

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

**19 JANUARY 2022**

### **THE FUTURE FIRST EXPO 2021 - EVALUATION AND NEXT STEPS**

#### **1.0 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To provide an evaluation of the 2021 Future First EXPO and the approach provided for 2022 onwards.

#### **2.0 Background Information**

- 2.1 In November 2020 the Economic Development Committee approved the 2021-2026 Economic Growth Strategy and Action Plan. A key priority within the Strategy was *“Accelerating the upskilling and reskilling of people into education, employment or apprenticeships with a focus on young people and older workers.”* This report provides an evaluation of the 4<sup>th</sup> Future First EXPO provided and hosted by Newark & Sherwood District Council in partnership with key business and education stakeholders to support the pathways to employment for young people. Further, the reports provides a conclusion and value to undertaking interventions like the EXPO, the impact the event has, and ways to improve future EXPO’s and next steps to delivery.

#### **3.0 Proposals**

##### **3.1 Future First Careers Expo 2021**

The Future First Careers Expo made a welcome return on 3 November 2021 to the Lady Eastwood Centre at Newark Showground after being put on hold during the coronavirus pandemic. The first Expo was held in 2017 and built on its success during 2018 and latterly in 2019 when a total of 67 businesses, education and training providers attended. The Expo aimed to give the young people attending the chance to discover more about the options available to them for their future. The schools who had previously attended were approached towards the end of the summer term in 2021 regarding their wish for the Expo to take place and with a resounding confirmation to go ahead exhibitors were contacted.

- 3.2 Due to the recent pandemic the maximum number of exhibitors for 2021 was restricted to 50, a reduction of 25% from 2019, to allow for more space per stand and this was reached by the end of September, 5 weeks before the event.

- 3.3 In delivering an inclusive and cost effective event, sponsorship packages of varying amounts were made available to the exhibitors to help cover the cost of the transport to and from the venue for schools attending from within the Newark and Sherwood District. The popularity of the expo has grown with one school close to the Lincolnshire border attending for the second year running during the morning session. The Suthers School now based at Fernwood made their first trip to the event bringing the total number of students through the doors on the day to 1176. The breakdown of schools attending and number of participants are identified below in table 1. This shows a positive impact of the event on securing 8 Schools, 1,176 students, 50 businesses to attend an event and provide opportunities for employment and education pathways.

Table 1:		
Name of School	Address	Number of students/staff
Morning		
The Minster School	Nottingham Road Southwell NG25 0LG	240 + 10
Dukeries Academy	Whinney Lane New Ollerton NG22 9TD	120 + 8
Toot Hill	The Banks Bingham NG13 8LD	120 + 6
Joseph Whitaker	Warsop Lane Rainworth NG21 0AG	50+ 4
Sir William Robertson Academy	Main Road Welbourn Lincoln LN5 0AP	185 Arranged own transport
Afternoon		
Newark Academy	London Road Balderton NG24 3AL	169 + 11
Magnus Academy	Earp Avenue Newark NG24 4AB	191 + 11
The Suthers School	Cross Lane Fernwood NG24 3NH	101 + 6

- 3.4 Business including John Deere and The Wirtgen Group co-sponsored the event for the first time. They had both exhibited separately in 2019 but they joined forces for the 2021 event. The Liz Hobbs group were platinum sponsors and RPS sponsored a gold package. The Expo has proven to be a valuable platform for businesses and educators from Newark and Sherwood and beyond to show what is great about a career in their industry or by taking their next step through a college or university door to inspire and raise the aspirations of all those attending.
- 3.5 A variety of innovative and exciting seminars ran throughout the day with topics ranging from Careers in the NHS to a modern day approach to a career in accounting, to Exploring digital marketing in a changing world. The Career Leads were asked to share these with the students attending and to encourage the students to book a place at a seminar prior to the event. The driving principle behind our approach is the acknowledgment that the expertise almost always exists within organisations. We believe our work is to bring the right people together for an agreed purpose to deliver specified outcomes.

