

# EAST MIDLANDS Going For Growth

public and private  
sectors in partnership

Northamptonshire  
Nottinghamshire  
Leicestershire  
Lincolnshire  
Derbyshire  
Rutland



FSB



East Midlands Airport  
Nottingham • Leicester • Derby



FSB

the federation of small businesses

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## The Importance of Consulting with Small Businesses in the East Midlands

There are approximately 280,000 businesses in the East Midlands, 99 % of which are small businesses employing under 50 employees and 95% with less than 10. Together they provide over 720,000 jobs, or approximately 44% of all private sector employment in the region and 38% of the private sector's £150,000 million turnover.\*

As employers of local residents, suppliers of local companies, and providers of essential services, small businesses are a key part of the East Midlands economy. They are essential to the integrity of local supply chains, vital to the long term sustainability and growth of communities and the regional economy.

The Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) is the largest direct member business organisation in the UK, currently with over 211,000 members and growing every day. In the FSB's three East Midlands sub-regions there are around 17,000 members, operating across the full spectrum of sectors. The FSB is the only business organisation dedicated to promoting and protecting the interests of small businesses and as such can provide the best impression of the impact of public sector policies and plans on small businesses, whether as a result of local developments or regional plans and initiatives.

\*Government/SBS statistics on enterprise, turnover and employment at the start of 2005. Released in 2007.



The FSB is a member led organisation, with members making up committees and lobbying groups at three administrative levels, all of relevance to all tiers of the public sector:

### 1. The East Midlands Policy Unit

Conducting research to monitor the impact of plans and initiatives from organisations such as emda, the Regional Assembly, and GOEM.

### 2. The three sub-regions of:

- Leicestershire, Northamptonshire & Rutland
  - Lincolnshire
  - Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire
- Working with local authorities, the police and other sub-regional partnerships and agencies.

### 3. Seventeen branches

Meeting regularly and have good linkages with many members able to provide evidence and local knowledge. Their meetings can provide an opportunity for local authorities and other local groups to disseminate information and gauge the effect of their ideas and actions.

### Why are small businesses so important?

Decisions taken by local authorities and other public bodies have a direct impact on everybody's lives, including the livelihoods of small business owners and their employees.

Businesses have a genuine stake in the effectiveness of local government, as beneficiaries of services like waste disposal, street cleaning and the condition of local roads. Local authorities therefore have a direct incentive to support not only the creation of new enterprises, but existing businesses too. Public bodies can help underpin the process of wealth creation, but it is the private sector that creates the wealth.

In some areas, the public sector and businesses have close and effective working relationships, for example through developing and testing practical schemes together on an Employment and Skills Board or a Local Strategic Partnership. However, often small businesses feel like the silent taxpayers, contributing greatly but with little voice in the future of the community.

### Genuine consultation with recordable results.

Small businesses need to be consulted and to know that their voice will not only be heard but taken into account. For example, under section 65 of the Local Government and Finance Act 1992 local authorities have to consult with businesses on their proposed budgets each year. Some local authorities do this very well, with meetings arranged well in advance and by providing relevant briefing papers. However, some do not give sufficient notice of meetings, may just send out a complicated pack of papers, or only consult with one business organisation and assume they have covered their responsibilities. This is really only paying lip service to consultation and is not acceptable.

### Provide opportunities for small businesses to serve on councils and be members of partnership groups.

Many small business owners would like to become councillors and take an active part in groups such as Sub-Regional and Local Strategic Partnerships. They are all busy people however and usually cannot afford to take time out of the business during the working day. Councils and partnership groups, who often struggle with achieving 'employer engagement', should therefore consider holding more meetings in the evening. On the partnership groups small businesses need to feel that they have a genuine role, that their input is valued and acted upon and that they are not there just to 'tick the box'.

It is impossible in a publication of this nature to include all aspects of the interaction of the public sector with small businesses. We have therefore identified nine key areas where the relationship is crucial:

- **LABGI**
- **NNDR & SBRR**
- **Procurement**
- **'Keep Trade Local'**
- **Regulation**
- **Transport**
- **Crime**
- **Business Waste**
- **Planning**

# Local Authority Business Growth Incentive (LABGI) Scheme

## Using Awards to Benefit Business

The Local Authority Business Growth Incentive Scheme (LABGI) provides an incentive for local authorities to promote economic growth in their area.

