

# talking BUSINESS

Editor's view  
by David Rankin

It is nice when things time well and come together just when the need is at its greatest, and this seems to be what is happening in Richmond this month.

The watch-word seems to be support, and it is the small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that crave it most.

Coincidentally, we have had a submission about Business Link on this very subject, and on page 37 of this supplement Richmond Chamber of Commerce leader Anne Newton outlines her new role, launching the country's first mentors' register, allowing knowledgeable business leaders to help SMEs as and when they can.

An impressive amount of work is going on behind the scenes, and we have only so far seen a small selection of what is coming up, but it is heartening to know SMEs are at the forefront of people's minds.

The only questions remaining now are how effective these new schemes will be and how long they will last, as governments have a history of starting and closing such things on an apparent whim.

I think I can say with some certainty Anne Newton will not let this one end in such a way, and I know she has worked incredibly hard in recent weeks to make this happen.

And while Vince Cable has a hundred other issues on his mind right now, I implore him to keep an eye on SMEs, as these are the groups that will be a true measure of how the economy is performing.

# Linking

talking business

## Linking the past with new success

A leading Richmond consultant has called on the Government to use the demise of Link to everyone's advantage.

In an open letter to Mark Prisk and Vince Cable, Steve Mullins outlined his experiences with the Link.

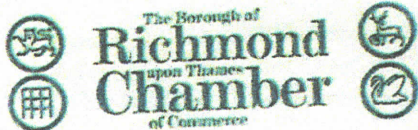
He was a founder member of the Richmond Business Link and helped 1,000 small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the past 20 years.

He said: "I am distressed that a resource as potent as the Business Link has been progressively squandered and will now be disbanded, but I feel there is much to be learned from it in delivering support to SMEs, which will play a progressively important role in the recovery of this country."

"Right now, there is in place the competence, connections and infrastructure to deliver practical support to SMEs based on the original Business Link principles; some of this can surely be built on for the changes that are to come."

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