

East Midlands Business Plan 2010



Federation of Small Businesses

The UK's Leading Business Organisation

CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	3
The FSB in the East Midlands	4
▪ Area Policy Unit (APU)	4
▪ FSB Regions	5
▪ FSB Branches	6
▪ How the APU, FSB Regions and Branches Work Together	7
Our Policy Priorities in the East Midlands	8
▪ Regulation	9
▪ Education and Skills	10
▪ Transport	11
▪ Crime Against Business	12
▪ Environment and Energy	13
▪ Broadband	14
▪ Local Government	15
How We Will Deliver Our Policy Priorities	16
Monitoring and Reporting Our Progress	20
Evaluating and Promoting Our Achievements	20

INTRODUCTION

From a political perspective, 2010 will be an extremely busy year for the FSB. Firstly, there is the General Election, where one quarter of the East Midlands MPs with whom we have worked in the past, have stood down. Secondly, 2010 also sees significant changes to the way that economic development is delivered in England. In April, two of the public sector organisations that the FSB has worked closely with during the last ten years, ceased to exist. These bodies were the East Midlands Regional Assembly and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC).

In April 2010, the Assembly's responsibilities for planning, housing and transport passed to Local Government East Midlands, and the new East Midlands Local Authority Leaders' Board. The Leaders' Board will now work jointly with *emda* (the East Midlands Development Agency) on the development, implementation and monitoring of a new Integrated Regional Strategy.

Meanwhile, the responsibilities of the LSC have been split four ways. The promotion and co-ordination of the Apprenticeship programme is now undertaken by the National Apprenticeship Service. The funding of further education and training for adults aged 19 years and above, is administered by the new Skills Funding Agency. The UK Commission for Employment and Skills has taken on the responsibility of analysing future skills needs, and local authorities have become responsible for the planning and funding of education for 16 to 19 year olds.

These changes mean that we need to develop productive relationships with new MPs and public sector bodies, and encourage them to support our campaigns and help us lobby on the changes that small businesses want in the East Midlands. The FSB also needs to consider how we engage with *emda*, the Local Authority Leaders' Board and with other organisations and groups throughout the remainder of 2010.

In order to encourage MPs, local authorities and other decision-makers to think of the impact that their policies will have on small businesses, we needed to identify what is most important to small businesses in the East Midlands and within the six counties. Nationally, the FSB is currently lobbying on sixteen different policy topics. As we have limited resources, we needed to agree on which of these policy topics were most relevant to the East Midlands, and prioritise our activities for 2010 on a select few policy themes. We also needed to identify which activities the FSB East Midlands Area Policy Unit (APU) would lead on, which activities would be led by the FSB Regions and Branches, and how we could best support each other in delivering the priority activities and campaigns.

In January, the East Midlands Area Policy Unit (APU) hosted a Business Planning Event to discuss what the priority policy themes, activities and campaigns should be. Representatives of the three FSB Regional Committees and Branch Committee Chairs attended the event. Sue Bridel, Senior England Policy Manager facilitated the event, and a draft document outlining the discussions was distributed to APU Committee members, the FSB Regional Committees, and the Regional Policy Groups in February for a five-week consultation. The outcomes of the consultation were then presented to the APU Committee in March, and the draft Business Plan was approved.

This Business Plan identifies seven priority policy topics that the FSB in the East Midlands will focus its efforts on throughout the remainder of 2010. It also outlines the activities that the FSB will undertake to deliver the Business Plan.

THE FSB IN THE EAST MIDLANDS

The FSB in the East Midlands consists of the East Midlands Area Policy Unit (APU), three FSB Regions and nineteen FSB Branches. Together, we represent a total of 16,910 small businesses.

The specific roles and responsibilities of the APU, FSB Regions and Branches vary, and these are detailed below. However, we all share a common aim and that is to lobby and influence the Government, MPs, MEPs, local authorities and other policy-makers on the behalf of small businesses.

East Midlands Area Policy Unit (APU)

The East Midlands Area Policy Unit (APU) consists of nine FSB members; three representative members from each of the three FSB Regions. It is the decision of the FSB Regional Committees as to who represents their FSB Region on the APU each year. The representative members do not necessarily have to be a member of the FSB Regional Committee. They can be members of the FSB Regional Policy Committee or a Branch Committee. In May each year, APU members are asked to elect a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman, a Treasurer and a Secretary.