LABGI delivers financial rewards directly to councils that promote economic growth in their areas by allowing them to retain a share of any increases in revenue derived from Business Rates.

The money is additional to the funding provided through the Local Government Finance settlement for core services.

As the award is not known in advance, it cannot be included within the normal local authority budgets and is in the nature of a “windfall” payment.

However, at present it is not ring fenced and local authorities can spend it on other areas rather than using it to promote business growth.

2008 is the third year of the LABGI scheme and in the provisional awards announced by Local Government Minister John Healey on 2nd April 2008, East Midlands local authorities have shared awards of just under £26m.

A national scheme to replace LABGI after 2008 has still to be announced.

### Key Recommendations

- The money awarded to local authorities through LABGI and its' successor should be 'ring fenced' and used to encourage development of the business community and promote local enterprise.
- Local authorities should identify how they are utilising the LABGI award with a clear statement as to how this will benefit the local business community.
- Local authorities should not divert LABGI funds away from promoting economic development.
- Local businesses and organisations representing them (such as the Federation of Small Businesses) should be consulted by local authorities before deciding on priorities for spending LABGI awards.



### LABGI SCHEME 2008 Provisional Payments to Local Authorities\*

#### Leicestershire:

Blaby District Council	£193,941
Charnwood Borough Council	£718,413
Harborough District Council	£179,609
Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council	£518,214
Leicester City Council	£1,289,293
Leicestershire County Council	£1,037,288
Melton Borough Council	£38,769
North West Leicestershire District Council	£21,090
Oadby & Wigston Borough Council	£194,011

#### Lincolnshire:

Boston Borough Council	£455,480
East Lindsey District Council	£484,235
City of Lincoln Council	£423,669
Lincolnshire County Council	£1,424,965
North Kesteven District Council	£324,620
South Holland District Council	£102,147
South Kesteven District Council	£544,229
West Lindsey District Council	£389,380

#### Derbyshire:

Amber Valley Borough Council	£402,205
Bolsover District Council	£157,528
Chesterfield Borough Council	£240,558
Derby City Council	£2,908,957
Derbyshire County Council	£1,279,164
Derbyshire Dales District Council	£185,855
Erewash Borough Council	£259,300
High Peak Borough Council	£422,678
North East Derbyshire District Council	£288,176
South Derbyshire District Council	£300,009

#### Northamptonshire:

Corby Borough Council	£121,298
Daventry District Council	£375,619
East Northamptonshire District Council	£252,526
Kettering Borough Council	£947,299
Northampton Borough Council	£304,136
Northamptonshire County Council	£1,515,403
South Northamptonshire Council	£89,854
Wellingborough Borough Council	£716,095

#### Nottinghamshire:

Ashfield District Council	£712,506
Bassetlaw District Council	£444,931
Broxtowe Borough Council	£253,270
Gedling Borough Council	£445,196
Mansfield District Council	£664,124
Newark & Sherwood District Council	£464,241
Nottingham City Council	£1,442,828
Nottinghamshire County Council	£1,907,750
Rushcliffe Borough Council	£393,282

#### Rutland:

Rutland County Council	£96,530
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\*Provisional Awards subject to appeal.

# National Non Domestic Rates and Small Business Rates Relief

## Promoting Small Business Rate Relief

**N**ational Non Domestic Rates (business rates) represent one of the largest expenditure items for small businesses.

It is often the third, or even the second, largest expenditure after wages and property rents.

It is the only tax which is not related to the ability to pay (although some hardship reliefs may be available in certain areas).

Small businesses pay a disproportionate amount of their income in business rates. It is estimated that a small business may pay up to five times more in business rates, as a proportion of their turnover, than a large business.

Business rates are now a major burden for small businesses. The FSB is calling on government to keep the business rate as low as possible and is calling on local authorities to do all they can to reduce the financial burden which small businesses face.

### **The Small Business Rate Relief Scheme (SBRR):**

Introduced in April 2005, the Small Business Rate Relief scheme offers a discount of up to 50% to qualifying small businesses.

It is vital that local authorities in the East Midlands advertise this scheme and encourage their local small businesses to claim for this tax relief.

Failure to do so may mean that many local small businesses will continue to suffer hardship unnecessarily.