- 3.6 The Lead for Education and Training at Newark College, part of the Lincoln College Group with whom Newark & Sherwood partner for the event said *“The Future First Expo is a key date in our diary every year and we always look forward to exhibiting. It’s a fantastic platform to meet prospective students and share the wide range of employer led courses and apprenticeships we offer at Newark College. We are also delighted to support the organising of the event as we know how important it is for young people to make informed choices about their future careers and the Expo facilitates this”*
- 3.7 The Training Manager for John Deere (A main sponsor of the event) for UK and Ireland said *“At the careers events it is important to raise brand awareness with most people being familiar with the John Deere tractors in green and yellow but we are much more than that. Today is great as we have met many young people who are interested and willing to have a conversation around our apprenticeship programme and what a career in our industry looks like. People are most focused on a successful and sustainable career”*.

By investing in the lives and futures of young people this empowers them to make decisions about their future careers that are right for them.

Exhibitors are encouraged to take part in the now annual competition to win one of the categories for:

- Most Innovative Stand – won in 2021 by Druid Gaming and 2022 by Liz Hobbs Group
- Most Interactive Stand – won in 2021 by Lincoln College and 2022 by Druid Gaming
- Best Looking Stand – won in 2021 and 2022 by John Deere

These are judged by an external party who visited the event. 100% of the exhibitors completed the feedback forms where they were asked to evaluate the event before, during and the benefits of attending the event. Brand awareness, raising the profile of their businesses, the opportunity to network during the breaks and to engage with young people who were keen to find out more about the opportunities available to them were recurring comments.

The Apprenticeship Manager for Nottinghamshire Police emailed with the following as a post event with the following *“Thank you for the Managing this event is was absolutely brilliant, long overdue and thoroughly enjoyable coming out of lockdown and being able to engage once again!*

*Just as one of the options for competition entries, you could also consider having one of the busiest exhibition stands, because we all came away that day, exhausted and with sore throats after speaking all day!”*

The Post 16 Pastoral Lead/Careers Lead for Newark Academy said *“I just want to say a huge thanks to you and your team for putting on such a wonderful event for the young people in our school and the wider community. I’ve had so many positive comments from students that attended and even at the end we were having to drag students away from the stands! One particular young lady who was less enthusiastic about going, actually came away having found a potential career and that’s what it’s all about! Once again massive thank you and we look forward to attending again next year”*

### 3.8 Next Steps and Changes for the Future

Seminar Attendance: How to improve attendance and encourage pre booking. In 2019 and subsequently this year the teachers were asked to discuss the subjects of the seminars and encourage the students to book on a seminar of their choice before attending the event. Some schools have had more success than others with student engagement pre the event having been one stumbling block. However, the Senior Lead for Pathways at Magnus Academy may have given a solution to this issue *“My thoughts around the seminars and engagement are could we have virtual intros to the providers of these? Something physical we could share with the students beforehand to grasp their interest? Something we could share in an assembly?”* This would involve more pre event engagement with those delivering the seminars and at an earlier point in time this but worth exploring for the 2022 event.

The 2022 Expo takes place on Tuesday November 22<sup>nd</sup> with 96% of the exhibitors from 2021 wishing to attend and 1 requesting the same stand space having specifically designed their stand to fit.

### 4.0 **Equalities Implications**

4.1 The Future First Careers Expo provides additional opportunities as highlighted in 4 of the eight Gatsby benchmarks of Good Career Guidance: No2. Learning from career and labour market information; No 3. Addressing the needs of each pupil to young people; No 4. Linking curriculum learning to careers and No 7. Encounters with further and higher education. The Equalities Implications are therefore positive.

### 5.0 **Digital Implications**

5.1 There are no direct implications for ICT.

### 6.0 **Financial Implications - FIN21-22/9145**

6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The Council budgets annually for the delivery of the Future First Expo event and anticipates receiving external sponsorship by exhibitors to cover some of these costs.

### 7.0 **Community Plan – Alignment to Objectives**

7.1 The Future First Expo aligns to the Vision, Purpose and Values of the Community Plan by serving people and improving lives enabling local residents to flourish and fulfil their potential.

### 8.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS** that:

- (a) **the report be noted; and**
- (b) **the continuation of the Expo for 2022 and 2023 be supported.**

### **Reason for Recommendations**

**To provide an update on aspects of projects delivered through the Economic Growth Team**

Background Papers

Nil

For further information please contact Veronica Dennant on Ext 5260

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