

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

DATE: **THURSDAY, 19TH MARCH 2015**

REPORT BY: **CHIEF OFFICER (COMMUNITY AND ENTERPRISE)**

SUBJECT: **FLINTSHIRE BUSINESS WEEK 2014 (FBW14)**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To update on key activity and outcomes from Flintshire Business Week 2014 (FBW14).

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 Since its inception eight years ago, Flintshire Business Week (FBW) has grown year on year and cemented the business community into a strong body with a platform and voice which ensures that “Flintshire is in Business”.

FBW is a true partnership with private, public and third sector business in collaboration with academia. In order to deliver this year’s programme, a fundamental review of FBW was needed to reflect a changed economic environment and to reflect the widened ambitions and improvements that all partners wished to see incorporated.

FBW has become a recognised brand to promote local companies, sponsors, collaborators and Flintshire Council to a far wider audience than would be possible through normal networking activities. Both financial and in kind sponsorship provides the resources to achieve the aims and objectives which are agreed through a series of evaluation and consultation events involving stakeholders throughout the whole process.

The event provides the resource to promote the county and businesses as well as cementing partnerships with the North Wales Economic Ambition Board, Mersey Dee Alliance, education institutions and Members of the UK and Welsh Government.

2.02 Improving the FBW Offer

To improve the FBW offer for 2014 the following ambitions were agreed with stakeholders:-

- » Positive promotion for Flintshire as an excellent place to do business and for potential investors
- » Partnership excellence to promote economic and regional priorities
- » Raise the profile of the manufacturing sector to young people regarding career, work experience and apprenticeship opportunities

Performance Indicators

2.03 The following performance measures were set:-

- » Achieve delegate attendance target of 2,575
- » Increase event awareness through increased use of social media
- » Production of a single website to promote FBW seminars; online Flintshire Year Book; Regional Business Exhibition; Flintshire Business Awards
- » Maintain 90% positive delegate evaluation feedback
- » Positive news stories

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 Positive Promotion

FBW 2014 was a dedicated Council event positively promoting the public, private and third sectors within the county and wider region. This was achieved through delivery of:-

- FBW seminars – including the regional economy; manufacturing industries; academia; apprenticeships and workforce training;
- Regional Business Exhibition – featuring 60 business stands from across the region to promote networking and trading opportunities;
- Flintshire Business Awards – showcasing Flintshire business excellence and the best in class in ten award categories;
- Development of Flintshire In Business website and Year Book 2014/15;
- Flintshire Industry Awareness 2 day event – raising awareness of the manufacturing sector with school aged students

3.02 Partnership Excellence

The wider regional benefits were incorporated in this year's programme to support the priorities of the Council, NW Economic Ambition Board (EAB), Mersey Dee Alliance (MDA) and incorporating academia at a higher level with industry to promote rapid commercialisation opportunities.

The following regional key themes were identified and incorporated in to this years programme;

- Regional Economy – local and global economics effecting local, national and international trading opportunities
- Destination Management – restoring the region’s reputation as a location for inward investment
- Advanced Manufacturing – using the opportunities represented by North Wales’ high value manufacturing sector and Deeside Enterprise Zone
- Developing partnerships and supply chain opportunities
- Social Enterprise – developing existing networks and showcasing support for new third sector enterprise

3.03 **Industry Awareness: Science Technology Engineering & Maths (STEM) Event**

The two day Industry Awareness Event was sponsored by Welsh Government to introduce 14-19 year olds to experience STEM in action via the various automotive and technological displays and activities within the Rally Service Park at Toyota, Deeside. The event provided direct engagement with manufacturing and technological businesses as well as education establishments exhibiting interactive displays and factory tours. The total number of exhibitors and attendees reached 1427 over the two days.

3.04 **Key Performance Outcomes**

As a result of FBW14 we have:-

- Achieved 2,740 delegate attendance against the corporate target of 2,575
- Increased event awareness through use of social media resulting in a £5k saving on media packages
- Developed a single website to promote FBW activity with 3,148 FBW14 hits
- Recorded 98% positive delegate evaluation feedback against a corporate target of 90%:
- Developed and delivered a highly-regarded quality inclusive programme, delivering a range of events of economic interest to individuals and organisations at a local, regional, national level;
- Produced a high quality Flintshire In Business Year Book that is being used to externally promote Flintshire and the region to local, national and international investors.
- Delivered Flintshire Business Awards and Gala Evening, attended by 200 delegates, to showcase and celebrate business success across 10 award categories which attracted 36 entries.

3.05 **Future Developments**

Feedback from stakeholders has been exceptional with interest already shown for FBW15.

- Rt Hon. Lord Barry Jones confirmed as FBW15 President
- Business Awards and Exhibition Headline Sponsors confirmed
- MDA and NWEAB priorities to be showcased
- HE / FE / Apprenticeships to be showcased
- FBW14 website has been a new development and is now a cost effective approach which can be updated for internal reuse
- Critical assessment from stakeholders has been undertaken to improve 2015 delivery such as:-
 - Exhibition and seminars to be held in the same location;
 - Streamline the programme over three days;
 - Include regional transformational projects;
 - Reintroduce Question Time;
 - Address bilingual challenges within the 2015 Year Book by considering alternative methods of production which will still meet the Corporate Welsh Language Policy

4.00 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.01 Committee is asked to note this report and the value of Flintshire Business Week to the successful development of the Flintshire and regional economy.

5.00 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.01 Both financial and in kind sponsorship provided the resources to deliver FBW14. £55,500 sponsorship was achieved against £51,850 expenditure with seminars free for businesses to attend.

6.00 **ANTI POVERTY IMPACT**

6.01 A growing economy will help to reduce poverty.

7.00 **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

7.01 None associated directly with this report

8.00 **EQUALITIES IMPACT**

8.01 None associated directly with this report

9.00 **PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

9.01 None associated directly with this report

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 None

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 FBW public, private and third sector stakeholders and President of FBW.

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 None

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

None.

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