

CABINET – 6 FEBRUARY 2018

GENERAL FUND AND SPECIAL EXPENSES REVENUE BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2018/19

CONSULTATION RESPONSE FROM THE FEDERATION OF SMALL BUSINESSES

The Federation of Small Businesses would like to thank you for the opportunity to respond to your **18/19 Budget Consultation**.

Small businesses are the engine room of the economy, accounting for 99.3% of all private sector businesses at the start of 2017 and employing 60% of all private sector workers and contributing over 50% of UK private sector turnover. Through your budget framework we would hope you are able to continue to provide opportunities to support the small business community in North West Leicestershire particularly through inward investment, a streamlined planning process, procurement opportunities for small local businesses, development of your High Streets and support for small business growth.

The FSB fully understand the need to have a balanced budget and having read the budget I have identified a few points I would like to comment on;

- Members in North West Leicestershire and across the UK have raised the issue that there is not adequate, flexible or affordable space for small businesses, even when startups are catered for the lack of provision of move-on space hampers their appetite and ability to grow and take on more staff. I would be keen to know what the planned opportunities are for new space for small businesses.
- I notice you report that Planning budget has been increased to strengthen legal advice and technical support. One of the biggest problems faced by small builders is the lengthy delays and poor service received from planning departments, which more often than not is caused by local lack of resources. If the extra budget is focused on tackling this problem and allowing small builders to compete, we would be supportive of this.
- The issue of car park charges continues to be highlighted as a problem for small firms. In your papers I haven't seen whether parking charges will increase or remain stable (but I may have missed it). Our research shows that seven in 10 small firms think parking is priority for the future of independent shops. We therefore feel that parking charges should be proportionate to what's on offer in the town. We urge the council to consider a long-term strategic parking policy that attracts visitors into retail areas, rather than focusing on short term revenue.
- The FSB would urge that you consider opening household waste and recycling centres to small businesses to dispose of their own waste at no cost.

I hope that this information is helpful, thank you again for inviting comment from FSB and I hope to keep in touch about North West Leicestershire's planned opportunities for small businesses in future.

Kind regards,
Jennifer

Jennifer Thomas

Development Manager- Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland
Federation of Small Businesses

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