The FSB has been monitoring the different local authority approaches to this very important small business issue.

We are pleased to report that many small businesses in the East Midlands are already benefitting from the scheme but, for many local authorities, much more needs to be done.

Several authorities, even after some years of the scheme, are still only achieving a low percentage take up of the SBRR.

This scheme is one of the best ways in which local authorities can support entrepreneurial activity. There is evidence in the East Midlands to suggest that proactive canvassing and working locally with the business community can significantly improve the take up of SBRR.

### **Key Recommendations**

- We urge councils to strive proactively to improve the take up of SBRR in their local area.
- A target of 100% take up of this very important tax relief scheme is not unrealistic!
- All local businesses with a Rateable Value of £15,000 and below should be mailed individually with details of the scheme.

### **What is Small Business Rate Relief?**

To qualify for SBRR in the East Midlands a business must occupy, either:

- a) One property with a Rateable Value of up to £15,000 which is the only property in England that it occupies (except for disregarded properties).
- b) One main property and other additional properties that have Rateable Values of less than £2,200 and the total value of all the properties remains under £15,000.

### **What discount is available with SBRR?**

Businesses with a qualifying property that have a Rateable Value of less than £5,000 will benefit from a reduction in rate liability of 50%.

For businesses with a Rateable Value of between £5,001 and £10,000 this 50% reduction will decrease on a sliding scale of approximately 1% for every £100 of Rateable Value below £10,000.

A business with a rateable value from £10,001 to £15,000 will benefit by having its' rates bill calculated using the lower small business rate multiplier of 45.8 pence instead of the standard business rate multiplier of 46.2 pence.

For qualifying ratepayers with a main property of rateable value under £10,000 the multiplier is also 45.8 pence.

**SBRR is not automatic and qualifying business need to apply to their local council to receive it!**

# Developing a Small Business Procurement Strategy

## Increasing the number of small businesses tendering for contracts

Within the East Midlands, there are 45 local authorities who together, spend a considerable amount on procuring products and services. In addition, the National Health Service, the five Police forces, and the Fire & Rescue services within the region all have considerable budgets.

An estimate given in 2006 by GOEM and emda at an event called 'Public Sector Procurement in the East Midlands – A Strategic Debate' was that in 2005, public expenditure in the region amounted to a massive £23.2 billion (37% of the East Midlands economy). The potential of public procurement to contribute to economic development is therefore substantial.

However, the Federation of Small Businesses survey of nearly 19,000 UK small businesses – Lifting The Barriers To Growth in UK Small Businesses 2006 – showed that only 23.5% of businesses directly supplied local authorities; just over 19% directly supplied schools; less than 16% directly supplied Universities and colleges; just over 10% directly supplied to the NHS and just over 7% directly supplied the Police or Fire Services.

Considerably smaller numbers of businesses also indirectly supplied the public sector.

A mere 3% of businesses said that the public sector was their main customer!

The FSB is concerned that the majority (over 76%) of small businesses do not trade with the public sector at all. The same Lifting The Barriers To Growth survey asked why businesses were not trading with the public sector at present. The main barrier is the perception that the process is too complicated, time consuming and bureaucratic to be worthwhile.

“Too much paperwork” was frequently cited by respondents.

Whilst the demands of European law and good practice require comprehensive documentation and prohibit the favouring of local businesses, nevertheless it is eminently possible to ensure that all paperwork is relevant and understandable and that local businesses are helped to understand the particular requirements of public sector procurement.

The FSB welcomed the publication of the Small Business Friendly Concordat in 2004. The Concordat is a way for local authorities to show their commitment to small businesses. All local authorities were due to have signed up to the Small Business Friendly Concordat by December 2005.

To date the figures for the East Midlands local authorities are:

- Derbyshire - 5
- Leicestershire – 4
- Lincolnshire – 6
- Northamptonshire – 1
- Nottinghamshire – 4
- Rutland - 0

### Barriers to Public Sector contract tendering:-

Process too complicated/ time consuming	<b>24.2%</b>
Business too small to bid	<b>21.7%</b>
Too much paperwork	<b>8.9%</b>
Difficulty/cost of getting on supplier list	<b>8.7%</b>
Time taken to get paid	<b>5.2%</b>
Accreditation requirements	<b>4.9%</b>

*Lifting The Barriers To Growth in UK Small Businesses 2006*



# Developing a Small Business Procurement Strategy *Continued*

## Increasing the number of small businesses tendering for contracts

### Case Study:-

The Lincolnshire Procurement Forum (which includes Lincolnshire County Council; the seven Lincolnshire local authorities; Lincoln University; Lincolnshire Police; Lincolnshire Fire & Rescue and the Lincolnshire Health Service) worked with the Lincolnshire Region of the Federation of Small Businesses and the Lincolnshire Chamber of Commerce to increase the number of small and local businesses tendering for business.

