

Small businesses need a bigger voice says Mark

SMALL business is big business in Milton Keynes.

That is according to a city MP who spoke up for the city's many companies which employ fewer than 250 people, in a special Parliamentary debate yesterday.

During the debate, which called for Government support for such businesses, Mark Lancaster dubbed Milton Keynes the 'city of start-ups', with five businesses moving into or expanding in the city each month.

The Milton Keynes North MP told colleagues that 72 per cent companies here were actually started in the city, and urged Ministers to give them as much of a voice as the bigger corporates that the city is also home to.

He drew attention to the fact that the area is viewed as affluent, and yet some areas of Milton Keynes are among the poorest in the South East.

Given that many of the 10,000 employers in the city are small businesses, Mr Lancaster urged the Government to give them a voice in the formation of the Local Enterprise Partnerships, which will drive forward regional growth.

He said this could be done by allocating funds not only to the Chambers of Commerce, but also to the Federation of Small Businesses, which locally is led by his predecessor, Cllr Brian White.

After the debate Mr Lancaster said: "We may be the HQ of headquarters in Milton Keynes, known for being home to Mercedes, Argos and Marshall, to name a few. But we are primarily the home of small and medium sized businesses. They are the lifeblood of our local economy and I want to ensure that they drive forward the growth of the city and are recognised for their enormous contribution."