

# Businesses fear

## UK economy will suffer in 2007

The Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) is anticipating struggles ahead for many of its members in 2007 unless several high-profile public figures use their power and influence to safeguard the future of Britain's small businesses.

With small firms playing the key role in the UK economy the FSB has drafted New Year's Resolutions for these people in the hope that their action will prevent the economy taking a negative turn in 2007. In addition to party leaders, ministers, regulators and other figures also have promises to keep.

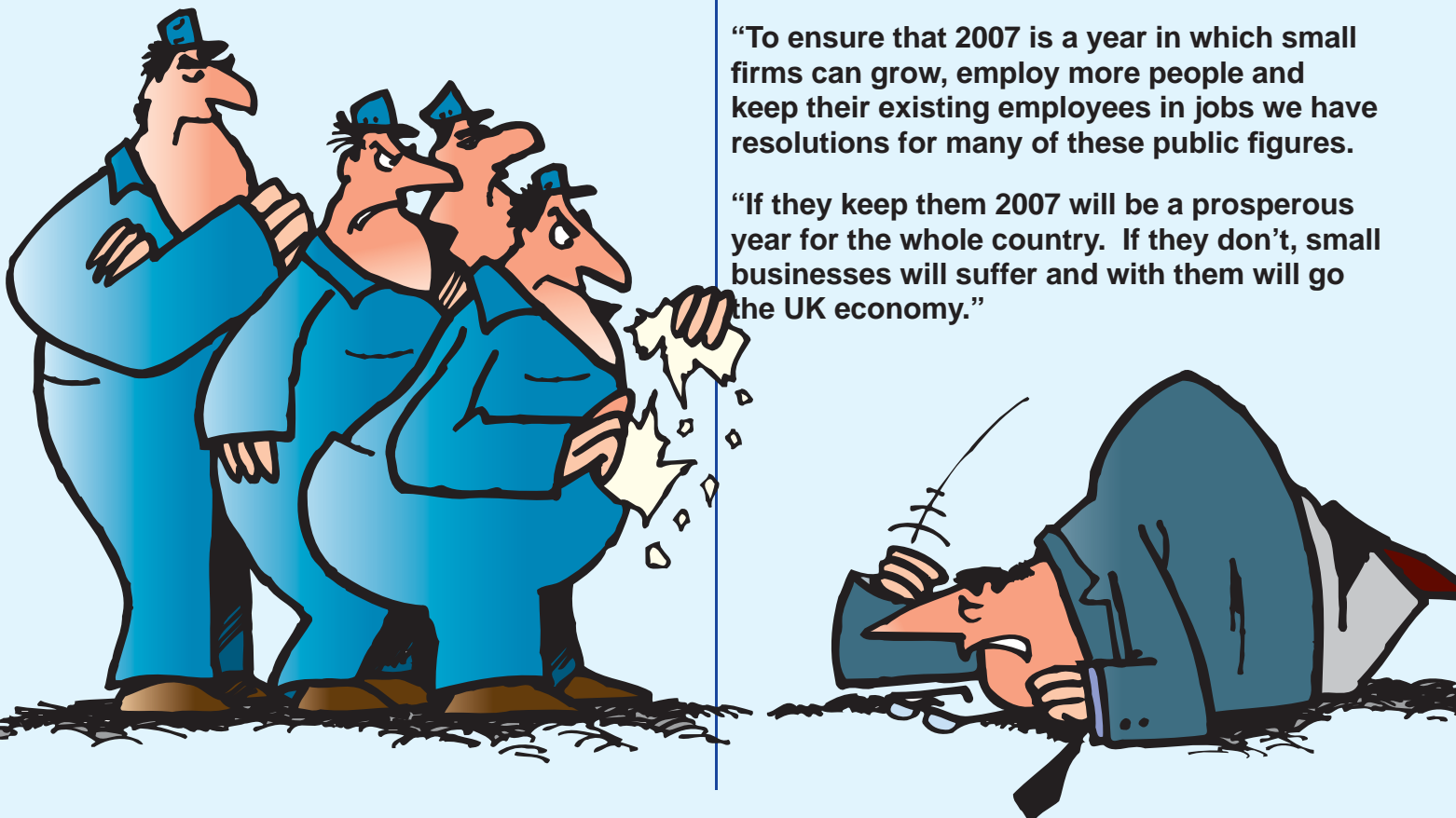
The resolutions cover issues from fair trading to local government finance, transport and skills.

Carol Undy, FSB National Chairman, said:

"Small businesses employ over fifty eight per cent of the private sector workforce. A huge number of public figures have a major impact on these employers and their 12 million employees. These businesses produce half of Britain's GDP, representing £1,200 billion per year.

"To ensure that 2007 is a year in which small firms can grow, employ more people and keep their existing employees in jobs we have resolutions for many of these public figures.

"If they keep them 2007 will be a prosperous year for the whole country. If they don't, small businesses will suffer and with them will go the UK economy."



<http://www.businessinberkshire.co.uk/fsbeastberkshire/>



## The FSB's New Year Resolutions are as follows:

**Tony Blair**, the Prime Minister, to ensure an orderly transition of power to a new PM that does not affect business confidence or the economy in a negative way.

**David Cameron**, Leader of the Conservative Party, should remember that business creates the wealth to fund public spending. Support from this sector should not be taken for granted, especially when examining green policies that can hit businesses hard if not drawn up correctly.

**Sir Menzies Campbell**, Leader of the Liberal Democrats, to continue the push of LibDem ideas for a general reduction in regulations for small businesses.

**Gordon Brown**, Chancellor of the Exchequer, should step up to the plate and bat for business by clamping down on the gold plating of EU regulations by UK civil servants.

**John Reid**, Home Secretary, must recognise the role that businesses can play in improving community safety with the right support, advice and response from the police. The police need to be more proactive in their response to crimes against businesses. This will ensure that businesses continue to be the 'eyes and ears' of communities in the counter terrorist effort.

**John Fingleton**, Chief Executive of the Office of Fair Trading, to make the OFT do what it says on the tin. He should prevent the unfair market created by the supermarkets from continuing the carnage of small shops on the high streets across Britain, which reduces competition and consumer choice.

**Douglas Alexander**, Secretary of State at the Department for Transport, to remember that investment in new and existing roads is crucial for small businesses to survive. A balance must be maintained between the economic and environmental health of the country.

**Alistair Darling**, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, to protect the post office network and reversing his decision to cull 2,500 post offices. To continue the fight in the EU against scrapping the UK opt-out from the Working Time Directive.

**John Hutton**, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to remember that without employers there would be no employees. He must make sure pension requirements in his White Paper do not bankrupt small businesses.

**Sir Digby Jones**, the Government's new Skills Tsar, to remember that 99% of businesses are small and thus need training to be on-site to avoid losing a large proportion of a business' workforce all at once. He should also make sure that any employer-led Commission for Employment and Skills must have full and proper small business representation.

**Sir Michael Lyons** must reject calls for business rates to be returned to local authority control. For the sake of the economy this cannot be allowed to happen.

**Bill Callaghan**, Chair of Health and Safety Commission, should make sure that the HSE Simplification plan delivers real improvements for business in terms of reduced costs and time spent filling in forms and doing risk assessments. This can be achieved without putting worker safety at risk.

**James Purnell**, Minister at the DWP, to recognise that the responsibility for saving for retirement lies with the individual, not the employer, and to remember that if businesses' money is diverted to pensions less will be spent on growing the business.

**Malcolm Wicks**, Minister of State at the Department of Trade and Industry to give small businesses a fairer deal in the energy market.