The purpose of the APU is to help formulate national FSB policies, develop FSB policy within the East Midlands border and to promote FSB policy across the East Midlands. The main responsibilities of the APU are:

- To work in collaboration with organisations with an East Midlands remit, and consult them on issues affecting FSB members across the East Midlands (including *emda*, Government Office East Midlands, East Midlands Business Forum, Bank of England – East Midlands Agency, Jobcentre Plus and the National Apprenticeship Service)
- To represent the FSB on the Boards, groups and forums established by organisations with an East Midlands remit (including the East Midlands Rural Affairs Forum, the Regional Economic Cabinet, Travelwatch East Midlands and East Midlands Stakeholder Advisory Groups)
- To consult with the Regional Minister for the East Midlands, the Regional Select Committee for the East Midlands and the five East Midlands MEPs on issues affecting members across the East Midlands
- To disseminate national FSB policy information and to represent the FSB on the National Policy Committee
- To develop policy campaigns for the East Midlands
- To support the FSB Regions in delivering UK and national policy campaigns
- To commission research on issues affecting FSB members in the East Midlands and to disseminate the results
- To represent the East Midlands on the FSB UK Policy Committee and to highlight member issues, progress on policy development and lobbying activities of the APU, FSB Regions and Branches

The East Midlands APU is supported by the East Midlands Policy Manager, Lyndsey Bunn.

FSB Regions

There are three FSB Regions in the East Midlands. These are:

- **Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland** (representing 5,087 FSB members)
- **Lincolnshire** (representing 6,068 FSB members)
- **Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire** (representing 5,755 FSB members)

With the exception of Lincolnshire, the FSB Regions fit the administrative boundaries of the County Councils in the East Midlands. The FSB Lincolnshire Region however, includes North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire which both fall within Yorkshire and Humber. The FSB Lincolnshire Region also includes Peterborough and the Fenlands which fall within the East of England.

Each of the FSB Regions has a Regional Committee. The Regional Committees in the East Midlands consist of between twelve and seventeen FSB members. The FSB members that make-up each Regional Committee are representatives of each of the FSB Branches. Between October and December each year, FSB Regional Committees elect a Chairman, up to two Vice-Chairmen, a Treasurer and a Secretary.

The purpose of the FSB Regions is to service the members that fall within their geographical boundary, formulate and deliver local and national campaigns and to increase the status and influence of the FSB. The main responsibilities of the FSB Regions are:

- To represent the FSB on the Boards, groups and forums established by organisations with a county or sub-regional remit (including Local Economic Partnership Boards and local Business Councils)
- To work in collaboration with organisations with a county or sub-regional remit, and consult them on issues affecting FSB members within their area (including the local authorities, Chambers of Commerce, Jobcentre Plus district offices)
- To engage and consult with MPs on issues affecting members in their area
- To participate and exhibit at local events and shows to promote the FSB and its policies
- To develop, discuss and present Motions for consideration by the Regional Committee and FSB National Council
- To assist in the recruitment of new FSB members
- To engage with local media, including participating in radio and television interviews, submitting articles and issuing Press Releases on FSB national or local policy and campaigns
- To elect FSB members to represent them on the FSB National Council
- To research, develop and deliver policy campaigns on issues affecting FSB members in their area
- To deliver national policy campaigns

The **Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland** FSB Region is supported by the Regional Organiser, Maxine Aldred. The **Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire** FSB Region is supported by the Regional Organiser, Natalie Gasson. The **Lincolnshire** FSB Region is supported by the Regional Organiser, Michael Self and the Regional Officer, Kris Hippey.

FSB Branches

There are nineteen FSB Branches in the East Midlands. These are:

Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Leicester City▪ South Leicestershire▪ North Leicestershire▪ Rutland▪ Northampton▪ East Northamptonshire
Lincolnshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ East Lindsey▪ Grimsby▪ Lincoln, North Hykeham and Sleaford▪ North Lincolnshire and West Lindsey▪ Peterborough▪ South Kesteven▪ Wash
Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Derby▪ Chesterfield▪ Mansfield and Ashfield▪ Southwell and Newark▪ Nottingham▪ Bassetlaw

