

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE
DATE: WEDNESDAY, 9 JANUARY 2013
REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT
SUBJECT: DEESIDE ENTERPRISE ZONE

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise Members of progress on Deeside Enterprise Zone.

2.00 BACKGROUND

- Deeside Enterprise Zone was declared by the Minister for BETS on 12 September 2011, it came into effect on 2 April 2012 .
- This followed the declaration of twenty four enterprise zones in England, two of which (Wirral Waters and Daresbury) are within twenty miles of Deeside.
- The Minister has established a private sector-led Board, Chaired by Askar Sheibani, Chief Executive of Comtek Ltd, to advise on the delivery of DEZ. The Board has no executive authority, delivery of the Enterprise Zone programme will be by the Welsh Government.
- To date, the Board has produced Business Plan/Marketing Plans, which have been well received by WG. These include bids for funding and a response is expected early in the New Year.

The DEZ plan is both ambitious and innovative and is intended to use the opportunity created by EZ designation to;

- create 7,000 new jobs, mainly in the manufacturing sector, helping to provide a major boost to employment for the whole North Wales region;
- help make Deeside recognised on an international scale as a major focus for advanced manufacturing;
- use the proposed investment at Deeside as a catalyst for the regeneration of the wider Deeside area, this is the main concentration of deprivation in Flintshire.

Progress

DEZ covers an area of 2,000 hectares, including Deeside Industrial Park and the Hawarden/Broughton aerospace complex. A total of 20,000 jobs are currently located within this area, with around 70% of these in manufacturing, a large proportion being within the advanced manufacturing sectors (that is, aerospace, automotive engineering, paper and packaging, pharmaceuticals, renewable energy and electronics).

To date, significant progress has been made.

1. Deeside EZ Board appointed by the Minister, with representatives from major employers (UPM, Tata, Toyota), Glyndwr University, Deeside College, financial institutions and a major trade union. FCC is represented by the Chief Executive.
2. a strong consensus has been established and this is driving forward DEZ on the twin tracks of skills/training and R&D/ supply chain development. This approach is being supported by industry bodies;
3. a planning application has been approved for what is believed to be the single largest development site currently proposed in Wales. The 200 hectare Northern Gateway site (marketed as The Airfields), will accommodate up to 5,000 jobs and 700+ residential units;
4. a feasibility study is underway which will examine the opportunity to develop a joint Advanced Manufacturing Park, focussed on a higher education-linked, Advanced Manufacturing Centre (AMC). The AMC could provide a location for a new Glyndwr University Engineering Faculty, relocated from the Wrexham Campus, a Deeside College outreach facility, the Advanced Composites Centre and an incubation centre for new small businesses. This will be the first Advanced Manufacturing Park in Wales and will follow the successful models now operating in Sheffield, together with those now declared in Derby and Belfast.
5. The AMC will provide;
 - a focus for public sector support for business, delivering FCC/WG and other public sector assistance on the 'one

stop shop' principle;

- a 'shop window' for the sector, promoting the capabilities of local and regional businesses and, importantly, to promoting local industry to the next generation of potential employees;
 - a 'full service' skills and training facility, offering training from the 14/19 level, through to post-graduate levels;
 - business incubation space for new small, high-tech companies.
6. a local recruitment initiative is now in place, this is helping local people into new job opportunities. To date 200 people have been helped in this way, with 140 gaining permanent employment.
 7. a Development Team approach has been established and this is dealing with all major applications in a coordinated and effective way.
 8. a business plan, including a marketing plan, has been prepared and both are now being considered by Welsh Government.

Conclusions

The local Flintshire community has welcomed the decision by the Minister to declare an EZ in Deeside and has responded rapidly and positively to the opportunity this presents. With 33.7% of all jobs in the sector, Flintshire is already the most manufacturing-dependent local authority area in the UK and has one of the most resilient economies in Wales, providing large numbers of jobs for people across North Wales. However, competition for investment is intense and the area needs to consider how it can best position itself for the future.

The DEZ business plan sets out a programme to reinforce Flintshire's competitive position for the next generation, by maintaining existing employment and attracting new investment. This will create a legacy of economic growth and opportunity that will benefit North Wales well into this century.

DEZ also offers the opportunity to provide a very significant boost to the local economy, providing a catalyst for regenerating Deeside and leaving a lasting legacy for the region. It has been well-received by the business community and is now the subject of a significant level of development interest.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

To be covered in presentation

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

That the report be noted.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None directly.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

New jobs will be created which will be targeted towards the most deprived areas.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

None directly.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

None directly.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

None directly.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

With Welsh Government.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

With Welsh Government.

12.00 APPENDICES

N/A

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

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