The Forum developed an introductory “How to Tender” presentation and, subsequently developed in-depth training on the completion of Pre Qualification Questionnaires (PQQs) and Invitation To Tender (ITT) documentation.

During 2007, introductory presentations to small businesses were held in Lincoln; Louth; Stamford; Gainsborough; Grantham; Boston; Skegness; Sleaford and Spalding. In-depth training on completion of PQQ and ITT forms were held in Lincoln, Grantham and Boston.

So far during 2008, procurement training for small businesses has been held in Louth, Gainsborough and Spalding and a full day “Meet The Buyers” event is planned.

The FSB applauds the action of the Lincolnshire Procurement Forum in leading the way with specific training for local small businesses.

We would like to see a continuous program of training events held throughout the East Midlands on a regular basis.

### Key Recommendations

- All local authorities should commit to and adopt the Small Business Friendly Concordat.
- Local authorities should resist the temptation to aggregate contracts and should break them down into smaller units to make them more attractive to small businesses.
- The Pre-Qualification Questionnaire documents should be simplified and the accompanying information requirements should be relevant and minimal.
- Public sector bodies must make more of an effort to advertise contracts of small value to as many local businesses as possible.
- Small businesses should not be charged a fee in order to tender with the public sector.
- Public sector bodies should produce guides on “How to do business with the public sector”, available both on-line and as hard copies, and should provide training opportunities for local small businesses.
- Provide constructive advice and feedback on why a small business did not win a particular contract and suggest how they might improve in the future.
- Recognise the community benefits and regeneration opportunities of buying locally.
- Encourage large, first tier suppliers to contract out to local small businesses.



# Regulation and the Small Business

## Help and guidance for small businesses

The implementation of regulations, and monitoring of new ones, is one of the greatest barriers to growth small businesses face. Administrative burdens for small business are five times more costly and take five times longer to process than for larger businesses. The effect of over burdensome legislation on local economic prosperity is enormous. Contrary to belief, the majority of small business owners recognise and welcome the need for well executed regulation.

Businesses (both large and small) have raised concerns with the government about the administrative burdens that they face from enforcement of regulations by trading standards and environmental health officers. The main areas of concern are that activities are not always well coordinated, not always consistent and not always as well targeted as they could be. For example, business can receive different advice at different times and from different authorities on what they need to do to comply with the law.

Whilst the vast majority of new regulations that affect business originate from the EU or central government, local authorities must interpret and enforce many of them. The FSB strongly supports action against businesses that deliberately ignore their responsibilities and refuse to comply with regulations. Local authorities however need to be sensitive to the challenges small businesses face in order to achieve compliance within a complex and changing regulatory regime.

Many regulations are enforced by local authorities and the FSB welcomes the Local Better Regulation Office which was set up in May 2007. We have also welcomed the statutory footing for the Compliance Code. Advice and enforcement should not only emphasise stamping out rogue businesses but also bring honest businesses, where they have made a genuine mistake, back into compliance.

### **An example of where fair play comes into force**

All supermarkets wishing to build a new store should pass a "Needs Test" at local authority level to show there is demand for a new supermarket. This would apply even where and when there is not an existing supermarket serving the community. The FSB wants to see this as part of new regulation at local and central government level to ensure small businesses are not adversely affected.

The recent report from the Competition Commission recommending that if one supermarket dominates an area, then more supermarkets should be encouraged there to increase competition is not appropriate and could further harm local independent retailers and decrease their chance of survival.

