

Agenda Item No. 7(g)

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET MEETING

23 December 2014

Report of the Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Environment

**DERBYSHIRE FOOD AND DRINK PROGRAMME
(HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE)**

- (1) **Purpose of Report** To propose a new approach to delivering the Derbyshire Food and Drink Programme to more effectively support the sector.

Background

The Derbyshire Food and Drink Fair has been running for 12 years with the annual Derbyshire Food and Drink Awards commencing a year later. Both events are the focal point of the County Council's programme to support the industry, promote small businesses and promote the quality and range of the Derbyshire food and drink offer.

In the light of the current financial challenges facing the Council and the recognition of Food and Drink manufacturing as a priority growth sector by the D2N2 (Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire) Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), a review was instigated to consider options for a more effective programme of support and activity, building upon existing community and local based events, complementing other related Council activity and developing the potential for attracting external funding support (notably European funding).

Review of Existing Events

Both the Derbyshire Food and Drink Fair and Awards have proved popular over recent years, as specific events to promote the industry and attract visitors. However, despite progress being made, both events (and the Fair in particular) require considerable resources in terms of budget and staffing to deliver.

Following a review, the following is proposed:

- Ceasing the Derbyshire Food and Drink Awards for 2015 and commence a detailed review of the format to ensure wider inclusivity of the sector. There is an element of the same businesses self-nominating each year and there are a number of other Food and Drink Awards operating across

Derby and Derbyshire. The review will consider resources and format, and whether a separate Derbyshire Food and Drink Award is effective and options for utilising the Derbyshire Food and Drink brand to support the sustainability of other locally run, industry led awards.

- Cancelling the Derbyshire Food and Drink Fair in its current format and work with existing local food and drink related events across Derbyshire to promote the sector and community based activity.

Strategic Context

The D2N2 LEP Growth Strategy recognises Food and Drink manufacturing as key growth sector, providing a competitive advantage for the region. In addition, the sector is closely aligned and complements the Visitor Economy, another D2N2 growth sector and a particular strength for Derbyshire.

The recently published D2N2 Food and Drink Manufacturing Strategy and Action Plan recognises a number of key industry challenges facing the sector, including:

- Poor perception of career choices against existing skills gaps in the key areas of management and leadership, food science technologists and production engineers.
- High levels of regulation especially in the wake of the recent horsemeat scandal.
- Providing affordable food supply whilst playing a significant role in promoting health and wellbeing.
- Opportunities for the industry to reduce greenhouse emissions and waste as well as making better use of resources.

To meet these challenges and create growth, the Strategy recognises four key themes for action:

- Supporting the Food and Drink Industry.
- Increasing skills levels and improving the long term attractiveness of the Industry.
- Innovation, Knowledge Transfer and Food Specialist Mentoring.
- Productivity and the Low Carbon Agenda.

At a County level, the Derbyshire Economic Strategy Statement (DESS) recognises the food and drink industry as a key manufacturing sector as part of Derbyshire's distinctive economic offer, playing a key role in maximising the potential of the Council's Visitor Economy, promoting vibrancy in Derbyshire's urban centres and market towns, and strengthening the rural economy.

The D2N2 European Structural Investment Fund Strategy 2014-20 identifies considerable funding that will be available to support the sector through the thematic objective of enhancing the competitiveness of Small-Medium

Enterprises (SMEs), as well as linking activity to the emerging D2N2 Growth Hub which is being established to co-ordinate business advice and support in the region.

Finally, a decision is expected shortly on the future delivery of LEADER activity through the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). Submissions have been made for both the Peak District and Bolsover/North East Derbyshire Local Area Groups and include measures that will complement rural SMEs and farming/agri-food businesses.

The New Derbyshire Food and Drink Programme

The proposed new Derbyshire Food and Drink Programme will re-focus on providing continuous business support to the sector, linking with other regional, countywide and local priorities and initiatives, and drawing in external funding in recognition of the sectors growth potential.

Activity will look to support the food and drink industry in its widest sense “from field to plate” encompassing the agri-food businesses, food manufacturing and processing and catering, hospitality and retail businesses. Through adopting this wider focus and complementing other activities, the new programme will not only support economic growth but promote the cultural, social and health and wellbeing agenda across Derbyshire.

The proposed activities to be developed and delivered under the existing and recognised Derbyshire Food and Drink brand as part of the new programme include:

- Food and Drink Promotion – co-ordinating industry engagement with the “Made in Derbyshire” campaign and integrating local food and drink producers with l'Eroica 2015, as well as supporting and promoting existing local food and drink events.
- Developing a forum where small businesses can be in contact with each other e.g. supplier to restaurant, B&B (This was requested by traders following the evaluation of the Food and Drink Fair 2014).
- Promoting local markets and high streets to support start-up activity and existing local food producers – building upon the recent Matlock Outdoor Market pilot and working with the Peak District and Derbyshire Town/Village Traders' Group.
- Promoting excellence through regulation – continuing with and further developing the “Taste Derbyshire” quality scheme and working with Trading Standards and partners to promote engagement with the “Better Business Regulation” programme.
- Supporting “Heart of Derbyshire” and other health and wellbeing initiatives through co-ordinating engagement with food suppliers and businesses.

- Seeking external funding to support business support and skills development for the food and drink sector, including collaboration with relevant local partners and linking activity to visitor economy/tourism priorities eg. University of Derbyshire Buxton Campus.
- Engaging with the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) and the British Beer and Pub Association to develop initiatives to support community pubs and the independent brewery sub-sector.

(3) **Financial Considerations** Budget provision to support the Food and Drink Fair and Awards has previously been vired from the Economic Regeneration General budget following Cabinet Member approval. It is proposed that an initial budget of £20,000 receive approval as seedcorn funding to support the development of the new programme and potential match for future external funding submissions.

Other Considerations

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.

(4) **Key Decision** No.

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

(6) **Background Papers** All relevant background information is held by the Economic Regeneration Service within the Economy, Transport and Environment Department. Officer contact details – Frank Horsley, extension 38348.

(7) **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATIONS** That Cabinet:

- 7.1 Approves the cancellation of the Derbyshire Food and Drink Awards and Fair for 2015.
- 7.2 Approves the development of the proposed new Derbyshire Food and Drink Programme including an initial sum of £20,000 from the Economic Regeneration General budget to support development.

Mike Ashworth
Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Environment