



**Allied Irish Bank (GB) Voted No.1 Business Bank
29th November 2006**

For the seventh consecutive time, Allied Irish Bank (GB) has been voted 'Britain's Best Business Bank', ahead of the 'Big Four' and other UK banks, in a comprehensive bi-annual survey of the business sector.

The survey, commissioned by the Forum of Private Business, found the 'Big Four' UK banks continue to lag behind smaller rivals, led once more by Allied Irish Bank (GB), in the battle for commercial customer satisfaction.

Overall, 78.6% of Allied Irish Bank (GB) customers stated that they were 'delighted' with the service provided by the Bank and 71.7% said that they had a very close relationship with their account manager. Customers also rated the Bank's staff as 'friendly and helpful' and 'reliable and accurate'. When dealing with queries and making decisions, customers stated that 'the Bank makes decisions quickly'.

Robbie Henneberry, Managing Director, Allied Irish Bank (GB), commented, 'This impressive accolade recognises our ability to deliver consistently superior customer service. We are delighted that, once again, our customers have endorsed our position as the leading and proven alternative to the large clearing banks in the UK. Our advantage is that, as a dedicated business bank, we are able to focus on providing quality services to mid-sized corporates by getting to know and understand them, to learn what they need from their bank, and to respond to that need.'

He continued, 'This award is testimony to the long-standing commitment of the Bank to its people. It's their knowledge, enthusiasm and experience that enable them to deliver valuable benefits to our customers. We continually invest in staff development and training programmes. Indeed, we have been re-accredited by Investors in People on three consecutive occasions. Our people stay with us a long time: every year, around two dozen people celebrate 25 years of service with us. The understanding and commitment this represents is paying real dividends for our customers.'

'Our continued commitment to the UK,' Mr Henneberry added, 'is reflected in our branch development programme into key business areas. Also, in direct response to customer feedback, we have relocated a number of key branches since the last survey was announced. We provide rapid decisions through locally empowered managers. We offer a full range of banking products and services tailored to our customers' needs. Each of our offices has a team of business banking experts who in turn have access to centralised sector experts. In short, we do everything we can to support our customers, and I am proud to see our commitment recognised once again in this award. We are truly honoured.'

Commenting on the findings, Nick Goulding, Chief Executive, of the Forum of Private Business said, 'The relationship between a customer and its bank is a crucial one, and can have a major impact on its success and growth. We are delighted that Allied Irish Bank (GB) has retained its lead position for the unprecedented seventh time as 'Britain's Best Business Bank'. Allied Irish Bank (GB) should be seen as an example of best practice for the industry. By understanding its customers and providing them with the products and services they need, it has maintained its lead over the 'Big Four' and other banks.'

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For further information, contact:

Ronan Sheridan

Group Press Officer

AIB Group

Bankcentre

Dublin 4

Tel: (+353) 1 6414651

Mob: (+353) 86 3880898