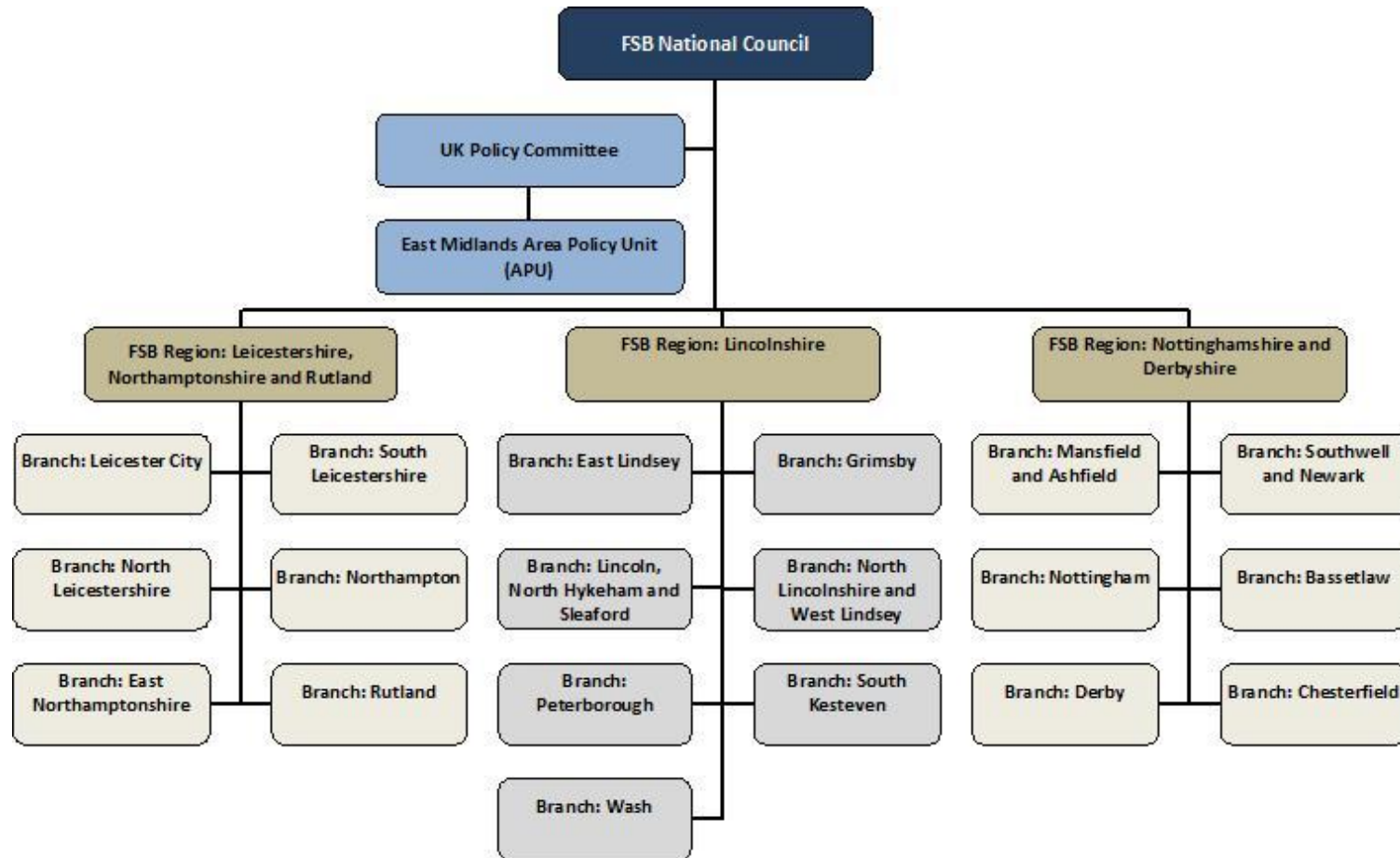
Between October and December each year, FSB Branches elect a Chairman, up to two Vice-Chairmen, a Treasurer and a Secretary. The purpose of the FSB Branches is to service the members that fall within their geographical boundary, and to increase the status and influence of the FSB. The main responsibilities of the FSB Branches are:

- To work in collaboration with organisations with a local remit, such as City, District and Borough Councils and consult them on issues affecting FSB members within their area
- To engage and consult with their local MP/MPs on issues affecting members in their locality
- To participate and exhibit at local events and shows to promote the FSB and its policies
- To develop, discuss and present Motions for consideration by the Branch Committee and Regional Committee
- To recruit new FSB members
- To engage with local media, including participating in radio and television interviews, submitting articles and issuing Press Releases on FSB policy and campaigns

How the APU, FSB Regions and Branches Work Together

The structural chart below illustrates how the East Midlands APU links into the UK Policy Committee and FSB National Council, and how the Branches link into the FSB Regions and FSB National Council:

Diagram 1: FSB Structure within the East Midlands



OUR POLICY PRIORITIES IN THE EAST MIDLANDS

At the present time, the FSB in the UK is actively lobbying on sixteen different policy themes. As FSB resources in the East Midlands are limited, the resource available had to be allocated to those policy themes which are most relevant to FSB members in the East Midlands.

