

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**D2 Joint Committee Meeting
2 July, 2021**

**VISION DERBYSHIRE:
PROPOSAL TO DEVELOP A FESTIVAL OF BUSINESS**

(1) Purpose of Report

1.1 This report seeks approval to access the Retained Business Rates Fund to pay for an innovative 'Derbyshire Festival of Business' under the banner of Vision Derbyshire delivered through a partnership led by the University of Derby.

(2) Discussion / Decision Required by the D2JC

2.1 A decision is required from the Derby and Derbyshire Joint Committee regarding the allocation of £43,000 (+ VAT) from the Retained Business Rates Fund to develop and deliver a Festival of Business as part of a Vision Derbyshire project.

(3) Information and Analysis

3.1 Working under the umbrella of the Vision Derbyshire theme, "Establish Relentless Ambition", the Employment and Skills COVID Recovery Cell has identified a key intervention to support business recovery in Derbyshire, working with the University of Derby and other delivery partners.

The Proposal

3.2 The event is to be managed by the University of Derby and delivered over a month-long window during the autumn 2021 (September/October/November). The overall aim is to help enable the business community to bounce-back from the challenges caused by the pandemic (and BREXIT) by:

- identifying existing and future skills talent
- exploring key business-related issues
- providing opportunities for collaboration and networking
- showcasing the best of Derbyshire's businesses to existing and future clients/customers/investors

3.3 The project has a number of strands of activity which include the following:

i) Showcasing Derbyshire's Business Community

The University of Derby to work in partnership with East Midlands Chamber, Federation of Small Business, Confederation of British Industry and locally based organisations such as Business Peak District, Destination Chesterfield,

Marketing Derby and Erewash Business Partnership to organise a programme of community-focused open day events that are geared to showcasing Derbyshire's businesses. The aim of this strand is to profile Derbyshire's businesses to potential customers/clients and future employees.

ii) Educational Engagement Programme

The University to work with key organisations (as referenced above), plus local authorities and D2N2 Careers Hub to implement a co-ordinated programme of education-related activities. This will include mutual visits between school/college/university and employers to deliver careers advice and guidance. Also, there is potential to include delivery of a hackathon, a series of live project briefs and masterclasses on key business-related topics e.g. business resilience. Potential extension to include a programme of intensive, one week-long work placements.

This will also link with the wider careers activity, creating additional opportunities for businesses to extend their reach through the local careers sites such as My Future, and STARTIN to potential young people in our schools, colleges and University.

The aim will be to showcase Derbyshire's businesses to the next generation of employees; to inspire school/college and university students to consider Derbyshire based employment opportunities.

iii) Online and Face-to-Face Masterclasses

Delivery of a suite of masterclasses on key topics of relevance to Derbyshire businesses. Speakers to include leading professionals, academic and businesspeople in Derbyshire, with the keynote event being the delivery of a TEDx talk. The University of Derby to publish a written version of the presentations.

The main aim of this strand is to raise the profile of Derbyshire as a 'thought leader' within the UK business community and so raise the county's profile as a place to do business.

Derbyshire Business & Enterprise Awards

- 3.4 The University to work in conjunction with East Midlands Chamber and Generation Next to showcase Derbyshire's business and enterprise-focused talent through a hybrid (virtual & face-to-face) awards ceremony. The objective of this intervention is to recognise and showcase the business and enterprise talent within Derbyshire and help raise aspirations to succeed.

The Derbyshire Business Expo

- 3.5 The proposal is to deliver a 3-day 'business expo' across locations in Derby, Chesterfield and Buxton, organised by the University of Derby as a means of promoting Derbyshire's businesses to existing and future clients.

