

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **CABINET**

DATE: **TUESDAY, 22 JANUARY 2013**

REPORT BY: **DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT**

SUBJECT: **FLINTSHIRE BUSINESS WEEK**

1.00 **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

The sixth Flintshire Business Week 2012 (FBW 12) took place over the period 12th October to 19th October and was developed and delivered by the Council's Business Development Team, with funding from a wide range of business sponsors. FBW is now widely acknowledged as being the most important business information and networking opportunity in North Wales.

2.00 **BACKGROUND**

2.01 The programme for FBW responds to the needs of local businesses and is developed through a series of consultation events with business people on behalf of, their representative organisations. It aims to deliver current best practice from experts, academics and professionals in a variety of fields, at the same time as creating networking and trading opportunities.

2.02 Challenges and targets set for FBW 12 were to:

- Continuously improve the event offer whilst ensuring quality service delivery.
- Secure sufficient financial and in kind sponsorship to enable the event to proceed at no cost to the Council.
- Increase the number of delegates.
- Improve trading opportunities particularly with businesses from outside the region.
- Improve marketing of the event, in particular platform the county as a good place to do business.
- Ensure that the aspirations of sponsors and stakeholders were met via agreed KPIs and SMART objectives.
- Create a desire for businesses to further collaborate on other projects to enhance the profile of the county and provide even more opportunities for investment.

3.00 **CONSIDERATIONS**

3.01 **Outcomes and Achievements**

FBW secured a total of 124 sponsors, generating £95,000 of income, with a further estimated £40,000 in Kind, an increase of 25% over 2011. Through the week, a total of 70 speakers presented at 31 events, attended by 1876 delegates, a fall on 2011, a reflection of the smaller events programme and of the ongoing difficult economic situation. The Business to Business Exhibition at Deeside featured 81 exhibitors.

FBW 12 was promoted through an extensive campaign of advertising and other means, including:

- *7000 X 64 page full colour magazines*
- *4000 DVDs promoting the Open for Business theme delivered to businesses in neighbouring English Counties.*
- *A new website which is fully bi-lingual*
- *Improved media and printing package for increased awareness and event promotion*

The average attendance at each separate event was 62, an increase of 15% compared with 44 in 2011.

3.02 **Evaluation**

FBW 12 has been evaluated using a customer satisfaction survey.

Over a third of our delegates found FBW 12 extremely useful to their organisation, a further 60% found it very useful. Only 5% found the event not useful.

3.03 **Programme of events:**

The week was divided into themes, delivered from a single venue when possible, including;

Venue	Theme	Seminars	Networking	Factory Tour
Deeside College	Politics & Economics,	1	Yes	n/a
Northop Country House Hotel	Politics & Economics	1	Yes	n/a
Westminster	Flintshire at Westminster		Yes	n/a
Northop College	Reviving of Town and Rural Areas	4	Yes	n/a
DIP	Business Exhibition &	14	Yes	Yes