In order to prioritise the APU's lobbying activities for 2010, we first considered the results of the 2009 National FSB Annual Survey and the FSB East Midlands Quarterly Surveys. We also assessed how each of the sixteen national policy themes impacted on small businesses in the East Midlands, and what we could achieve through our lobbying.

Representatives of the APU, FSB Regions and FSB Branches were asked to indicate which of the sixteen national policy themes they believed were most important to small businesses in the East Midlands. The results were calculated and the policy themes were ranked in order of importance. The following table illustrates how each policy theme scored and the ranking awarded:

Table 1: Policy Themes That Are Deemed to be Most Important to FSB Members in the East Midlands

	Rank of Importance
Regulation	1 st
Education and Skills	2 nd
Transport	Joint 3 rd
Crime Against Business	Joint 3 rd
Environment and Energy	4 th
Broadband	Joint 5 th
Local Government	Joint 5 th
Employment	6 th
Local Planning	7 th
Business Support	8 th
Financial Affairs	8 th
Rural Affairs and Tourism	8 th
Taxation	8 th
Trade and Industry	8 th
Public Sector Procurement	9 th
EU and International Affairs	10 th

The results indicated seven priority policy themes for the FSB in the East Midlands. In order of importance, the seven priority policy themes are regulation, education and skills, transport, crime against business, environment and energy, broadband and local Government. These seven priority policy themes form the basis of our lobbying work for the coming year.

Regulation

In 2008 and 2009 over one hundred new or altered regulations came into effect. All of these regulations directly affected businesses. FSB members believe that employment legislation is the most burdensome and confusing because of the volume of alterations that are regularly being made.

Nationally, the FSB is lobbying for an overhaul of the UK regulatory system. This includes asking for a suspension on business regulation for the first eighteen months of economic recovery. The FSB is also asking for current legislation to be simplified so that it is easier for businesses to understand and implement the regulations, particularly laws on maternity, paternity, discrimination and health and safety. The FSB is lobbying for regulation to be reduced by 25%.

The volume of regulation on employment and the number of regulations affecting the agricultural and horticultural sectors are a particular issue for small businesses in the East Midlands. The Equality Act 2010 which will come into effect from October 2010 should help to address some confusion for businesses on employment law as it combines the Equal Pay, Sex Discrimination, Race Relations and Disability Discrimination Acts along with several statutory instruments. However, the introduction of the Act also introduces additional regulations which all employing businesses will have to learn, understand and comply with. The East Midlands has a significant proportion of agricultural and horticultural businesses, and the volume and content of regulations on pesticides in particular is burdensome for small businesses in these two sectors.

What Will We Do in the East Midlands?

In 2010, we will:

- Take action against the volume and content of regulations and legislation on pesticides in the agricultural sector
- Lobby Government for early consultation with businesses on proposed changes to or introduction of new regulations
- Provide advice and information to members on regulation and legislation, including a guide on the Equality Act 2010
- Consider how the inspection, compliance and enforcement of regulations can better serve small businesses

Education and Skills

The education and skills system has been a source of confusion for small businesses for many years, with different organisations responsible for dealing with several different aspects (eg. different age groups, different qualification levels and specific industrial sectors). The introduction of the latest structural changes to education and skills could create further confusion. The FSB therefore remains concerned about the number of different Government-funded bodies that will have some responsibility for education and skills.

Despite the raft of changes made over the years to improve the quality of education and training, small businesses are still reporting problems. These issues include the duration of courses, the need for subsidised courses to lead to a qualification, school and further education college leavers being ill-prepared for the world of work, and difficulties in accessing training on subjects that are industry specific. Small businesses continue to call for shorter and more flexible training that can be adapted to fit the needs and work schedule of their business, rather than the business having to compromise with a standard training programme that may be longer and which may not address all of their skills needs.

Nationally, the FSB is lobbying the Government for greater provision of short or bite-sized training programmes which may not have a qualification attached to them but will meet the needs of businesses. The FSB is also lobbying Government for increased investment in apprenticeship programmes and the promotion of incentives to encourage small businesses to employ an apprentice.

What Will We Do in the East Midlands?

