

## **Single portal for 50 retail licences by end 2013 as part of Government plan to reduce burden of licences by 33% - Minister Bruton, Minister Perry**

(Wednesday, 19 December 2012) SME retailers will be able to apply for all of their annual licensing requirements at a single time via a single portal by Q4 2013, as part of a Government plan to reduce the administrative burden of licensing requirements for businesses. Today's announcement was made by the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Richard Bruton TD together with the Minister of State for Small Business, John Perry TD, following agreement on proposals brought by the Ministers to a Cabinet Committee this week.

As part of Action Plan for Jobs 2012, the Ministers this week presented a report on licensing prepared by Forfás together with a set of proposals to the Cabinet Committee on Economic Recovery and Jobs. The report focused on 159 licences across key sectors of the economy - including manufacturing, food & drink, retail, hospitality & leisure, waste management, road haulage and construction - and found that there is potential to reduce the burden of compliance with licences by a third, including removal/amalgamation of up to 20 licences.

The Cabinet Committee agreed to proceed with the implementation of the recommendations in the report, including:

- Introduce one-stop-shop integrated online licensing systems for key sectors of the economy, including harmonisation of registration and renewal dates
- Proceed with implementation of integration of retail licensing system, incorporating up to 50 licences, as a first-mover by the second half of 2013

Minister Bruton said: "A key part of the Government's plan for jobs and growth is to reduce costs on businesses to make it easier for them to start-up, expand and create the jobs we need. Today's announcement is part of a range of actions being taken across Government to improve competitiveness and reduce red tape, including the inclusion of a series of tax measures targeted specifically at SMEs in Michael Noonan's recent Budget.

"Today's announcement will mean that from the second half of next year retailers will be able to apply for all of their annual licensing requirements at the one time via a single website. It will mean significant savings in terms of time and costs for many hard-pressed businesses and entrepreneurs across the country, which will help more of them start-up, survive, grow, and ultimately protect and create more jobs. I am determined to ensure that this initiative is then extended to other key sectors of the economy along with other measures to reduce the total burden of licencing by 33%, helping to improve our competitiveness and create the employment we need".

John Perry TD, Minister for Small Business commented. "I envisage the final delivery will be a one-stop-shop website for business licensing requirements. Rather than having to invest the time in dealing with a multiplicity of agencies, business will be able to apply for all licensing requirements, applications and renewals, through one single website. This will significantly simplify the process for business and cut down on the administrative burden, particularly for those businesses that require multiple licences such as the retail sector."

Martin D. Shanahan, Chief Executive, Forfás said, "Getting a business started can require a range of different licences, with numerous applications and the requirement to deal with a number of Government departments or agencies. For example, establishing a medium sized supermarket could involve up to 20 different licences. Our study shows that licensing is recognised as essential by business, but that the burden associated with many licences is

high. Businesses are telling us that initiatives to reduce the regulatory burden would be very welcome.”

“The Forfás review found that there is potential to amalgamate a number of sectoral licences and that a single integrated licensing system would significantly reduce the licensing process for businesses, particularly in the retail sector and for the construction and food and drink sectors. There is significant potential to improve the way licences are processed and issued and to extend the renewal frequency of licences to reduce the burden on businesses while still ensuring that the regulatory objective is achieved. Forfás also found that there is opportunity for greater use of risk based licensing to reduce the burden and associated costs for low risk and compliant businesses. The Minister’s proposals announced today around a single point of delivery of licences to ensure the minimum administrative overhead will be a very welcome development for business.”

The full report and recommendation are available at [www.forfas.ie](http://www.forfas.ie)

**ENDS**