



South Somerset District Council

SSDC4Business Newsletter

Keep up to date with all the latest information about local business matters and economic development projects in the South Somerset area.

Upcoming Events

22nd February 2017
Highbridge Enterprise Centre

Digital Trends Get Up to
Speed

[Learn More](#)



1st March 2017
Tytherington, Frome

**Heart of Wessex Local
Action Group**
Forum meeting

[Learn More](#)

23rd February 2017
Telford House, Yeovil

HR Hot topics
Free event

[Learn More](#)



2nd March 2017
Padbrook Park Hotel, Collumpton

**Green Business Fund
Workshop**
Introduction to energy efficiency

[Learn More](#)

8th March 2017

3-5 South Street, Crewkerne

**Marketing: A waste of time
and money?**

Crewkerne Business Chamber

[Learn More](#)



10th March 2017

Cerne Abbas Village Hall

Budget 2017 Breakfast

Listen to tax experts

[Learn More](#)



14th March 2017

The George Albert Hotel,
Evershot

Breakfast with Neighbours

[Learn More](#)



30th March 2017

Stourhead House

Women in Business

Afternoon Tea

[Learn More](#)



News

**Is your Business Ready for the
Apprenticeship Levy?**

The 10th National Apprenticeship Week (6th - 10th March) will bring together employers and apprentices from across England to celebrate the success of apprenticeships over the last decade and will seek to encourage even more people to choose apprenticeships as a fast-track to a great career.

The overarching theme for National Apprenticeship Week 2017 is 'Ladder of Opportunity!'- focusing on the progression routes of apprenticeships, from traineeships through to higher and Degree apprenticeships.

Apprenticeship participation increased to 899,400 in the 2015/16 academic year, up 3.2 per cent on 2014/15 and the highest number on record. Apprenticeships are available in 1,500 job roles, covering more than 170 industries. The majority of employers said that they were satisfied with their apprenticeship programme and that productivity had improved once taking on an apprentice.

From April, 2017 the way Government funds apprenticeships in England is changing. The apprenticeship levy will be introduced on the 6th April, 2017 and requires all employers operating in the UK, with a pay bill over £3 million each year, to invest in apprenticeships.

However, [a recent and worrying new survey report published by City and Guilds](#) indicated that 33 percent of 500 senior decision makers surveyed who will have to pay the new change knew nothing about it. And out of those that were aware of the levy, only a third felt "fully informed" about how the resulting employer-led system will work.

The levy rate was set at 0.5% of your pay bill in the November 2015 Comprehensive Spending Review. Your 'pay bill' is your total employee earnings subject to Class 1 secondary NICs. Employers get a £15,000 fixed annual allowance to offset against the levy payment. Employers who operate multiple payrolls will only be able to claim one allowance for the levy.

Payments will be collected monthly by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) through Pay as You Earn (PAYE), alongside tax and National Insurance. There will be the same time limits, penalties and appeal procedures as for income tax.

The money will be collected monthly by HMRC via a new Digital Apprenticeship Service (DAS) account. You will be able to use this to pay for apprentice training. On your DAS account you'll be able to see training provider or providers you want to deliver the training, choose appropriate Apprenticeship training courses and find candidates for your programmes. You will be able to register for your DAS account from January 2017. If your business is likely to be affected by the new levy, you can find out more information here -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-levy-how-it-will-work/apprenticeship-levy-how-it-will-work>

Or attend an event hosted by Yeovil College on either the 22nd February, 7th March or the 4th April between 5-7pm.

Tickets for all (free) events can be found here -

- [February 2017](#)
- [March 2017](#)
- [April 2017](#)



Changes to Small Business Rates Relief

Thousands of businesses in England and Wales are set to see dramatic changes to the amount they pay in business rates, after the government

published the new "rateable values" of their properties in September, 2016. From April 2017, the revaluation will come into effect and businesses are advised to check if they are eligible for SBR.

How are business rates calculated?

Rates are calculated by multiplying the rateable value of a property by a multiplier set by the government. But as property values change over time, rateable values need to be reassessed periodically - usually every five years.

However this update to property values is two years behind schedule, making it a harder pill to swallow in areas where the price of real estate has been rising.

Small business rates relief explained

The small business relief rate has now been established; meaning any business in a single property with a rateable value less than £12,000 won't have to pay business rates at all.

Those with £12,000 and £15,000 will be given tapered (gradual) relief. And those with businesses in properties with a rateable value of between £15,000 and £51,000 will be eligible for the small business multiplier for each property.

Only businesses with a rateable value of over £51,000 will now pay the higher rate.

This means that more 600,000 SME's will not pay any business rates, giving them a saving of more than £6,000 a year. A further 250,000 businesses will see their rates cut.

If more than one property is occupied the threshold for the rateable value of individual second properties will increase from £2,599 to £2,899, and the threshold for the aggregate value of all second properties will increase from £17,999 to £19,999. As before SBR will only be awarded on the higher RV property only.