In 2010, we will:

- Alert *emda*, the National Apprenticeship Service and the Employment Skills and Productivity Partnership to the skills shortages and issues that FSB members have with current training programmes
- Encourage members to employ Apprentices and offer work experience placements
- Lobby local and national politicians to ensure that the education system better equips school leavers with the knowledge and attitude they need for the workplace
- Lobby education providers to ensure that training programmes will develop the basic employability skills in young people that businesses need
- Develop better engagement between education and skills providers and businesses so that the training on offer to small businesses includes more bite-sized courses, more on-site training on the business premises, and allows businesses to select the course components they need to address the specific skills gaps in their workforce

Transport

Small businesses are concerned that Government revenue secured from motoring taxes are not sufficiently re-invested in road improvements. With increasing oil costs, and increases in fuel duty, the cost of fuel is an issue of prime concern for businesses that need to use vehicles as part of their business, particularly those involved in logistics or haulage. The FSB is strongly opposed to any form of road pricing or levies on car usage. This includes bridge and tunnel tolls, congestion charging and Workplace Parking Levies. The FSB's opposition is based on the fact that essential and non-essential road users are charged equally, and this has a disproportionate impact on small businesses which may have no choice but to travel by road. The majority of FSB members regard improvements to local rail network infrastructure as more important than high-speed rail. Investment in rail freight infrastructure would also benefit small businesses by shifting more freight from the roads to the railways.

Nationally, the FSB is lobbying Government to remove all road tolls, and is lobbying local authorities to abandon any plans to introduce Workplace Parking Levies. The FSB has also signed-up to the 'Every Penny Counts' campaign to oppose further increases in fuel duty.

The FSB in the East Midlands is heavily involved with groups such as Travelwatch to campaign for transport improvements. The Workplace Parking Levy (WPL) has been approved for Nottingham and will commence in April 2012. Although the majority of small businesses will be exempt from the levy, if they are undertaking contractual work with businesses which are liable to pay in Nottingham, the levy could be passed onto them. There is also a concern that the WPL could be introduced in Derby and Leicester for revenue-raising purposes. Lobbying for the electrification of the Midland Mainline is ongoing, but vast improvements are needed across the rail network in the East Midlands to address overcrowding and to reduce journey times.

What Will We Do in the East Midlands?

In 2010, we will:

- Lobby Network Rail for better rail services across the East Midlands rail network (especially at weekends)
- Lobby for improvements to existing freight lines to enable a modal switch from road to rail
- Lobby the local authorities and transport operators for improvements to public transport to ease pressure on the road network
- Lobby the local authorities and utility companies for more advanced notice and better promotion of planned roadworks and for compensation to businesses disrupted by roadworks
- Lobby against the introduction of the Workplace Parking Levy in Nottingham in 2012 and congestion charging and road-pricing schemes in general

Crime Against Business

The latest FSB statistics on crime show that 64% of small business members have been victims of crime, but only 45% report it. Police Forces across England have limited financial resources available to tackle crimes against business, and the FSB is concerned that these resources may be being wasted in dealing with the after-effects of crime rather than crime prevention measures. The FSB's 'Listen to the Business Beat' campaign aims to encourage small business to actively engage with their Neighbourhood Policing Unit (NPU) and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP). The FSB is also trying to encourage small businesses to report every crime, every time so that business crime statistics are more accurate.

Nationally, the FSB is lobbying the Home Office for a national definition for crimes against business, and a dedicated strategy for how crimes against business will be tackled. This will ensure that crimes against business are recorded in the same way across the UK, and should mean that adequate financial resources are allocated to Police Forces specifically for tackling crimes against businesses.

The East Midlands is one of four English regions with a Business Crime Forum, and we currently occupy four seats on the Forum. Police Forces can only direct resources to addressing crimes against business if local Policing Plans contain a specific target for reducing crimes against business. The Police also need an accurate assessment of the types of crimes that are affecting small businesses, where the crimes are occurring and how frequently.

What Will We Do in the East Midlands?

In 2010, we will:

- Consider how FSB members can be encouraged to report every crime, every time
- Research the need for increased policing in rural areas and lobby Police Authorities for quicker response on crimes against rural businesses
- Lobby Government for a more equal focus and investment on minimising theft from all sectors, as opposed to just focussing on theft from retail
- Lobby for better support to address street crime and crime which adversely affects the environment that businesses operate in

Environment and Energy

According to the 2009 National FSB Annual Survey, 47% of FSB members are recycling their business waste and 32% have reduced their energy usage. The FSB is concerned that regulations on the environment, waste and energy are burdensome, and may deter some small businesses from adopting more environmentally-friendly practices.

