

EPHING FOREST BUSINESS CHARTER IS SIGNED TO HIGHLIGHT PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Essex FSB (Federation of Small Businesses) has praised One Epping Forest, the Local Strategic Partnership for Epping Forest, for leading the way in partnership working with the signing of a special Business Charter this week.

Essex FSB Chairman, Iain Wicks, said: "Partnership working between the public, private and voluntary sectors brings big benefits for a local community and Essex FSB believes that One Epping Forest is a shining example of the success of such partnership activity.

"The latest example of this is the Business Charter which was signed by representatives of Epping Forest Chamber of Commerce, Epping Forest District Council, Essex County Council, Essex FSB, Essex Police, One Epping Forest and Voluntary Action Epping Forest at a special ceremony on Thursday 15 September 2011 at the Lee Valley White Water Centre.

"This Business Charter sets down a series of agreed principles aimed at supporting local businesses which have been developed through discussion between the partners on One Epping Forest including Essex FSB and Epping Forest Chamber of Commerce.

"We are looking forward to the signing ceremony and to the Charter then being put into action."

Leader of Epping Forest District Council, Councillor Lesley Wagland, said: "Supporting the local economy is important for the future prosperity of the Epping Forest District and the Business Charter is a clear demonstration of that support from the public sector partners on One Epping Forest.

"The business organisations in our area are positive as to what can be achieved in the current financial climate but are also strong in their lobbying to make sure the business voice is heard .

“We are pleased to be a signatory to the Business Charter and pleased that so many partners have also signed it as we hope it will make a real impact on our local economy as it brings benefits for our community.”

The Business Charter’s key pledges are:

1. Sign up to the Prompt Payment Code. Pay all invoices received from local business within 20 working days but aspire to make payments within 10 working days
2. Buy Local if possible, when tendering for work in Epping Forest District pro-actively seeking a quotation from at least one local business and when purchasing goods look to companies located in the district, where one is available*
3. Through the One Epping Forest Partnership, Consult with and listen to local business properly through:
 - i. *a clear consultation and engagement plan made known to the business community*
 - ii. *a dialogue with business that is ongoing not ‘one off’*
 - iii. *‘joined up’ ways of seeking better business views and sharing results*
 - iv. *a range of communication tools to promote better business engagement including, consultation documents, newsletters, information on websites, local media or staff working directly with local media*
 - v. *developing a good working relationship with the recognised business organisations*
4. Support the work of the Partnership Business Champion. Their role will be to ensure that the views of the local business community are heard and their needs and priorities raised, at the right time, in the right place, and identify and support business owners that can be ‘engagement champions’ within the local business community.

The FSB represents more than 200,000 business people across the United Kingdom and is the largest single organisation representing business interests in the country.

The Essex Region of the FSB represents small businesses in the areas covered by Essex County Council and the London Boroughs of Havering and Redbridge.