

**Agenda Item No.4 (a)**

**DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**MEETING OF CABINET MEMBER - STRATEGIC POLICY, ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT AND BUDGET**

**4 April 2017**

Report of the Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Communities

**D2 EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS BOARD**

(1) **Purpose of Report** To report on progress with the development of the Derby and Derbyshire (D2) Skills and Employment Board (D2 SEB) and seek approval to part-fund the Co-ordinator and activities and align the work of the D2 SEB Board to the Derbyshire Economic Partnership (DEP).

(2) **Information and Analysis**

**Background**

D2 SEB is an employer led (demand side) Board, set up to bridge the gap between the private sector and those responsible for delivering the local skills agenda. The D2 SEB was initiated by the Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership (D2N2 LEP) in May 2014 with the merging of the two previously separate Derbyshire Employment and Skills Board (ESB) (Chaired by DEP Board Member, Frank Lord) and the Derby City ESB. The SEB is a resource that was set up to move the skills agenda forward and ensure there is appropriate employer ownership and leadership of the agenda.

The Board is chaired by Graham Mullholland from epm: technology group and currently consists of employers from a range of private sector businesses. These have previously been focused around Derby city, but a recent membership drive has seen the Board expand to include more Derbyshire-based businesses (now approximately 50:50). Board members include representatives from the following employers: Pentaxia, Katapult, Advanced Roofing, One to One Support Services, Toyota, Acclaim Housing Group and Bowmer & Kirkland; Greenbank Group UK, The Derby Conference Centre, Yews Residential, Federal-Mogul Motorparts, Jurys Inn (East Midlands Airport), Holiday Inn Derby- Riverlights, Signal House Group Ltd, Fairgrove Homes and Brighter Directions.

Other organisations represented on the Board include the City and County Councils, Department for Work and Pensions, Federation of Small

Businesses, East Midlands Chamber, Destination Chesterfield and First Steps.

Since inception, funding for the D2 SEB has been provided by the D2N2 LEP (50%) and Derby City Council (25%) and Derbyshire County Council (25%) until April 2017. Funding has resourced the employment of a Co-ordinator (administered by Derby City Council) and a small budget to support Board activity.

Following discussions with the D2N2 LEP during the summer 2016, it was confirmed that no further funding was available from the LEP to support D2 SEB. This being the case and with the contract of the current Co-ordinator coming to an end, Officer discussions have taken place between the City and County Councils to determine the possibility of extending support to the D2 SEB for a further 12 months to build on the development of the Board's activity to date.

### **D2 SEB Priorities and Objectives**

The Priorities and Objectives of the Board have been shaped to complement the Derbyshire Economic Strategy Statement and Derby Economic Strategy, and are aligned with the D2N2 LEP's Strategic Economic Plan. The work of the Board is driven by a live action plan which seeks to focus on key priorities identified from the employer/demand side perspective.

The three priorities that drive D2 SEB activity are:

- Inspire and engage young people to take on apprenticeship opportunities.
- Facilitate the development of sector skills for growth.
- Increase business engagement in work readiness activities for young people.

Within this strategic context, the D2 SEB has agreed to focus (but not exclusively) on four key sectors: construction; engineering, visitor economy, and health and social care.

Overall objectives of the Board are to:

- Raise awareness of the challenges facing the growth sectors in D2 and create opportunities to reduce the mismatch between skills supply and employer demand.
- Drive the co-ordination and collaboration between providers and employers, and align them to service the D2's growing economic needs.
- Collate and communicate sector-based data on the emerging skills and trends to inform the decision makers in D2.

- Develop apprenticeship campaigns for local young people and create signposting services to inform local employers of the impact of Apprenticeship Levy.
- Incorporate Work Readiness activities for local young people who are in the early stages of school through employer engagement across the priority sectors.