Therefore, those with rateable values as shown below:

RV Limit	Amount of relief	How do they have to apply?
RV up to £12,000	100% relief	Application required. Its recommended customer complete the online form on our website
RV from £12,000 up to £15,000	Decrease on a sliding scale relief From 100% to Nil	Application required. its recommended customer complete the online form on our website
RV from £15,000 up to £51,000	No relief but the Small Business Multiplier is used in calculating business rates	No application required <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The lower multiplier will automatically be applied where a business is occupied with RV under £51,000 from April 2017 except where a mandatory relief is being received.

SSDC's website and forms have been updated and customers are encouraged to make an application before 1 April 2017 so their annual bill is correct. The new rateable value for 2017 has now been loaded onto our systems so we are able to give advice to customers on whether they would qualify or they can check their rateable value themselves on www.gov.uk/voa/revaluation.

If you have a rateable value of under £15,000 and you want to apply for Small business rate relief you must complete an application form. Please go to our website and complete the [online form](#).

Does your Business have CCTV?

A business owner has been prosecuted for failing to register with the Information Commissioner because she was using in-store CCTV.

The defendant was operating CCTV cameras as part of her business

premises licence but said she didn't realise this meant she had to register with the ICO. The annual fee for most businesses is £35. She was fined £200, ordered to pay £439.28 prosecution costs and a £20 victim surcharge.

The ICO's CCTV Code of Practice gives guidance to companies using CCTV and business owners can also talk about any data protection issues with trained advisors by calling the ICO's helpline on **0303 123 1113**.



£12.4m of funding now available to increase rural jobs, growth and productivity

The Heart of the South West is one of the most rural Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP) areas in the country, with 91% of its land classified as rural. The business population spans both the rural and urban environment on a roughly 50:50 basis.

Rural businesses and organisations can now apply to the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) for grants through the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) Growth Programme for the following:

- £2,784,740 for 'Rural Business Development Grants' - Farm businesses diversifying into non-agricultural activity and new or existing micro and small businesses (including social enterprises) in rural areas can apply for capital grants between £35,000 and £170,000.
- £7,540,000 for 'Food Processing Grants' - New or existing food and drink processing businesses.
- £2,088,555 for 'Rural Tourism Infrastructure' - Rural businesses, farmers, landowners, charities and public bodies can apply for capital

grants from £35,000 for projects that improve the local rural tourism offer by delivering new or enhanced rural tourism assets and infrastructure.

The main aim of the RDPE Growth Programme is to create jobs and growth in the rural economy; therefore, all applicants must demonstrate how they will achieve this. The deadline for expressions of interest (EOIs) is 31st March, 2018.

The application for funding is a two-stage process. If an EOI is approved then you will be invited to submit a Full Application. Please see [the handbooks](#) which will tell you if you are eligible, the funding available, how much can be applied for, and guide you through the application process.

Calling all Construction Businesses...

Plymouth University are working on a piece of research for the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership's (LEP) Brexit Resilience and Opportunities Group, and as part of it have developed a survey that is specifically directed at the construction sector.

The LEP is currently trying to identify the implications of the UK's departure from the European Union. The Construction sector is a key enabler of economic growth, hence understanding the potential opportunities and threats to these businesses is of significant importance for future policy.

If you are in the construction sector, please help to gather as much intelligence as possible. The survey can be found [here](#) and they are accepting responses until the 28th February, 2017.

Do you know a local food or drink

producer that would like to attend a free market?

SSDC will be hosting a local producer market on the fourth Saturday of each month from February until November 2017. Contact 01935 462173 if you would like to book a stand. #FoodisGREAT



Driving Productivity in the Heart of the South West: Green Paper

All of the councils in Devon and Somerset, along with the Local Enterprise Partnership, the two National Park Authorities and the three Clinical Commissioning Groups, are working in partnership towards achieving devolution for the Heart of the South West.

Following the changes in Government after the EU Referendum, the process of moving towards devolution has slowed. Our devolution bid is fundamentally about addressing the productivity gap between the Heart of the South West and the rest of the UK and the work we are now doing targets this.

The Partnership is now developing a Productivity Plan in order to deliver our aspirations.

The current consultation sets out the challenges facing the Heart of the South West in some detail. A number of questions are identified and the Partnership wants to hear your thoughts on these points.

Please share and discuss this document with your colleagues and through your networks <http://www.torbay.gov.uk/devolution>. Please let us have your

views by 10 March 2017 by making submissions to engagement@torbay.gov.uk.

The information provided during the engagement process will be used by the Partnership prepare the Draft Productivity Plan - which will be released by the end of June 2017. There will be a further period of consultation on this paper over the summer with the final Plan expected to be approved in the autumn.

SSDC4Business Twitter

Keep up to date with the latest business news and the activities of the Economic Development team here at South Somerset District Council.



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