

# **SMEs celebrate after Government rates move**

**Thousands of small business across Edinburgh, Fife, the Lothians and the Borders are celebrating after plans to end the small business bonus scheme (SBBS) were shelved during Stage 3 of the Non-Domestic Rates (Scotland) Bill in the Scottish Parliament.**

Research by the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) had showed that three quarters of Scottish firms believed that giving council's additional powers over non-domestic rates would be bad for business.

Four in five were opposed to moves to abolish national rates reliefs, like the Small Business Bonus- even if there was to be an option for councils to develop their own replacement schemes.

Garry Clark, East of Scotland FSB Development Manager, said: "Small businesses across south-east Scotland already face challenging times with rising employment costs, squeezed margins and low confidence.

"While much of Scotland's business rates system is old-fashioned and unnecessarily complicated, the removal of national support schemes, such as the Small Business Bonus Scheme would have dealt a hammer blow to the 27,680 business which benefit from the Scheme in Fife, the Lothians and the Borders.

"We are delighted to see MSPs across the political spectrum

listen to FSB members and the small business community to recognise these amendments were the wrong approach.

Andrew McRae, the FSB's Scottish Policy Chair, said: "MSPs had a big call to make. If they didn't amend this legislation, we'd have seen bills going up and national reliefs axed.

"This was not the time to hit small businesses with new annual rates bills in excess of £7,000.

"Our MSPs are to be congratulated for recognising this threat and acting decisively to address it.

"All eyes are now on the tomorrow's final vote on the Bill as a whole. We urge all MSPs to back the Bill as amended and get what is, on the whole, a sensible and long overdue package of reforms onto the statute book."