### **What would businesses do with 7 extra hours?**

- *Create more jobs and invest additional time in staff training.*
- *Spend time actually listening to their staff.*
- *Spend time gaining skills for themselves.*
- *Develop their business through marketing, product development, research and design.*
- *Help others develop new businesses and products for the future.*
- *Devote more time to activities in the local community.*
- *Invest time nurturing the next generation of entrepreneurs.*
- *Actually catch up on some sleep*



# Regulation and the Small Business *Continued*

## Help and guidance for small businesses

### Steps to build on

Small businesses are not looking for anything extra – just a level playing field to ensure that they can compete. Every business has the right to expect this.

Overzealous inspection of local businesses should be stopped. There is no need. Providing local solutions to these red tape challenges is where the benefit will be found, not from aggressive regulators.

Enforcement should be carried out in such a way that it is transparent, consistent, proportionate, accountable and targeted. Most local businesses value the support of their local authority and this must be built upon. Local authorities should work in tandem with BERR to help reform and tackle unnecessary regulation.

Local authorities carry out more than three quarters of all inspections in the UK and we would hope that improvements will be made to help improve the relationship between them and local business. Putting this in place will help businesses prosper, which in turn should lead to a healthier local economy.

FSB research shows that small businesses spend over 7 hours each week dealing with regulations and filling in forms. This time could be better invested in:

- generating jobs;
- growing the business;
- working with local communities;
- providing a better work/life balance.

### Key Recommendations

- Compliance is best achieved by offering help and guidance to enable small businesses to operate within the law.
- Local authorities and other enforcement agencies should appreciate that failure to implement a regulation must be regarded as understandable, if not inevitable, if no effort has been made to inform the business of the introduction of, or amendment to, such a regulation.
- Local authorities should make more use of technology to inform businesses of regulations, especially when new ones are to be introduced.
- Regulators need to take a risk-based approach to inspection and enforcement, which means fewer inspections for the majority of compliant businesses but more rigorous inspection when it is felt there is a high risk of a business not complying



# Keep Trade Local!

## Support your local small businesses

The House of Commons All-Party Parliamentary Small Shops Group “High Street Britain: 2015” (published in 2006) reports that 2000 local shops are closing each year and states that by 2015 there will be no independent retailers still remaining in the UK!

This amounts to the closure of over 50,000 small businesses! (In the four years prior to 1996, 7,337 independent stores closed. During the same period the market for convenience stores grew at a rate of 5% each year.)

The average person now travels 893 miles a year to shop for food and the closure of local stores will increase that amount.

To secure the future of small shops across the UK and safeguard the choice and competition that people expect in the market place, the FSB has launched a campaign to “KEEP TRADE LOCAL”.

The FSB has opened a petition on the 10 Downing Street website at <http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/keeptradelocal/> and is aiming to collect one million signatures in support.

However, the FSB is calling on local authorities to support all of their local small businesses by taking a positive stance to “KEEP TRADE LOCAL!”

### Key Recommendations

#### End the two market approach

- The superstore and the small independent shop market should not be considered as two separate markets. Neither should investigations into the impact of supermarkets on local economies be limited to the grocery market.

#### Introduce a truly independent regulator to review local planning

- An independent regulator would overview and influence local planning law and decision to ensure that any developments (particularly out of town) do not have a negative effect on the area and the interests of the local community.

#### Prohibit unfair pricing advantages, such as below cost selling

- This is illegal in some countries such as France. It should be banned in the UK as an unfair commercial practice.

#### Address problem of free out of town parking

- Local authorities should adhere to Planning Policy Guidance 6 and 13 (town centre and transport) – The Sequential Planning Test – to ensure that transport by foot and bicycle is considered to be the most desirable means of reaching local amenities, followed by public transport and then cars.

#### Ensure that out of town supermarkets allocate space for small retailers

- Local authorities should be urged to consider granting planning permission for out of town supermarkets only if there is a commitment to placing smaller shops within the supermarket.

### The FSB’s Keep Trade Local campaign is NOT an anti-

**globalisation campaign** – it is not the place of the FSB to argue against market liberalisation or globalisation.

### The FSB’s campaign is NOT anti-supermarket

- supermarkets are a reality, we all use them and they have a place in the market. We seek a level playing field for small shops and supermarkets.



# Transport

## A good transport infrastructure is essential for small businesses

Small businesses are dependent on transport infrastructure for the movement of goods and services, to enable their employees to get to and from work and for customers. Most small businesses are dependent on roads for all functions and most trade within a 50 mile radius of their base, so local road networks are particularly important.

