

**DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**CABINET MEMBER MEETING – JOBS, ECONOMY AND TRANSPORT**

**21<sup>st</sup> January 2014**

**REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**LOW CARBON ECONOMY ENGAGED RESEARCH PROJECT: FINAL REPORT**

**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

To inform the Jobs, Economy and Transport Cabinet Member of the completion of the Low Carbon Economy Engaged Research Project, carried out in partnership with the University of Derby and Derby City Council.

**2. INFORMATION AND ANALYSIS**

Further to the report to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2012, the Low Carbon Economy Engaged Research Project is now complete.

The project has been a collaborative research partnership between Derbyshire County Council, Derby City Council and the University of Derby. The aim was to generate data that could inform the on-going development of the low carbon economy agenda in Derby and Derbyshire and is aligned to the strategic priority of the D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership “Maximising our area’s untapped potential, particularly in terms of capturing employment growth from our strategic sectors and the low carbon economy”.

The research focus was, “Economic activity that actively seeks to reduce carbon through products and services”. It engaged 472 students mainly studying business and management, from HND, Degree, and Masters to PhD in twelve focused research priorities. A further 83 local businesses have been engaged through the research programme.

The research concluded that:-

- Large businesses recognize the business case for low carbon initiatives, whilst small and medium sized businesses often perceive these as business costs.
- Purchasing and supply chains provide opportunities for the acceleration of low carbon economies.
- The greatest challenge relates to winning hearts and minds of employees, the supply chain and customers.

The original scope of the project was as follows:

#### Project brief

- Contributes to the regeneration and economic strategy for the Derby and Derbyshire region
- Clarifies opportunities relating to a low carbon economy to generate new jobs, economic growth and maximises employment, skills and funding opportunities
- Improves the understanding of the key strengths that Derby and Derbyshire has in delivering energy efficiency and a low carbon economy compared to the rest of the UK
- Makes recommendations based upon real examples that works to aid the development of a bespoke strategy that reflects the city's and county's strengths and weaknesses.

#### Project aim and objectives

The project aim was to generate data that could inform the on-going development of the low carbon strategies of the respective councils. The objectives of the project were:

- Describe and quantify the gaps in Derby and Derbyshire regarding the existing low carbon activity
- Identify exemplars in Derby and Derbyshire based on researched case studies of small and medium businesses
- Offer an opinion on what the market opportunities are specifically for Derby and Derbyshire
- Define the scope of the research that meets the combined priorities of Derby and Derbyshire

- Recommend a focused approach (not a strategy) to delivering these opportunities in the area, including potential funding methods
- Enrich the learning experience for students through ‘real world’ research.

### Project key outcomes

The key desired outcomes of the project were:

- A detailed report that presents the combined research priorities, findings and recommendations
- An academic paper on ‘engaged research’ all partners can publish
- A proven ‘collaborative working’ arrangement with partners to build on for the future
- Establish an ongoing relationship in relation to the Low Carbon Economy agenda with Derby City Council and the University of Derby.

As the report and its findings are now complete it is proposed that the collaboration continues and aims to target specific areas for progression detailed within the report. This ongoing work will see a project steering group established which will incorporate business leaders and shape the priorities of the ongoing research and development of the Low Carbon Economy in Derby and Derbyshire.

This work will link directly into the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Chamber of Commerce and the Local Enterprise Partnership (D2N2). D2N2 has the aim of supporting business and creating jobs and training opportunities in the emerging low carbon / clean technology (cleantech) sector. This economic activity seeks to reduce carbon through products and services. The low carbon plan forms a key component of the wider LEP Growth Plan and will be the strategic framework against which funding from the Single Local Growth Plan will be secured from Government and future investments will be made.

The continued collaboration with the University of Derby and Derby City Council will see key areas of this agenda investigated, and notable opportunities for support identified. These will include:

- Renewable Energy technologies
- Sustainable Transport opportunities

- Identification of the gaps in Derby and Derbyshire regarding the existing low carbon activity
- Potential to support SMEs with growth and innovation
- Facilitating knowledge exchange
- Development of purchasing and supply chains
- The interconnectivity of activities eg. between transport modes, between supply and demand, between school/education and work, between work and leisure all expose opportunities for greater efficiencies in carbon reduction,
- Further research in the area eg. into the potential for growing 'green' businesses.

### **3. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The county council contributed £15,000 from the 2012/13 economic regeneration budget. On-going work with the partnership will be met via existing budgets.

### **4. LEGAL, PREVENTION OF CRIME AND DISORDER, EQUAL OPPORTUNITY, ENVIRONMENTAL, HEALTH, HUMAN RESOURCES, PROPERTY AND TRANSPORT CONSIDERATIONS**

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered; legal, prevention of crime and disorder, equality of opportunity; and environmental, health, human resources, property and transport considerations.

### **5. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Report of the Strategic Director Policy and Community Safety, 14<sup>th</sup> September 2012, Opportunities for the Low Carbon Economy in Derby and Derbyshire: Research Proposal

### **6. KEY DECISION**

No

### **7. OFFICER RECOMMENDATION**

- (1) That the Low Carbon Economy Engaged Research Project Report is endorsed and approval is given for an associated joint press release.

(2) That approval is given to continue with the partnership (Derbyshire County Council, University of Derby and Derby City Council) on developing the Low Carbon Economy agenda.

**Ian Stephenson**  
**Chief Executive**