

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

**DATE:** 15 September 2014

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise

**PORTFOLIO:** Economic Development

**SUBJECT:** International Festival of Business 2014

**WARDS:** Borough Wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

The purpose of this report is to describe the scale and impact of The International Festival of Business 2014 across the Liverpool City Region and to focus upon the specific activities that took place in the Borough of Halton during the Festival

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That**

- (i) Halton's contribution to the success of International Festival of Business 2014 be noted**

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **3.1 Background**

The International Festival for Business (IFoB) took place across the Liverpool City Region in June and July 2014 and was marketed as a gathering of the world's most inspiring businesses.

Bringing together cities from throughout the UK for 61 days of events, exhibitions and showcases, IFoB was billed as the largest event of its kind in the UK since the Millennium Fair of 2000 and the Festival of Britain in 1951.

A major cultural festival also took place alongside IFoB

### **3.2 The Impact of IFoB**

IFoB 2014 featured more than 400 events in venues across the Liverpool City Region and a further 139 events at venues further afield, covering seven different business sectors.

More than 75,000 business delegates took part in IFoB with more than 15,000 registering for the IFoB Business Club and 10,000 delegates passing through the festival's nerve centre, the IFB Hub. During the

Festival there were more than 1,100 one-to-one business meetings in the Hub.

Key events included the BT Global City Leaders' summit which saw more than 100 mayors, city leaders, politicians and policy advisers come to the City Region for three days to discuss how cities can succeed as economies begin to emerge from an era of austerity.

At International Festival for Business 2014 finale gala dinner at ACC Liverpool to mark the official end of IFB 2014 Chancellor George Osborne announced that there will be an International Festival of Business 2016 hosted again in the Liverpool City Region.

### 3.3 IFoB Events and Activities in Halton

#### **June 24 2014 : International Festival of Business 2014 'Big Data Day'**

'Big Data' refers to any collection of data sets so large and complex it becomes difficult to process using standard data management tools and traditional data processing applications.

Increasingly, the capture, curation, storage, search, sharing, transfer, analysis and visualisation of large data sets impacts upon a broad range of disciplines including meteorology, genomics, complex simulations and biological and environmental research. The manipulation of 'Big Data' is also at the heart of the internet, global finance and business informatics.

Given the national significance of high powered computing at SciTech Daresbury UKTI, the Science Technologies and Facilities Council (STFC) and Halton Borough Council came together to stage a major international event targeting academics, major corporates and niche ICT companies active in the field.

The event, on Tuesday 24 June, attracted 130 speakers and delegates from companies as diverse as Hitachi, Jaguar Land Rover, Vodafone, BT, NTT Europe, IBM and Samsung.

The event featured a plenary session chaired by John Wormersley, Chief Executive of STFC, and the following, themed, sessions :-

- Connected Car and Automotive Services
- Digital Society ; The Connected Consumer
- Internet of Things and Smart Networks
- The Power of Big Data in Improving Population Health
- Using Data to Deliver New Insight and to Build Better Products Faster

The event concluded with a tour of SciTech Daresbury focusing upon The Virtual Engineering Centre, Virtual Touch Laboratory and Visualisation and Virtual Reality laboratory.

A second tour concentrated on the Versatile Electron Linear Accelerator and the role of particle accelerator technology in solving industrial challenges.

### **June 26 2014 : Addressing the Skills Needs of the Science, Technology and Advance Manufacturing (STAM) Sector**

The science, technology and advanced manufacturing (STAM) sector is a key source of high value jobs and innovation in Halton.

Currently there are 221 Science, Technology and Advanced Manufacturing companies in Halton, employing 7,568 individuals.

38% of the local STAM workforce is employed in the chemical sector (2,609 employees) while the digital sector, with 72 individual companies, accounts for 33% of the sector locally.

A key influence upon the continued grow of the sector locally will be the provision of a suitably qualified and flexible workforce. A major event was, therefore, delivered by SOG Ltd, the owners and managers of The Heath Business and Technical Park, and Halton Borough Council to consider the future skills needs of the sector and begin to put in place the measure to ensure the sector has the future workforce it requires.

The specific objectives of the event were :-

- To stimulate the wider debate about the skills needs of the Science, Technology and Advanced Manufacturing Sector.
- To provide a platform to showcase The Heath Business and Technical Park to the local and sub-regional business community.
- To provide local companies with the opportunity to learn more about the skills training and recruitment support available across the Liverpool City Region.
- To provide an opportunity to engage with local young people, particularly young women, in order to engender a greater enthusiasm for careers in Science, Technology and Advanced Manufacturing and to illustrate the range of support that is available to young people wishing to pursue a career in the sector

The event, held at The Heath Business and Technical Park, on Thursday 26 June attracted over 150 delegates.

The central focus of the event was a panel debate, chaired by BBC TV's Business Breakfast correspondent Steph McGovern. The panel included:-

- David Parr : Chief Executive Halton Borough Council
- Derek Twigg : MP for Halton
- Graham Jackson : The Wood Group PSN

- Carol Thomas : SOG Ltd
- Andy Brown : Regional Operations Director ECITB
- Jonathan White : Operations Director Diageo
- Terry Dray : Director of Graduate Advancement and Employer Engagement Liverpool John Moores University

The event also included an exhibition and networking lunch. The exhibition featured both public and private sector organisation that provide employment, recruitment and training support to employers. For example, Job Centre Plus, Riverside College, the local universities and private sector providers were all represented.

A key element of the event focused upon attracting young people into the sector.

A series of events were, therefore, staged which attracted 200 + local young people from Halton schools. The Catalyst Discovery Centre delivered a series of workshops focusing upon space science while the ECITB performed a play which about careers in engineering.

A panel of twelve 'real' scientist, engineers and technologists were recruited to speak to the young people in small groups about their work and how they got into their particular field. All of the young people who attended the event had the opportunity to meet with each of the experts.

#### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

Liverpool Vision is currently working on a 'Local Benefit Matrix' which is expected to be completed by the end of September which will more precisely quantify the impact of IFoB 2014 to the City Region.

However, The International Festival of Business 2014 gave local employers an opportunity to participate in business event of unprecedented size and scale. It is clear, from anecdotal evidence, that a number of companies benefited directly from participation in the Festival through the winning of new business and forging lucrative alliances.

Halton's two key events focused deliberately upon the science, technology and advanced manufacturing sector the further development of which will make a very real contribution to the realisation of a number of the Council's key strategic objectives.

#### **5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

##### **5.1 Financial Implications**

Halton Borough Council invested £4,214.00 from existing budgets to support the delivery of two major 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.

Further 200 + of the Borough's young people participated in events designed to encourage Halton's future employees to consider a career in science, technology and advanced manufacturing.

### **6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton**

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

More specifically, the event at The Heath Business and Technical Park on June 26 brought together local employers and training and skills providers to both raise awareness amongst local companies of existing service provision but also to encourage local employers to consider local people when attempting to recruit.

### **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 was an opportunity to showcase a number of development opportunities in Halton to a national and international business audience.

## **7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

No implications.

## **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.