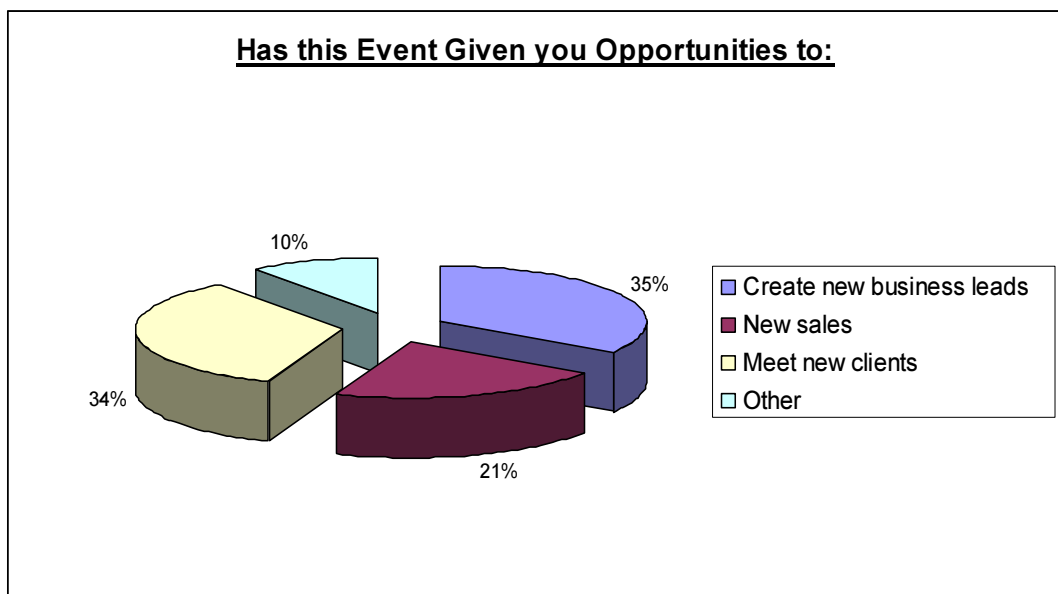
	Seminars			
Toyota	Business Exhibition & Seminars	n/a	n/a	Yes
TATA Steel	The Future of Energy	1	yes	No
Days Hotel	Ethics in Business	1	Yes	n/a

Key events were the Westminster reception, this year attended by Trade Attaches from Russia, China, Germany, France and Latvia. The prospects for developing these links are good with further visits to Flintshire from Latvia taking place in December 2012 and a Chinese delegation planned to visit the County for March 2013. Other alliances were forged with Russia and Germany.

The Latvian Trade delegation has made business contacts and trade negotiations are underway with several local companies.

The final event of the week was the Gala Dinner and Awards Ceremony which was over-subscribed, attracting 220 attendees. The entries from local companies was a small increase on 2011. The judges were very impressed with the standard of entry and the quality of applications. The 11 Business Award categories received a total of 53 nominations, an increase of 61% over entries in 2011.

- 3.04 All of the FBW award winners were entered into the Daily Post North Wales Business Achievement Awards. Four Flintshire companies were successful in the ten categories available. A wide range of beneficial outcomes have been delivered by FBW 12 to both local businesses and the Authority.



Set out below is a sample of comments received following FBW 12:

“I found the events I attended to be GREAT how can anyone miss any. The organisation was great. I learnt so much and am more aware of different issues as a result of attending FBW12. The team is GREAT and a credit to FCC. The exhibition at ConvaTec was brilliant - I was able to connect one business with someone who offered a solution to their problem within 15 minutes”.

Cllr. D. Mackie

“What an outstanding job yourself and colleagues and ConvaTec did staging this year’s exhibition. We thoroughly enjoyed ourselves over the two days and this was due in no small part to your helpful nature, cheerful smile and constant enthusiasm.”

M & S Water Services Ltd

“As a headline sponsor, I am delighted with the level of media activity and positive exposure of the county and the businesses”.

DRB group

3.05 **Conclusions**

FBW continues to be a very important part of the Council’s calendar of events. Over the last five years, it has helped raise the profile of the authority regionally and nationally; it has helped to build strong local networks both between businesses and between the authority and the business community. Most importantly, it has shown Flintshire County Council to be a business friendly and ‘can-do’ organisation. This is now producing a wide range of benefits for the Council in terms of its very strong relationships with the business community and in the support being given to initiatives including Deeside Enterprise Zone, the Business Entrepreneurship Network and the Advanced Manufacturing park.

4.00 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.01 Members are asked to note the content of the report

5.00 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.01 All costs for FBW12 are fully covered by sponsorship

6.00 **ANTI POVERTY IMPACT**

6.01 None Directly

7.00 **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

7.01 The purpose of the Future of Energy and supply chain opportunities seminar was to impart best practice information of current and future initiatives, so local companies could make alliances with speakers and

agencies for future reference.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01 Non directly

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 None

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 None

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 None

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 None

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Contact Officer: Patricia Carlin
Telephone: 01352 703042
Email: patricia.carlin@flintshire.gov.uk