Benchmarking Good Practice

- 3.6 A review has taken place of similar events in the region to test the effectiveness of the approach. The Leicester Business Festival is the largest business event in the region. It has become “Leicester and Leicestershire’s annual economic showcase and is cited as an important part in the post-Covid economic recovery plan” ([About \(leicesterbusinessfestival.com\)](http://leicesterbusinessfestival.com)). The 2020 Leicester Festival of Business attracted 3049 participants, 798 of which were outside the region with attendees from 24 countries. Overall, 1,076 unique businesses were engaged, whilst 90% of attendees said that their business benefited from attending an event in the Festival (LBF 2020 Official Festival Report”).
- 3.7 Other areas of related good practice include: ‘My Future’ and ‘MADE in Chesterfield’. With regards to the impact of My Future, a paid for campaign running until September has reached 12,806 people and there have been 18,661 impressions leading to 630 ‘click throughs’. Also, a Google and YouTube static advert aimed at parents has had 34,421 impressions leading to 231 click throughs. In addition, a video advert aimed at parents has had 15,100 impressions leading to the main video being viewed 884 times. The platform is also used by career leaders in school and more recently, has been rolled out to work coaches in Job Centre Plus who will use it with customers
- 3.8 By way of an overview, the MADE in Chesterfield Programme brings manufacturing businesses together with schools and colleges to inspire the future workforce by raising awareness of the opportunities and skills needed to work in those sectors. Recently, the programme has been widened to capture construction as well as manufacturing.
- 3.9 There are similarities with Festival of Business proposals in that MADE engages largely via ‘open door’ sessions where students are invited to visit employer premises. To date, over 3500 students have been engaged. Last year due to COVID, this happened virtually, developing virtual workplace tours and STEM resources with UCB, MSE Hiller and Woodhead Construction. The virtual tours can be seen on the links below: -

<https://youtu.be/EXSSsQXg0Go>

UCB STEM Skills

<https://youtu.be/KaPsAJticc4>

UCB Tour

<https://youtu.be/-uLeDXKZiAQ>

Woodhead STEM Skills

https://youtu.be/OOVTLz0sj_0

Woodhead Workplace Tour

<https://youtu.be/qvIzY8ual44>

MSE STEM Skills

<https://youtu.be/GuM94zP-jGk>

MSE Workplace Tour

(4) Measuring Performance

- 4.1 The following performance measures are proposed to be used to judge the success of the Festival:
- number of locally/regionally based organisations coming together to deliver the festival (10+)
 - numbers of businesses engaged (1000+)

- c. number of individual events delivered as part of the festival (50+)
- d. cumulative number of attendees at events (2000+)

(5) Costs

5.1 The costs of the Festival of Derbyshire project have been identified as follows:

£18,000	1.0FTE Project Manager fixed term over 6 months (including on costs) - to coordinate the various activities linked to the Festival
£15,000	Marketing/promotional work needed to build demand for the Expos
£5,000	Brand development & broader social media campaign to promote the Festival
£5,000	Impact assessment/evaluation of the Festival
£43,000 VAT	+ TOTAL

- 5.2 The current level of funding available in the Retained Business Rate pot (not including £1m previously allocated support for the Business Start Up Programme) is £0.8m and there is sufficient to cover the costs of the proposals as set out above.
- 5.3 Subject to agreement with Derbyshire County Council's Finance Service, it is proposed that a separate reserve account be set up to fund the Festival of Derbyshire to allow the transfer of £43,000 (+VAT) from the Retained Business Rate pot.

(6) Going Forward

- 6.1 Although currently, the Festival is proposed as a one-off intervention to be held in Autumn, 2021, it is considered that even in the short term, such a project could bring significant benefits to businesses, potential employees and a much-needed boost to the local economy. To help understand the longer-term potential of the intervention, it is proposed to evaluate the impact of the Festival on stakeholders, capture good practice and areas of learning. This will then help refine proposals and assess whether the interventions are worthy of being sustained in the longer term.
- 6.2 The aspiration is, in fact, to build a sustainable model for delivery and whilst the underpinning business model for subsequent years has not yet been built, the detailed nature of the collaborative working engendered by the Autumn Festival should establish a model for future working that will ensure a viable delivery model. Indeed, subject to evaluation, the aim is for the 2021 Festival to be developed into a fully sustainable model, without public sector support by the University of Derby and its partners.

(7) Recommendations

The D2 Joint Committee is recommended to:

- i) Note the overall aims and project proposals set out in this report.
- ii) Agree the allocation of £43,000, plus VAT, from the Retain Business Rates Fund into a nominated budget within Derbyshire County Council's Economy and Regeneration Service.

Andrew Marsh

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Derbyshire County Council