

Media Release

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Chamber Disappointment at Lyons' Recommendation

Following the Lyons Review recommendation that Councils should be given the power to raise a supplementary business rate, the Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce Group, who participated in the consultation last year, has expressed disappointment at the outcome.

Claire Prosser, policy executive at the Chamber, said: "We were delighted to host a consultation with Sir Michael on the 21st of August last year at Newbury Racecourse, to debate the merits of relocalisation of business rates. We were impressed by his strength of knowledge and assured by the clear concern he demonstrated for the issues of the business community. The consultation reaffirmed our members' position of keeping business rate decisions with Central Government.

"However, the Chamber is disappointed with the outcome of this enquiry. Sir Michael Lyons' recommendation on supplementary business rates is essentially relocalisation by another name. Our concern is that his recommendation is sure to result in local authorities taking the opportunity to raise more money from business.

"What is being proposed will give local authorities the ability to levy an extra rate on businesses without any accountability and no guarantee that the extra revenue raised will be spent on projects that actually benefit those paying for them.

"This is not a case of the business community reluctant to contribute further funds. Business Improvement Districts have proven the willingness of the business community to contribute extra resources, so long as they are able to have a say in how their money is spent."

For further information on this or other Chamber of Commerce issue, please contact the Chamber on: 01753 870 500 or visit www.welcometobusiness.co.uk.

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Notes to Editor

The Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce Group works with businesses across Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Wiltshire to help them achieve their full business potential through: meeting new customers; cutting costs; developing their workforce; influencing local decision makers; and arming them with business intelligence. Membership is available to all businesses.

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