

Liverpool Chamber Of Commerce

The Future Means Business



As Liverpool has moved through its recent renaissance and coped with the toughest recession in decades, LIVERPOOL Chamber has consistently monitored the confidence and sentiment of the local business community.

In the latest quarterly economic survey (QES) covering the first quarter of 2010 over 400 businesses told us that there are signs of a fragile recovery, but the Merseyside economy still faces serious risks.

At the Chamber we regularly discuss and debate key issues with members covering important topics including; transport, environment and energy, digital infrastructure, construction & regeneration, skills & enterprise, international trade, finance, arts, culture & tourism.

We relay the key messages from businesses to a range of economy stakeholders:

- In the local and regional press, radio and television
- Through reports and consultation responses submitted to partners (including the NWDA, Liverpool City Council, Liverpool First, The Mersey Partnership and Mersey-travel)
- Directly to our MP's, MEPs, and central government departments.

Liverpool Chamber of Commerce with over 1,700 members is the ultimate business network and the voice of local business.

As we approach the local and national elections the Chamber has compiled the following summary of business needs to steady the economy and pave the way for future growth.

With the imminent public spending cuts we want to ensure that the future for Liverpool means a strong business focus. For us and our members the future means business.



Liverpool's Business Infrastructure

The reinvigoration of Liverpool's infrastructure must continue even in the face of tough cuts in public expenditure.

TRANSPORT

The Chamber view on local, regional and national transport issues:

- Capacity issues must be addressed at **Central Station**.
- The city requires must work in partnership to secure **high quality bus corridors**.
- The Chamber has lobbied central government to support the **electrification** of the rail line between Liverpool and Manchester, and is in support of the **Northern Rail Hub** proposals.
- Freight has always been important to Liverpool and the development of the **SuperPort** proposals will enhance this. It is therefore essential that schemes such as the Mersey Gateway Bridge and work on access to the Port of Liverpool (Dunnings Bridge Road) continue.
- The Chamber has been working with core city partners to call for a national **High Speed Rail** network which would link the UK's cities.
- The continued development of the **Mersey Gateway** must be secured.

DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

British Business requires a broadband infrastructure that is suitable for emerging and future technologies. It is critical that the UK's proposals aim for speeds in excess of 100Mbps and benefit all technologies.

However, the Government's digital levy is not the preferred option for business and further discussions should be had with major telecommunications companies to ensure that the market plays its fair share.

- City leaders should commit to pursuing future broadband speeds of 100Mbps to compete with areas including Media City to ensure Liverpool maintains competitive.

ENERGY

- Regional government should work to position Liverpool as a centre of excellence for off-shore wind and tidal energy.
- National government should remove the current restrictions regarding the funding of renewable energy projects and eligibility to claim feed in tariffs. The tariffs play a fundamental role in creating demand for renewable energy, and stimulating job creation.



Breaking down barriers to growth

Environment

- Local government should continue to work with business to provide guidance on trade waste issues.
- On-going awareness raising initiatives for information on environmental products and services should be implemented locally to ensure take up amongst businesses.
- Local government should work to simplify the planning regulations, particularly those associated with renewable energy.
- Support for small firms to measure and reduce their environmental impact should be simplified and promoted.
- Funding streams that firms can access to improve their environmental performance should also be simplified and promoted.

Skills and Training

- Regional government should implement a people-centred strategy to ensure that Merseyside retains its graduates and attracts talented individuals from across the UK and internationally to remain globally competitive.
- Invest in understanding what skills the low carbon economy will require and ensure provision is made to deliver this training.
- Commit to a stable skills and training system – which is critical to future growth.

Arts, Culture and Tourism

- Further and more focused action should be taken to ensure local arts and creative businesses are aware of the opportunities and risks presented by Media City.
- The Chamber is committed to supporting the Liverpool City Council in bidding for UNESCO City of Music status to develop and further raise the city's national and international profile, building on existing successes.
- Liverpool city council should seek to secure high profile national sponsorship to continue the success of the Mathew Street Festival.
- Liverpool's UNESCO World Heritage Site has the ability to drive tourism. Financial resources and support is needed from the RDA to support the development of the educational and tourism opportunities presented.

Tax and regulation

- We work closely with British Chambers of Commerce support their calls to:
- Cancel the increase in tax and National Insurance planned for 2011.
- Introduce a moratorium of new UK employment laws for the life of the next Parliament.
- Mandate a tax simplification programme that delivers predictability, value for money, and a fairer business rates system.
- Introduce a single set of procurement pre-qualification rules and regular reporting on SMEs share of public contracts across the UK.



Delivering Jobs through local Enterprise and Global Trade

Enterprise & Trade

Britain's economy must be rebalanced during the next decade. The next Government has a once in a generation opportunity to encourage the development of globally competitive and entrepreneurial businesses in services and manufacturing - drawing on the success of our best companies.

The next government must:

- Make a clear statement on how it will support enterprise, entrepreneurship and international trade
- Develop a proactive UJ-wide export strategy, building on our strengths in services and advanced manufacturing
- Continue to support to help SMEs, in particular, to export
- Consolidate the European Single Market, ensuring the UK firms have unfettered access to the new markets.

In Liverpool, we should

- Continue to develop relationships in Shanghai, post 2010
- Export our way to recovery, with a particular focus on the service sector.