Nationally, the FSB is lobbying for a dedicated small business department to be established in the Energy Savings Trust to advise and support small businesses on energy issues. The FSB is also lobbying Government for improved access for businesses to waste and recycling facilities, a VAT reduction on green energy to encourage small businesses to move to greener energy supplies, and the introduction of financial incentives for small businesses for purchasing and installing energy efficient equipment.

Oil costs continue to rise, and the most recent survey conducted with FSB members in the East Midlands showed that 46% had seen the variable costs of their business increase because of escalating fuel and energy bills. Whilst a recent survey of FSB members indicated that small businesses are aware of the financial and ethical reasons for reducing their energy consumption, only a small number of businesses are installing more fuel-efficient or renewable energy systems for their heat, power and water needs.

What Will We Do in the East Midlands?

In 2010, we will:

- Lobby the Environment Agency and local authorities on improved flooding protection, better water management and river maintenance to safeguard businesses in vulnerable locations
- Promote the value and benefits of Alternative Fuel Schemes to FSB members (eg. photo-voltaic panels, biomass boilers) and signpost members to available grants, interest-free loans and sources of advice
- Lobby local authorities for improvements and investment in waste management systems such as anaerobic digestion facilities and turning waste into energy
- Lobby the local authorities for improvements to Commercial Waste Disposal facilities and a reduction in charges
- Lobby the MEPs and Government on reducing and simplifying environmental regulation

Broadband

Surveys show that over half of small businesses rely on the internet for up to 50% of their annual turnover. However, some businesses particularly in rural areas, have no broadband provision at all as either the telephone exchange is located too far from the business, or the exchange and cabling has not been sufficiently upgraded.

Nationally, the FSB is lobbying Internet Service Providers to guarantee the minimum speed at which documents can be downloaded and uploaded, and for cabling to be replaced with fibre-optic cables which provide faster speeds. The FSB is also lobbying the Government to enforce an increase in minimum speeds and encourage private companies to invest in exchange and cabling upgrades.

Broadband service provision across the East Midlands is patchy, with some areas, being unable to access broadband services at all. The East Midlands Select Committee has urged *emda* to lobby Government for greater investment in broadband infrastructure in the East Midlands. In 2009, BT announced plans to upgrade two exchanges in Glossop (Derbyshire) and Hinckley (Leicestershire) with fibre-optic cables. In January 2010, BT confirmed that Coalville (Leicestershire) and Stoneygate (Leicestershire) would receive fibre-optic upgrades by Summer 2010. Along with the North East, the East Midlands is receiving by far the lowest number of upgrades for the nine English regions.

What Will We Do in the East Midlands?

In 2010, we will:

- Lobby British Telecom, *emda* and the Government for improved availability of broadband services, with an emphasis on rural areas
- Encourage FSB members to sign-up to *emda's* Broadband Line Information Monitoring Project (BLIMP) checker to accurately record the actual broadband speed that FSB members are receiving
- Use the results of the BLIMP checker to lobby Internet Service Providers and politicians on where in the East Midlands the speed and reliability of Broadband services is a barrier for small businesses

Local Government

After salaries and rent, business rates are the third largest item of expenditure for small businesses. During the recession a significant proportion of small businesses struggled to pay their business rates. It is estimated that half of businesses eligible for Small Business Rate Relief do not apply for it. The devolved Governments in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have already implemented Automatic Business Rate Relief. It has also been difficult for small businesses to sell or rent properties during the economic downturn and Empty Property Tax has imposed an additional burden on these businesses.

Nationally, the FSB continues to lobby for Small Business Rate Relief to be issued automatically in England and for Empty Property Tax Relief to be re-applied. The FSB is also lobbying local authorities to dissuade them from using the Business Rates Supplement to gain further revenue from small businesses for funding large regeneration projects.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that some small businesses in the East Midlands are halting construction works on near-complete properties, or demolishing buildings in an effort to avoid paying Empty Property Tax. Questions remain as to whether it is possible that the Business Rates Supplement will be levied by local authorities in the East Midlands to fund major regeneration projects, such as improvements to our football stadiums for the England Football World Cup bid for 2018.

What Will We Do in the East Midlands?

In 2010, we will:

- Lobby Government and local authorities for Business Rates to be rebated automatically and to not levy the Business Rates Supplement on small businesses
- Identify the take-up and administration of Discretionary Rate Relief amongst FSB members in the East Midlands
- Identify ways in which public sector procurement opportunities can be opened-up to small businesses and obtain a commitment from the Public Sector to implement change
- Monitor the impact of car parking charges on small businesses and lobby the local authorities with the results
- Consider how small businesses should be engaged and consulted on governance structures and East Midlands policies and strategies and lobby *emda* and the Local Authority Leaders' Board

HOW WE WILL DELIVER OUR PRIORITY POLICIES

The following table illustrates how we will deliver the seven priority policy themes across the East Midlands. The activities that we will undertake throughout 2010 are listed. For each activity we have also specified who will have a lead role (APU, FSB Regions or Branches), who will support delivery of the activity and whether it will be a joint responsibility.

