

**20 April 2010**

## **Eye watering rate rises for local businesses**

Liberal Democrat research has found that many Scottish businesses including hospitality, tourism, auction marts, petrol station and nursery businesses will face an increase in their rate bills up to sixty times higher than the rate of inflation. Last week in the Scottish Parliament, the Scottish Liberal Democrats called upon the Government to cap 2010-11 business rate increases at 12.5%, or 5% for small businesses and let those who gain under the revaluation to see the benefits immediately.

Jim Tolson MSP for Dunfermline West commented "Many businesses are facing business rates which have risen by tens of thousands of pounds on April 1 this year. Last week, I was contacted by the owner of a local childrens nursery regarding the 'eye watering' 150% rise in business rates she was facing. Seems that she is not alone with this issue – all the other nurseries in the Dunfermline area are facing the same rise!

In the debate on Thursday, I raised the issue on behalf of the nursery but unfortunately the reply from John Swinney MSP, Cabinet Secretary, was that the owner was entitled to appeal. This sort of answer is not good enough!

We need the Scottish Government to act to help these affected businesses by introducing a transition relief scheme. The UK Government is introducing a transitional relief scheme to limit the increases in business rates in England but so far the SNP does not think that there is any need for such a scheme! It is not too late to introduce a transitional relief scheme to limit the increase in bills. In the end it comes down to fairness."

**Ends**