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Knowsley businesses lead the way to recovery

Local MPs, George Howarth, Eddie O'Hara and Council leader Ron Round today published a report calling for action to support local businesses following the Knowsley Business Summit.

Earlier this year, around 100 Knowsley Businesses came together to identify the range of challenges they are facing arising from the downturn and to work out practical policy solutions. These include:

- Improving access to finance and insurance to improve cash flow
- Clearer access to education and training support
- A simplified process for accessing grants and financial support
- Ensuring the public sector implements the prompt payment code, and a call to extend it to cover subcontractors
- Cutting paperwork involved in public sector procurement
- Streamlining regulations to cut unnecessary duplication
- Specific help to support the construction, housing and automotive markets

The report will be sent to central and regional Government and representatives of the insurance and banking industries asking for a response to the measures proposed.

Commenting on the paper, Knowsley North and Sefton East MP, George Howarth said:

"Most local businesses are fundamentally sound and with the support of improved services will be well positioned to lead us out of the downturn. We need to create new services, remove unnecessary administrative burdens and make it easier to access credit and insurance where there is a sound business case. Since the summit, we have been busy lobbying Ministers and have already seen significant progress for example in some of the measures introduced in the budget on the car industry."

Knowsley South MP, Eddie O'Hara MP said:

"Small local businesses in particular are experiencing difficulties of cash flow from several directions at once: from late payment, even by public service customers despite the obligations laid on them by the Government, from larger businesses who are taking advantage of their difficulties to demand more flexible terms, and from the banks who are increasing the cost of overdraft facilities and the cost and conditions for access to new credit. We shall be asking the government to intervene with practical mechanisms to address these difficulties".

Leader of Knowsley Council, Cllr Ron Round said:

"We have given a commitment to supporting our local businesses in any way we can through these difficult economic times. The Business Summit was a valuable first step, allowing us to listen to the concerns of local companies and discover exactly what support and guidance they need. We have committed an additional £1million of funding to supporting businesses this year and the Business Summit will help shape how that funding is best used to maximise its impact on the local economy."