FSB research has revealed that the average business loses 6.8 man hours per week because of congestion. The FSB welcomes the work being done by six East Midlands councils to find ways to improve the situation, but does not support the introduction of Congestion Charging, as it does not differentiate between essential and non-essential traffic.

### Key Recommendations

#### Congestion

- Proposals to ease congestion should concentrate on improving traffic flows and getting non-essential traffic off the roads at peak times
- Opportunities should be taken to lobby for funding for dualling of key routes

#### Road works

- Local authorities should 'ring-fence' funds available for road maintenance and investment
- Road works should avoid peak travel times

- Small businesses whose trade is affected by road works should be compensated for loss of turnover, as they are with utilities
- Companies carrying out road works should rent road space affected
- All road works should carry penalties if not completed on time

#### Parking

- Town centre retailers find it increasingly difficult to compete with out of town retailers and large scale developments.
- Some town centre car parks should provide at least the first half hour free of charge.
- A timed disc system for delivery and service vehicles could be provided.
- Adequate provision must be made for staff parking at locations convenient for businesses.
- A work place parking levy should not be introduced in Nottingham

#### Public transport

- Improvements must be made to bus provision, frequency of services, reliability and quality of information.
- New initiatives, such as dedicated bus ways and tram lines should not impede business activity on their routes, either during construction or operation.
- Bus lanes should not apply for 24 hours a day, seven days a week
- Rail and road public transport should be integrated, with parking at multi-modal hubs.
- Town centre bus stops should be located close to/in commercial centres.

### Case Study

John Wilson is a Partner at Blythe Squires Wilson, a well known and long established accountancy and investment advice firm in Derby, with three partners and ten staff.

John says: "Until such time as the Council has exhausted all other alternatives, such as road and public transport improvements, Congestion Charging will only be seen as a money raising exercise. We have staff who travel to work from Belper, Long Eaton, Melbourne and Ticknall. With our offices on Vernon Street it would not be an easy commute by public transport, added to which, we do require them from time to time, to travel out to clients. Clients who bring their books to us will not necessarily be able to avoid peak times and thus the Congestion Charge".



# Crime Against Business

## Reducing crime against business

Crime and the fear of crime is a major concern for many small businesses because it is not just a crime against the business but against the owner, staff, customers and the wider community. The FSB's 'Crimes Against Business: the forgotten fifth' report from 2007 highlights that one fifth of all recorded crime is targeted against business and that 57% of businesses have been the victim of crime in the past 12 month period. The cost of crime against business to the economy nationally is £12.6b\*. All too often scarce financial resources are wasted dealing with the effects of crime. This may deter further investment, reduce employment opportunities and hasten business closure, a contributing factor in the decline of town centres and wider communities.

### Key Recommendations

- Business crime should be recorded by the police under a national definition and targets set to reduce it at both a national and local level.
- Local authorities must engage more effectively in specifically addressing the issue of business crime at a local level. Local authorities have a requirement through Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1988 to consider crime and disorder reduction in their duties, activities and decision-making. At present, business crime is not

being sufficiently addressed through Local Area Agreements (LAAs) and Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs). LSPs and CDRPs/ Community Safety Partnerships should be aware of the value of sharing experience and best practice in reaching the right approach to tackling crimes against business.

- Effective business representation from the wider business community needs to be made a priority. These structures offer a valuable opportunity to consider the impact of business crime in the local community and offer partnership solutions to tackle the problem.
- Local authorities must support the FSB's 'Every Crime Every Time' campaign to accurately record crimes against small businesses.

### Planning Regulations must not stifle crime prevention measures

Current planning regulations in certain areas effectively prevent businesses from installing crime prevention measures. They must be relaxed to allow businesses to protect their premises. New developments must be designed to 'Build Out' crime. Security and crime prevention measures should be disaggregated from the rateable value of a property and not lead to higher business rates.

### Effects of business crime on economic development

Crime against business has an enormous impact on the local environment and affects large and small businesses alike. The profitability of a business can suffer drastically, which in turn can lead to:

- Areas with high crime rates being less attractive to inward investors, resulting in reduced opportunities for local suppliers.
- A downturn on the job prospects in the community.
- Businesses migrating to safer territories if continually affected by crime.

