

**FEDERATION OF SMALL BUSINESSES ENGAGEMENT ACCORD  
(Report by Acting Economic Development Manager)**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to invite the Cabinet to adopt the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) Accord, a voluntary code of practice for local authorities which seeks to maintain or encourage a productive dialogue with local businesses.
- 1.2 The Accord represents a commitment by local authorities to taking an active approach to engaging with businesses so they are given the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process and to fully understand reasons behind final decisions.

**2. ACCORD-DETAILS**

- 2.1 There are 14 Accord Principles (Appendix A) which outline how local authorities can ensure that effective consultation with the business community becomes a feature of our consultations.
- 2.2 Huntingdonshire District Council already adheres to the 14 principles. While the Accord has been designed with small businesses in mind, it is considered that the principles are relevant to all businesses and will be applied accordingly.
- 2.2 There are some implications for the Council in signing up to the Accord which relate to two of the 14 principles.

**3. IMPLICATIONS FOR HDC IN SIGNING THE ACCORD**

- 3.1 Accord Principle 1 requires the Council to nominate representatives to ensure that views of the local business community are considered at appropriate stages of consultation exercises. In line with current practice it is suggested that these responsibilities should be undertaken by the Executive Councillor with responsibility for Resources & Policy and the Sustainable Economic Development Manager.
- 3.2 Accord Principle 3 states the Council should identify businesses that can encourage links in the local business community. Again recognising the role adopted by businesses and their representatives within the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership, it is suggested that the members of the Economic Prosperity & Skills Group should be identified as the main route for engagement with the local business community.

#### **4. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There are no added financial implications arising from adoption of the Accord and formalising the Council's existing arrangements may result in small efficiency savings by having a clear route and process for engagement.


#### **5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 5.1 Adoption of the Accord will help to demonstrate the Council's longstanding commitment to consultation and engagement with the business community and by building alliances will help in joint identification of priorities and in the better targeting of resources and applications for external funding.

- 5.2 It is recommended that the cabinet —

- (a) endorse the signing of the Small Business Engagement Accord; and
- (b) nominate the Executive Councillor with responsibility for Resources & Policy and the Sustainable Economic Development Manager as the council's representatives to promote effective engagement with the business community; and
- (c) note that, in addition to annual and specific consultation initiated by the council, that the Economic Prosperity and Skills Group at the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership has been identified as the main route for engagement with the business community.

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