

A Chamber of Commerce can observe the repercussions even minor changes can have on local businesses both large and small. Sometimes it can be something as apparently simple as car parking or public transport. Or it could be something as fundamental as change to employment laws or tax regimes.

Maresa Molloy, Liverpool Chamber's Head of Policy and Information explains: "The Chamber is concerned with the economic growth and development of the local economy; concerned not just about what is happening today but how business will be affected in the future. For example, Liverpool Chamber's 'Planning for the Future Forum', operated with Merseytravel, seeks to identify with some of the city's key businesses what the transport requirements will be from 2011 onwards."

Taking Liverpool's needs to Westminster

Liverpool Chamber also produces the Greater Merseyside Quarterly

Economic Survey. This is one of the largest business surveys in the region, providing an accurate picture of local business performance. Results are used by organisations such as the Bank of England in determining the UK's economic performance.

Recently the Chamber took a delegation of local businesses to Westminster to meet with Alistair Darling, Chancellor of the Exchequer. Molloy explained: "We have identified a number of specific requests of government, among them: reinstate empty property rate relief, cut interest rates and abolish the backdating of business rates for port property."

Liverpool Tenders

To ensure that companies get maximum access to tender opportunities, Liverpool Chamber launched Liverpooltenders.com. This is an online tender alert service that provides registered companies with information about live tenders. This award-winning service ensures that companies don't have to hunt for

relevant tender opportunities. Major public and private sector partners are involved, including the London Olympics and some European tendering opportunities.

The service is backed up with a comprehensive training and information programme, alongside support to enable smaller companies to successfully enter the tendering process. George Barr, MD of East Quay Engineering, said: "The knowledge we gained from the course enabled us to fully realise the potential of our existing, highly skilled workforce. We are now in a great position to tender for new contracts."



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CASE STUDY

After a 70-year absence, KLM Royal Dutch Airlines will operate services out of Liverpool John Lennon Airport from 2009. KLM's decision to reintroduce services from Liverpool follows support and lobbying by Liverpool Chamber. The Chamber played an integral role in meeting KLM executives, making the business case for the city and supporting the airport - a business that brings an estimated value of £200m to the local economy. Neil Pakey, deputy CEO of Peel Airports Group, pointed out the benefits of the new routes for the Northwest's business community: "KLM's flights will make doing business in Liverpool with international markets much more straightforward and attractive. And for people looking to experience new destinations and cultures, across Asia, Africa or the Americas, then KLM's offer at John Lennon Airport will deliver this for Liverpool for the first time."

