

Pre-Budget Report 2008

24 November 2008

Regional Press Notice

Pre Budget Report 2008 IN THE SOUTH EAST

Key Facts

- Today, the Chancellor has announced a package of measures targeted at supporting small businesses to access the capital and manage the cash flow they require, which may be of particular benefit to the 740,785 SMEs in the South East.
- The Government also announces a package of housing measures to support the objectives of promoting the long-term stability of the housing market and supporting homeowners facing difficulties. Bringing forward of investment in new social housing stock will help the 5,510 households deemed in priority need of housing in the South East.
- As part of a fiscal stimulus package, there will be a temporary reduction in the standard rate of VAT to 15% from 1 December 2008 until 31 December 2009 to provide further support for growth and incomes during the economic downturn. This is the equivalent, for the average household, of £275 a year for extra spending. The Government is also bringing forward £3bn of capital spending from 2010-11 to 2008-09 and 2009-10. Bringing forward valuable public investment will impact directly on economic activity in the UK, in particular supporting the construction sector, which is expected to be disproportionately affected by the economic downturn.
- The Chancellor has also announced a substantial package of measures to ensure that those facing redundancy and those seeking employment are helped back into work as quickly and efficiently as possible. This will help with the 45,385 job vacancies that were notified to Jobcentre Plus in the South East in October 2008.

Quotes

Jonathan Shaw, Regional Minister for the South East said:

“Businesses of all sizes are absolutely critical to this region. This PBR sets out a programme of strong support for businesses currently facing an uncertain time, through access to finance and tax relief”.

The Exchequer Secretary Angela Eagle MP said:

"It is vital at this time of economic uncertainty that Government recognises the pressures affecting individuals, families and businesses in every region of the UK. This PBR provides a fiscal stimulus to help alleviate these short term difficulties, while setting out a responsible strategy for the long term. A 2.5% reduction in VAT will help families and businesses in time for Christmas and a £600 increase in the personal allowance will benefit 22 million basic rate tax payers."

Further Information

For a breakdown of how the key PBR measures will impact on the South East, please visit the Treasury microsite at: <http://prebudget.treasury.gov.uk/>

Notes to Editors

HM Treasury Press Office

Press enquiries: 020 7270 5238

Non-Media enquiries: 020 7270 4558

HM Revenue & Customs Press Office

Press enquiries: 020 7147 0798 / 2328 (Business Tax Desk)

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020 7147 2314 / 0052 (Law Enforcement Desk)

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