Table 2: Activities to be Delivered in the East Midlands

Policy Theme	Issues/Activities	Led By	Supported By	Joint Activity	When
Regulation	Take action against the volume and content of regulations and legislation on pesticides in the agricultural sector	FSB Region: Lincolnshire	APU & Branches		Ongoing
	Lobby Government for early consultation with businesses on proposed changes to or introduction of new regulations	APU	FSB Regions		Ongoing
	Provide advice and information to members on regulation and legislation, including a guide on the Equality Act 2010			APU, FSB Regions & Branches	June to September 2010
	Consider how the inspection, compliance and enforcement of regulations can better serve small businesses	APU	FSB Regions		October to December 2010
	Research where regulation has a wider impact on small businesses			APU & FSB Regions	Ongoing
	Empathy with members on regulation	Branches	APU & FSB Regions		Ongoing
Education & Skills	Alert <i>emda</i> , the National Apprenticeship Service and the Employment Skills and Productivity Partnership to the skills shortages and issues that FSB members have with current training programmes	APU			March to June 2010
	Encourage members to employ Apprentices and offer work experience placements	APU	FSB Regions & Branches		March to September 2010

Education & Skills	Lobby local and national politicians to ensure that the education system better equips school leavers with the knowledge and attitude they need for the workplace	APU	FSB Regions & Branches		April to August 2010
	Lobby education providers to ensure that training programmes will develop the basic employability skills in people that businesses need	National FSB	APU & FSB Regions		Ongoing
	Develop better engagement between education and skills providers and businesses so that the training on offer to small businesses includes more bite-sized courses, more on-site training on the business premises, and allows businesses to select the course components they need to address the specific skills gaps in their workforce			APU, FSB Regions & Branches	
Transport	Lobby Government against increases in Fuel Duty	National FSB	APU, FSB Regions & Branches		Ongoing
	Lobby Network Rail for better rail services across the East Midlands rail network (especially at weekends)	APU	FSB Regions		March 2010
	Lobby for improvements to existing freight lines to enable a modal switch from road to rail	APU	FSB Regions		March to May 2010
	Lobby the local authorities and transport operators for improvements to public transport to ease pressure on the road network	FSB Regions	APU		Ongoing
	Lobby the local authorities and utility companies for more advanced notice and better promotion of planned roadworks and for compensation to businesses disrupted by roadworks	APU	FSB Regions		July to September 2010
	Lobby against the introduction of the Workplace Parking Levy in Nottingham in 2012 and congestion charging and road-pricing schemes in general			APU & FSB Regions	
Crime Against Business	Consider how FSB members can be encouraged to report every crime, every time	FSB Regions	APU		Ongoing
	Research the need for increased policing in rural areas and lobby Police Authorities for quicker response on crimes against rural businesses	FSB Regions	APU		Ongoing

Crime Against Business	Identify the impact that fraud and scams are having on FSB members			APU & FSB Regions	June to September 2010
	Lobby Government for a more equal focus and investment on minimising theft from all sectors, as opposed to just focussing on theft from retail			APU & FSB Regions	Ongoing
	Lobby for better support to address street crime and crime which adversely affects the environment that businesses operate in			APU & FSB Regions	Ongoing
	Maintain momentum on addressing crime against business	FSB Regions	APU & Branches		Ongoing
Environment & Energy	Lobby the Environment Agency and local authorities on improved flooding protection, better water management and river maintenance to safeguard businesses in vulnerable locations	FSB Regions	APU		Ongoing
	Promote the value and benefits of Alternative Fuel Schemes to FSB members (eg. photo-voltaic panels, biomass boilers) and signpost members to available grants, interest-free loans and sources of advice	FSB Regions	APU		Ongoing
	Lobby local authorities for improvements and investment in waste management systems such as anaerobic digestion facilities and turning waste into energy	FSB Regions	APU		Ongoing
	Lobby the local authorities for improvements to Commercial Waste Disposal facilities and a reduction in charges	FSB Regions	National FSB & APU		Ongoing
	Lobby the MEPs and Government on reducing and simplifying environmental regulation			APU & FSB Regions	June to October 2010
	Consider how small businesses in the East Midlands can support and benefit from a Low Carbon Economy	APU	FSB Regions		July to October 2010
Broadband	Lobby British Telecom, <i>emda</i> and the Government for improved availability of broadband services, with an emphasis on rural areas	APU	FSB Regions		March to May 2010

