

The Marches  
Local Enterprise Partnership



Herefordshire Business Board

Actions from the Meeting – Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> November 2011

Present:

**Chair:** Neil Kerr (NK), **Vice Chair:** Ray Stone (RS). Andrew Sanders (AS), Andy Edwards (AE), Angela Fitch (AF), Cathy Meredith (CM), Gary Woodman (GW), Heather Gorrington (HG), Helen Thomas (HT), Jonathan Hines (JH), John Jones (JJ), Natalia Silver (NS), Peter Brown (PB), Phil Collins (PC), Stephen Eckley (SE), Cllr John Jarvis (JJa), Rachel Jones (RJ), Cllr Graham Powell (for item 6)

Apologies: Joseph Connor, Cllr Roger Phillips, Paul Sinclair, Richard Garnett

1. Chair Update

The chair represented the Marches LEP alongside Dr Geoffrey Davies at a LEP network event in London. There are currently 37 LEPs. Priority appeared to be focussed on infrastructure projects which would be LEP consortia led.

JJa attended a LEP meeting with Backbenchers and £500m is being made available to LEPs; the Marches LEP will receive £5m based on the populations and levels of unemployment in the area. The Board discussed how the funding could be used and proposed creating a “wish-list” of projects for the LEP area, and prioritise accordingly. It was felt that lobbying Government was needed in order to get a better share of any available funding. Working more closely with Visit Herefordshire might also be beneficial.

Eric Pickles, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government will be visiting Herefordshire in February.

The LEP auxiliary boards have presented information to the LEP Board on Housing and Tourism, highlighting the loss of skills in the housing area but that Tourism is good news for the area and creates high value jobs.

A discussion was held around inviting new members onto HBB, after debate it was agreed that a 12 month review should be conducted in January 2012 to include review of work to date, performance, objectives and nominations for new membership (bearing in mind specialities, location, gaps in current expertise). NW to circulate some questions in order to benchmark the HBB activities to date, **Action - NW**

2. Enterprise Zone Update:

The EZ board has met twice and the documentation on governance has been sent to BIS. Membership of the board includes LEP reps from each county, and Mary Hudson of DCLG has been invited to attend. NW is leading the executive group which has met three times. A sub-group of the board looking at buildings for the EZ has also been created.

Interest has been shown by 35 companies to date (including 2 from the US). There has been some concern about displacement, but creating new jobs is a key requirement for businesses locating on the EZ. Alternative sites are being offered to companies too big or not fitting the EX criteria. One proposal is a TIC (Technology Innovation Centre) might locate on the EZ, specialising in food security, and would be a good link to other EZs in the UK.

RS has been discussing the possibilities of sponsorship and will be putting an advert in the Hereford Times inviting sponsorship of local companies. The MEP has suggested some European funding might be available for the EZ.

### 3. Branding for Herefordshire

RJ gave an update on the new Herefordshire brand since its launch on 6<sup>th</sup> October. Three creative workshops were held on 26<sup>th</sup> October with 57 businesses attending. Several businesses have already started using the branding and a “hit list” of key, high profile, Herefordshire businesses will be written to in the next couple of weeks.

- HBB member companies encouraged to sign up and begin using the brand
- Nominations and information from RJ
- Links to brand presentations are available on slide share:
  - Business summit presentation: <http://www.slideshare.net/rejoneshc/herefordshire-brand-presentation-herefordshire-business-summit-27092011>
  - Brand launch: <http://www.slideshare.net/rejoneshc/herefordshire-brand-launch-presentation-visit-herefordshire-6102011>
  - Creative Workshop slides: <http://www.slideshare.net/rejoneshc/being-part-of-the-herefordshire-brand-creative-workshop-261011>

### 4. Working Group Updates

#### **Small Business Support**

JJ gave updates on the Business Booster grant and the review meeting held earlier in the week. With the new Business Enterprise Funding (BEF) scheme beginning mid-November the board were invited to join the grant panel, (Helen Thomas put her name forward) and to represent Herefordshire on the board. Herefordshire has also been successful in their £1.5m RGF bid for a Redundant Building Grant for the Marches LEP area, NW and JJ to discuss if the BEF panel could be part of the process for this new scheme too, **Action – NW, JJ**

#### **Retail**

HG proposed a HBB session to discuss support to Retail and E-Tail, including getting Stanhope to present to the group about the new retail development in Hereford. RS to contact Alistair Shaw of Stanhope and HG/JJ to lead a discussion on retail issues and support to the retail sector at the next HBB meeting, **Action - RS/HG/JJ**

HG has drafted a letter to Mary Portas from HBB and Hereford Businesses inviting Mary Portas to consider Hereford as one of the pilots for the high street review, **Action - RJ**

#### **Communications**

Following the previous HBB presentation HG proposed that this group be disbanded. Communication is the responsibility of the whole board and all agendas should have “key messages from the board” at every meeting which can then be circulated and included in HBB messages on the website.

- Monthly press releases from the board to be circulated
- Website is being designed by Small Back Room and once the pages are available it will be populated and up running by the end of the year.

#### **Inward Investment**

New inward investment tender for the Enterprise Zone has gone on-line on the Herefordshire Business Portal. A memorandum of understanding has been signed by the Marches LEP and UKTi who wanted a central Marches point of contact, however we need to ensure continuing contact within Herefordshire.

#### **High Growth Businesses**

A new Government scheme for businesses has been launched, called “Business Coaching for Growth” NK to send the information round the group, **Action – NK**. “Winning Moves” is also available in this area, discussion needed to look at the links with Chamber. **Action - GW, JC, RS** JC to be give an update on High Growth businesses at the next meeting, **Action – JC**

JJ to send information about the Goldman Sachs scheme, **Action – JJ**.

#### **Start-Up / Young Entrepreneurs**

Young Enterprise has had a contribution this year from HBB, invite them to a HBB meeting to present what they do and how HBB can get involved, **Action – NW, RJ**.  
More information is needed about young people and unemployment figures, and employability. We need to know more about the issues and numbers and what initiatives are underway, **Action – AF, RS, PC**.

5. The “HBB Voice”

The group discussed the importance of neutrality, but that HBB should debate key issues and have a view. It is important to highlight (particularly with the press) if a comment is a personal one or the view of HBB. It was agreed that key issues and HBB projects should be identified as the projects HBB has a view on and this will be clarified following the review of HBB.

6. AOB

HC to look at providing a quick reference sheet for the HBB members covering key facts about Enterprise Zone, Broadband, Herefordshire Branding etc, **Action – NW, RJ**

7. Discussion – Superfast Broadband Update

Cllr Graham Powell a quick update on the work of Superfast Broadband project and answered questions from the board. Business and household questionnaires are being sent out and people are asked to respond to give a clear overview of current and future usage of internet in Herefordshire. The tendering process is underway. The project is now looking at the whole of Herefordshire and Gloucestershire.

8. Date of next meeting: Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2012, 3pm, to be confirmed