Would you be interested in speaking to the media about your experiences? E- [Scotland.policy@fsb.org.uk](mailto:Scotland.policy@fsb.org.uk)

Over the next week, we'll also soon be urging Scottish local authorities to take a more sensible approach toward regulation.

#### In brief....

- HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) has temporarily shelved its business record checks scheme. Read our comments in the [Herald](#)
- Trams and business rates discussed in the [Edinburgh Evening News](#), not once but [twice](#)
- FSB makes the case for safeguarded Royal Mail services in the [Press and Journal](#)

#### Get the edge....

- The Long Term Conditions Alliance Scotland, with our friends from [Healthy Working Lives](#), are looking for small employers to consider attending their [free conference on the 27 March in Glasgow](#)
- [The Scottish Business Crime Centre](#) are holding a [free half day conference in Edinburgh on 2 March](#) so that business can avoid being infiltrated by organised crime. You might also be interested in their [newest newsletter](#).
- Get on the [energy supply chain at this free event](#) in Edinburgh on March 20 and 21



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