Broadband	Encourage FSB members to sign-up to <i>emda's</i> Broadband Line Information Monitoring Project (BLIMP) checker to accurately record the actual broadband speed that FSB members are receiving	APU	FSB Regions		April to July 2010
	Use the results of the BLIMP checker to lobby Internet Service Providers and politicians on where in the East Midlands the speed & reliability of Broadband services is a barrier for small businesses	APU	FSB Regions		August to October 2010
Local Government	Evaluate the financial implications that Public Sector Pensions are having on businesses	FSB Region: Lincolnshire	APU		March 2010
	Evaluate the running costs of Local Government	FSB Regions	APU & Branches		Ongoing
	Monitor the impact of car parking charges on small businesses and lobby the local authorities with the results		APU	FSB Regions & Branches	June to December 2010
	Lobby Government and local authorities for Business Rates to be rebated automatically	National FSB	APU & FSB Regions		Ongoing
	Consider how small businesses should be engaged and consulted on governance structures and East Midlands policies and strategies and lobby <i>emda</i> and the Leaders' Board	APU	FSB Regions		March 2010
	Identify ways in which public sector procurement opportunities can be opened-up to small businesses and obtain a commitment from the Public Sector to implement change	FSB Regions	APU & Branches		Ongoing
	Lobby the Government to suspend Empty Property Tax until 18 months after economic recovery	National FSB	APU & FSB Regions		Ongoing
	Identify take-up and administration of Discretionary Rate Relief	National FSB	APU & FSB Regions		Ongoing
	Develop effective partnership arrangements with the Public Sector	FSB Regions	Branches		Ongoing
	Share intelligence and information with local authorities on the issues and needs of small businesses			APU, FSB Regions & Branches	Ongoing

MONITORING AND REPORTING OUR PROGRESS

The Business Plan indicates where the APU, FSB Regions and Branches will lead on, or support, specific activities. We will seek a number of FSB members, from the APU, FSB Regions and Branches, to assume a leadership role on the specific activities. These lead members will be expected to keep the APU informed of the progress made on delivering the activities outlined in the Business Plan. The lead members will do this by providing regular written or verbal updates via the East Midlands Policy Manager, and by attending APU Meetings on an as required basis.

The opportunity to champion or co-ordinate a specific activity is open to any member of a FSB Regional Committee, Regional Policy Committee or Branch Committee. Members do not need to be a member of the APU Committee in order to lead on a policy theme or activity. All we ask is that the member has some expertise, experience or a keen interest in helping the FSB to deliver that activity.

After each APU meeting, the Policy Manager will produce a written East Midlands Policy Report for circulation to the FSB Regional Committees and Branches, based on the updates provided by lead members and resulting discussions at the APU meeting. The East Midlands Policy report will provide an update on the progress made in delivering each of the seven priority policy themes and activities. The Policy Manager will also use this report to ask the FSB Regional Committees and Branches to make the APU aware of any activities and campaigns they are delivering that support the Business Plan, and to notify the APU of any issues or local campaigns that they would like the APU to raise at National Policy meetings.

EVALUATING AND PROMOTING OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

Throughout 2010, we will produce a new bi-monthly electronic newsletter to promote our progress and achievements in delivering the Business Plan to the agencies that we currently work with, and those agencies and individuals that we want to influence. The newsletter will be based on the content of the East Midlands Policy Reports, but will also include information on national and local FSB campaigns. The APU will circulate the newsletter to MEPs, and agencies such as *emda*, Government Office East Midlands, the East Midlands Business Forum, the Bank of England, Jobcentre Plus and the National Apprenticeship Service, and it will also be posted on the East Midlands pages of the FSB website (www.fsb.org.uk/emids). The FSB Regions will also have access to the newsletter, so that they can distribute it to their contacts and networks as they see fit.

In February 2011 we will produce an Annual Achievements Report based on the success and achievements that the FSB in the East Midlands has had in delivering the priority policy themes and activities in the Business Plan. The Annual Achievements Report will outline what we set out to achieve, how we did it, and most importantly, identify the impact that the lobbying of the FSB in the East Midlands has had on small businesses across the East Midlands. This report will feed-in to the FSB's National Policy Achievements Report and will enable us to highlight the specific achievements and successes of the APU, FSB Regions and Branches.