### **Key Achievements to date**

Following an admittedly slow start, the activities of the D2 SEB increased significantly during 2015-16. Key achievements to date include:

- Supporting the D2N2 LEP Careers Enterprise Company (CEC) programme. CEC creates stronger links between schools and employers and the D2 SEB has been coordinating the Enterprise Coordinators (EC) in D2 who are engaging with schools and linking with business leaders to act as Enterprise Advisors working with schools on a strategic level.
- Advocating the use of the D2N2 Employability Framework across D2 schools to support career development and work readiness in partnership with education, employers and careers professionals.
- Collaboratively working with the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) on a number of initiatives to promote apprenticeships opportunities to the local young people, for example, working closely with East Midlands Apprenticeship Ambassador Network (EMAAN - a group of employers coordinated by the SFA) to promote the SFA Apprenticeships Vacancy online tool for local schools and encourage local businesses to engage.
- Coordinated with key partners on sector focussed training programmes and initiatives that allowed young people and schools the positive engagement with local employers including the delivery “Get me into Construction” and “Getting into Engineering” pilot programmes.
- Supported the development of a new D2N2 Health and Social Care action plan which has led to the creation of the Health and Social Care Employment Sector Skills Advisory Group.
- Hosted the ‘Reflect & Review’ summit to allow existing board members and local employers to discuss what the future priorities are and objectives for D2 SEB, and engage new businesses to widen participation.
- Established regular liaison with district and borough councils through the Derbyshire Local Authority Group (DLAG) to encourage co-operation and identify local strategic employment and skills needs.

Recently, the expanded Board has focused on establishing task groups to lead activity in the identified key sectors with the purpose of raising the profile of the local skills offer and employment opportunities, especially for the young and unemployed, facilitate interaction with schools, and raise the profile of apprenticeships as a viable career option.

### **Proposed future development**

The current funding to resource the Co-ordinator post will run out in April 2017. Without securing further resource, there is a risk that the progress made to date in delivering activity and widening participation on the Board will be lost and, potentially, the Board could be disbanded. Clearly, the Board is being encouraged to find a sustainable income stream to match local Government revenue funding and contribution from the private sector.

Following discussions with Derby City Council, it has been proposed that further funding is secured between the City and County Councils to enable the extension of the current postholder's contract for a further 16 months (until August 2018) and including a modest activity budget to support delivery of the action plan. In return, it is proposed that the funding partners agree with the Board key deliverable and related performance measures aligned to the action plan. Furthermore, it is proposed that an evaluation is undertaken during 2017-18 regarding the ongoing success and future work plan of the \board to ensure the arrangements remain fit for purpose.

In addition, it is recognised that the D2 SEB evolved from city centric origins, but strenuous efforts have been made to widen participation of businesses from across Derbyshire. It is therefore proposed that any revenue funding support is conditional upon the re-alignment of the D2 SEB as a formal sub-group of the DEP once the DEP Board is re-established in May/June 2017.

As a result of this alignment, the work of the SEB Co-ordinator will support the current 0.6 full time equivalent work of the DEP Business and Skills Co-ordinator to ensure delivery of the D2 SEB action plan is in line with the strategic objectives of the DESS.

Furthermore, the D2 SEB will develop strong links with the Council's new Employment and Skills Service and should be invited to attend the Council's Employment and Skills Board to ensure services are pressure tested and meet the demand of Derbyshire's economy. Also, with DEP support, the opportunity will be taken over the next 12 months to ensure the work of the D2 SEB, the Council's own Employment and Skills Board and the D2N2 LEP Skills Commission are fully aligned.

A key objective will also be to review arrangements and relationships between the D2 SEB and key providers (especially in relation to European Skills Fund contractors) to ensure more robust and joined up discussion and delivery, and in particular, the delivery of the Guildhall principles and D2N2 Skills Strategy (once approved).

(3) **Financial Considerations** Subject to approval, the match funding of £25,000 will be committed from the DEP budget for 2017-18. Derby City Council has confirmed an equal matched commitment of £25,000.

(4) **Human Resources Considerations** The Co-ordinator is employed by Derby City Council on behalf of the funding partners, therefore, there are no direct Human Resources implications for Derbyshire County Council.

(5) **Social Value Considerations** The work of the D2 SEB directly impacts on social value by focusing on providing opportunities for local people, especially the young, to engage with employers and key sectors in the local area and therefore increase their chances to benefit from economic activity that will increase prosperity and social wellbeing.

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

(6) **Key Decision** No.

(7) **Call-in** Is it required that call-in be waived in respect of the decisions proposed in the report? No.

(8) **Background Papers** Held on file in the Economic Regeneration Service of the Economy, Transport and Environment Department. Officer contact details – Frank Horsley, extension 38348.

(9) **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION** That the Cabinet Member approves an amount of £25,000 from the Derbyshire Economic Partnership budget during 2017-18 to part fund the Derby and Derbyshire (D2) Skills and Employment Board Co-ordinator and the activity of the Board, subject to the conditions outlined in the report.

**Mike Ashworth**  
**Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Communities**