

REPORT TO: Employment, Learning, Skills & Community Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 25th March 2013

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Children and Enterprise

PORTFOLIO: Leader

SUBJECT: International Festival of Business 2014

WARDS: Borough Wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to inform Members of proposals for the development of an International Festival of Business in the Liverpool City Region, and to advise Members (at an early stage) of the opportunities that the event could bring to the borough.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- (1) Halton's participation in The International Festival of Business 2014 be supported

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Background

The International Festival for Business is an international gathering of the world's most inspiring businesses taking place in Liverpool in June and July 2014. It will provide a global forum where industries in key sectors such as advanced manufacturing, low carbon, and life sciences, professional and financial services can come together to trade ideas, products and contacts.

The International Festival has been conceived as a key component of the Lord Heseltine and Sir Terry Leahy review: "Rebalancing Britain – Policy or Slogan" and is supported by the Liverpool City Region LEP, Wirral MBC, UK Trade & Investment, the Department for Business Innovation & Skills, The British Chambers of Commerce and the Peel Group.

Described as 'Mini Shanghai Expo' it will bring together world and UK cities for 61 days of themed events, exhibitions and showcases. The expo will be the largest event of its kind in the UK since the Millennium

Fair of 2000, held at the Millennium Dome, and the Festival of Britain in 1951. It is anticipated that the Festival will attract 250,000 visitors from across the globe and bring £100 million worth of investment. A brochure is appended to this report.

The International Festival of Business will be themed around three core business sectors:-

- LOW CARBON: One of the world's growth industries, valued in the UK alone at £112 billion and worth over £3.2 trillion globally.
- GLOBAL COMMUNICATIONS: A thriving and highly competitive sector and the backbone of international trade.
- KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY: The industries that are shaping our future, comprising the varied worlds of creative and digital, advanced manufacturing, life sciences and financial and professional services.

The Festival will attract international business leaders, entrepreneurs, innovators, investors and policy makers and act as a launch pad for commercial success by providing opportunities for companies of all sizes to engage with new networks and make global deals. The North American and the BRIC economies (Brazil, Russia, India and China) will be particularly targeted.

A major cultural festival will also take place alongside the Festival of Business.

To date three launch events are planned:-

- 25th February 2013 in London which is targeted at high profile attendees such as Ambassadors, Trade Envoys etc.
- 18th March 2013 at ACC Liverpool, an evening event for 500 people aimed at a northern UK audience
- 27th June 2013 as part of Accelerate 2013 at ACC Liverpool. 400 UK entrepreneurs and high growth businesses will be invited to a gala dinner

A draft version of the calendar of events will be available late spring/early summer 2013. First key sponsors and speakers anticipated to be announced early March 2013. We have an opportunity to contribute to the calendar of events.

3.2 A Role for the Borough Halton

Given the concentration of both business and facilities which fall broadly within the sector designation of 'the knowledge economy' in the Borough it is proposed that two, possibly three, themed events are planned to take place within Halton during the Festival.

In consultation with the Chamber of Commerce, discussions have commenced with both The Heath Business and Technical Park and Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus to hold events during the Festival. It is also proposed that one of the bi-annual Economic Forums be held during the Festival.

- 3.3** Clearly the focus will be on business; Halton might wish to consider supporting a 'do business day' which picks up on the theme of growing innovation and entrepreneurship, a key ingredient at both the Heath and Daresbury. This is a great opportunity to show case businesses and assets that the borough has to offer in a global context and Halton's involvement in the Festival has received favourable recognition from Liverpool Vision, the event coordinators.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The International Festival of Business 2014 will deliver tangible benefits to the local business community and in so doing contribute to the realisation of a number of the Council's key strategic objectives described in the Community Strategy

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial Implications

It is proposed that a sum not exceeding £5,000.00 be allocated from existing budgets to support the delivery of two\three events in Halton during The International Festival of Business.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

Improving business sustainability and performance will create more employment opportunities for the Borough's young people

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

The International Festival of Business will make a positive contribution to employment generation across the City Region

6.3 A Healthy Halton

No implications

6.4 A Safer Halton

No implications

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

The International Festival of Business will be an opportunity to showcase a number of development opportunities in Halton to a national and international business audience.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

The International Festival for Business has set itself ambitious targets in terms of the numbers of visitors expected to visit the City Region and the volume of events which are proposed to take place during June and July 2014.

Considerable responsibility lies, therefore, upon the principal organisers, Liverpool Vision, to secure sufficient sponsorship and contributing partners to deliver the Festival

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

There are no equality and diversity issues

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

None under the meaning of the Act.