

New figures show government is winning war on red tape

Monday 17 December, 2012

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Business Minister pledges tougher action to eliminate burdens on enterprise.

Business will benefit from nearly £1 billion in reduced red tape costs thanks to Government action, independent figures revealed today.

The Fifth Statement of New Regulation reports that the overall closing balance for 'One-in, One-out', the Government rule that dictates that every new cost on business must be balanced by an equivalent saving, is predicted to be around £836 million since January 2011. These figures are independently verified.

Additionally, the statement shows that the Government expects to reduce the regulatory burden by around a further £83 million between January 2013 - when 'One-in, One-Out' is replaced by 'One-in, Two-out' - and June 2013. Expected measures include reforms to environmental regulation, employment law and consumer law.

Business Minister Michael Fallon said that Whitehall is increasingly putting the needs of businesses centre stage, but vowed to go further and faster to roll back barriers to growth.

Every department is predicting either a zero balance or being in credit at the start of One-in, Two-out, showing that the de-regulatory agenda is having an impact right across Whitehall.

The report shows that the overwhelming majority of Government measures affecting business are deregulatory, with only ten new items imposing new costs on business compared with 89 that will save money or will impose a zero net cost. The costs from the 'ins' (£6 million) are also dwarfed by the savings from the 'outs' (£89 million), giving a predicted net saving to business of £83 million.

Recent deregulatory measures include:

- Changes to modernise and simplify the registration of company charges, saving £21.9 million.
- A series of changes to building regulations to reduce cost and complexity for industry.
- Less heavy-handed Health and Safety regulations for low-risk businesses including shop and offices.
- Improvements to speed up processes covering adoption and foster-carer eligibility.

Business Minister Michael Fallon said:

"The Government has a very simple objective: to make the UK the best place in Europe to start, finance and grow a business. This requires a fundamental culture change in Whitehall, so that new regulation is only imposed as a last resort.

"We've made a promising start, but firms still struggle with excessive red tape. We'll now push departments to go further to bear down on costs imposed on business, and we'll fight harder to get EU bureaucracy off the back of our entrepreneurs. "

For the first time this Statement sets out EU measures that will be introduced during the reporting period, giving businesses time to prepare for these changes. Fifty-seven EU measures are expected to be implemented into UK legislation.

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