



## **South West Policy Newsletter – May 2007**

Welcome to the South West FSB's electronic Newsletter

Topics covered in this Newsletter

### **Council Election Results**

**Public Procurement or selling to councils and other public bodies**

**A big Thank you on Train to Gain**

**A question for the Experts.....and that means you!**

**Globalisation**

**Transport**

**A358 – urgent – you have until May18th**

### **Council Election Results**

FSB Branches in areas where control over the local council has changed as a result of the elections should be making contact with the new administration – unless of course they know them already. The Lyons report is suggesting a lot of changes which potentially affect businesses and FSB members will want to get their point across.

But don't forget those who have lost control, particularly if you have had a good relationship in the past. Politicians remember particularly well people who are more than just fair weather friends. And as surely as the pendulum swings one way, sooner or later it will swing back.

### **Public Procurement**

Many FSB Branches are working hard with their local councils to improve the effectiveness of their economic development, by getting the council to increase the volume of goods and services bought locally.

The New Economic Foundation has produced a workbook to enable people to work out just how much a locality benefits from local purchasing. Find it on line at

[http://www.neweconomics.org/gen/tools\\_lm3.aspx](http://www.neweconomics.org/gen/tools_lm3.aspx)

Meanwhile, the revised SW FSB Public Procurement Policy and some 'How to.....' Tips are on the SW Policy website.

We are trying to build up a portfolio of case studies on 'good practice' by local councils, so if your council, or NHS, or University or any other Government body has done something particularly special, do please let me know – [Vivienne.rayner@fsb.org.uk](mailto:Vivienne.rayner@fsb.org.uk)

### **A big Thank you on Train to Gain**

FSB members have been responding wonderfully to my request for comments on their experiences of Train to Gain - a Big Thank You – it is very much appreciated.

Members' comments have already had an effect. Providing the EU agrees, from next year, Train to Gain will help people working in businesses with fewer than 50 staff to get a 2<sup>nd</sup> qualification. In addition, the FSB has been invited to represent employers on the SW brokerage group. The object is to improve the way brokerage is working for small businesses in the SW, especially Train to Gain.

We are making progress – so please keep your experiences of Train to Gain coming in.

### **A question for the Experts.....**

FSB members are experts in many fields and they are all experts in one.....and that describing what it is like running a small business.

Increasingly, policy staff are finding that real life experiences from FSB members are the most effective way of getting things changed.

SW members' experiences were key to getting child tax credits moved off the payroll. They were also key in getting insurance companies to give 3 weeks notice of renewal premiums or non renewal so we have local experience of how effective it can be.

At the moment we are very interested to hear about FSB members' experiences on Planning, with the Inland Revenue, with Train to Gain, Performing Rights Society, with selling to the public Sector and with the new regulations like WEEE. And remember, we want to hear the good as well as the bad!

Of course, those are issues we are working on at the moment. If you know of others, please let me know at [Vivienne.rayner@fsb.org.uk](mailto:Vivienne.rayner@fsb.org.uk)

### **Globalisation**

Has globalisation affected your business? Do you think it is affecting the economy in the SW?

While some businesses are suffering from cheap imports and cheap foreign holidays, other businesses are seeing their costs go right down for the same reasons. How far does Red Tape, EU Regulation and poor educational standards affect your ability to compete?

Globalisation is one of the issues being discussed in advance of the Review of the Regional Economic Strategy which starts next year. This is your chance to have your say on the matter. Look on the FSB website for the discussion document or contact Vivienne Rayner at [Vivienne.rayner@fsb.org.uk](mailto:Vivienne.rayner@fsb.org.uk)

## **Transport**

As the summer draws on, South Western roads get busier. The Highways Agency is trying to be more sensitive to seasonal traffic flows, as well as lifting many speed restrictions at weekends.

Have you noticed this?

Are there any speed limits that could be safely lifted at weekends which are not being lifted?

Are there roadworks in the summer that should really be programmed earlier or later in the year for business reasons?

## **A358**

The route for the A358 dualling is out for consultation until May 18<sup>th</sup> – full details are on the website at <http://www.highways.gov.uk/roads/projects/14075.aspx>

There is a strong green lobby trying to stop this much needed improvement to the SW road network. Your views are important.

Vivienne Rayner

4<sup>th</sup> May 2007