The impact of crime against business must not be underestimated. The damage to local economic growth and development is substantial in both urban and rural areas. If the threat of crime against business could be reduced in some areas this may be more attractive to the business community than other proposals contained within regeneration projects.

\*Chamber of Commerce recent survey

# Business Waste Management

Help businesses become environmentally friendly

**W**aste management issues are a key concern for small businesses. Increased regulation and taxation in this field are particularly burdensome. The FSB believes that small businesses suffer as a result of a poor system of local waste infrastructure and a lack of local government awareness of the special difficulties faced by businesses.

## Measures to prevent the illegal dumping of waste

Fly tipping, the illegal tipping of waste, is an environmental crime of which small businesses are largely the victims. Removal of this waste is an expense which the victim is obliged to absorb. Increased funds must be made available at a local level to enable authorities to tackle this crime and its causes more effectively.

## Waste electrical and electronic equipment

The Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Regulations came into force in January 2007 and set targets for the collection, recycling and recovery of all types of electrical goods.

As local authorities form part of the domestic WEEE collection infrastructure, the FSB would urge them to provide similar facilities for small businesses.

## Key Recommendations

Improved local facilities for small businesses through civic amenity sites, dedicated commercial recycling centres or local waste transfer sites, would enable small firms to play a more active role in helping government meet aims for waste recycling and responsible waste disposal.

*This could be achieved by:*

- Introducing a system to allow simple recycling to happen, e.g. business cardboard being recycled instead of going to landfill.
- A scheme should be introduced to allow small firms to use Civic Amenity sites for low volume non-hazardous waste.
- Local authorities and organisations ensuring that any government initiative information (e.g. NISP) is readily available to businesses and widely publicised.

## Case Study

Small businesses are being restricted in their efforts to deal in an environmentally friendly way with the disposal of old computer equipment.

Manufacturers collect old computer equipment free of charge from large retailers for disposal.

The public (the end user) can take their old computers to local “tips” for disposal without charge by the local authority.

However, small retailers have to pay per item at specialist disposal sites when they dispose of old computer equipment.

This is grossly unfair on small businesses and does not encourage the environmentally friendly disposal of old equipment.



# Planning

## Regional and Local Plans all affect business

The planning system has considerable direct and indirect impact on the conditions under which small businesses have to operate.

Hence the plan development process should be designed to encourage the positive involvement of the private sector, as well as resident communities.

Thriving and growing small businesses are an essential part of a healthy local economy and the cornerstone of local authorities' economic development strategies. Small businesses wanting to build or expand their premises however often find it hard to understand the process or the reasoning behind decisions, which sometimes appear to be restrictive or negative.

### Key Recommendations

#### East Midlands Regional Plan

- The allocation of sites and positive planning processes for the creation and development of small businesses should be key priorities.

#### Local Development Frameworks

- The impact of plans on local small businesses should be assessed at an early stage.
- Development on new business parks should be by sectors/industries that are likely to support the local small business supply chain.
- Policies towards business development should be positive, unless they cause major negative environmental impact on the environment or local community.

#### Planning Applications

- The process should be simple, affordable and fast.
- A “common sense” approach should be adopted to minor changes and we welcome the proposals in the new Planning Bill which seek to address this issue.
- Adopt a positive approach to applications for the development of growing businesses.
- Invite business applicants to meet and discuss plans with officers before they submit them.
- Fast track applications for development on derelict sites and unused industrial/commercial buildings.

#### Case Study:-

FSB Member Alison Smith took over a mediocre café in Edwinstowe, Nottinghamshire in 2004 and transformed it into the high quality and thriving Maid Marian Restaurant, employing 13 local people. It now needs to expand to ensure it meets increasing demand and remains as an asset for the local community and Edwinstowe's tourism role. There is plenty of room on site, but it is in a Conservation Area. The planning application and appeal were refused, demonstrating the importance of early discussion with planners.

Alison says: “ We want to stay and grow our business in Edwinstowe. The restaurant is now providing what the local community wants, local produce cooked freshly on the premises to a high standard. We deliberately chose an orangery style extension that would suit the building. The local authority dug their heels in and did not seem to want to compromise. This time we have discussed our ideas with the planners and it looks like we should be able to agree on a style and size that meets our needs and their policies without going through the long and expensive appeal process again.”



Alison's business partner Alain Launay outside the Maid Marion Restaurant.





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