

SCC additional comment on £320 million Covid-19 package of support

Providing additional comment on the Scottish Government's announcement of an initial package of support to help businesses being affected by the COVID-19 outbreak, Dr Liz Cameron, Chief Executive of the Scottish Chambers of Commerce said:

"As we have seen the number of cases of Covid-19 rise in Scotland, we have heard calls from increasing numbers of businesses across all of Scotland for measures that will support them through these challenging times. Issues over cancelled bookings, orders, cashflow, disruption to supply chains and the redesign of business models, are collectively having severe impacts across all sectors.

"This is a good starting position by the Scottish Government, particularly for the retailing, hospitality, and tourism sectors, which reflect measures introduced in other parts of the United Kingdom. The immediate expansion of business rates relief, and the reversal of planned increases, and in some cases deferring payments are all heading in the right direction. Business rates was already identified as a burden for business that needed to be eased. Now is the opportunity to sort the system to reduce these operating costs as we move forwards towards the expected peak period of the virus.

"Furthermore, the introduction of a support grant for all small businesses will be helpful. However, as we experience the growing loss of revenue, some of which will not be retrieved post-virus, this may need to be increased to provide additional support towards employment costs, and supporting our employees to be able to work from home safely and effectively when appropriate. Many businesses are now redesigning their operating models – this is an additional, unplanned cost for many and they will require further support for this."