



William Graham AM
Chair
Enterprise and Business Committee

26 March 2015

Dear William

Further to the recent Ministerial scrutiny session on business rates, I am attaching some additional information on areas of interest that were raised by Members.

In terms of the published business rates information for Enterprise Zones, this is contained within the Progress Update that is published on our website. I attach a link to the latest version which was updated in November 2014. This is due for further update in May. The business rates information can be found on pages 27-28.

<http://www.business.wales.gov.uk/enterprisezones/>

The latest 2014/15 round of the Business Rate Scheme has been the most successful to date with more applications and more businesses supported than in previous rounds and more funding provided. I will publish more detail on this shortly.

As I reflected in the Committee session, the Northern Ireland Executive commissioned the Northern Ireland Centre for Economic Policy (NICEP) at the University of Ulster to evaluate Small Business Rate Relief. This work was informed by a public consultation between April and July 2014. The documentation concerning the evaluation can be found online:

<http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/rating-review>

I also discussed the business rates temporary relief schemes at Committee and the steps that I have taken to test various measures to support business through the business rates regime. These relief schemes remain relatively new and we continue to monitor these.

We have undertaken initial management reviews and have taken measures to raise awareness of the schemes. Given that some of these schemes are scheduled to end this year, I will be reviewing their effectiveness, building on the monitoring that has already been undertaken.

Finally, Committee Members raised the issue of self-catering and business rates. A report was commissioned from the Institute of Revenues, Rating and Valuation to look at the impact of the current Order in Wales. The report contains recommendations on how to make the proposals work more effectively in the future. Local Government Officials have looked at possible amendments to the legislation and improved guidance for ratepayers. They will be providing formal advice to the Minister for Public Services and to me in next few weeks and a further update will be provided to Members.

<http://gov.wales/topics/localgovernment/finandfunding/businessrates/publications/impact-legislation-self-catering/?lang=en>

Edwina Hart