

Herefordshire Business Board

Actions from the Meeting – Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2012

**Present:**

**Chair:** Neil Kerr (NK), **Vice Chair:** Ray Stone (RS). Andrew Sanders (AS), Andy Edwards (AE), Cathy Meredith (CM), Gary Woodman (GW), Heather Gorrington (HG), Helen Thomas (HT), Ian Hilditch (IH), Jonathan Hines (JH), John Jones (JJ), Joseph Connor (JS), Paul Sinclair (PS), Peter Brown (PB), Phil Collins (PC), Stephen Eckley (SE), Rachel Jones (RJ), Richard Garnett (RG).

Apologies: Angela Fitch (AF), Cllr Roger Phillips (RP).

1. Notes of Last Meeting

The notes were approved.

**Herefordshire Brand**

**Action – RJ** to add HBB members to the mail out when the new Herefordshire Brand toolkit goes live.

**Action – All** HBB member businesses to begin using the Herefordshire Brand

**Superfast Broadband**

The project is progressing, and BT has recently announced plans to upgrade broadband in Hereford City. Allpay are rolling out their broadband; Architype and Wiggly Wiggles have both got improved broadband via Allpay.

2. Chair Update

**Marches LEP**

MLEP are looking at their terms of reference and have recently approved alternate voting. Sir Ben Gill has been tasked with looking at the potential for business and leisure hotels, with conference facilities, in the MLEP area. Some funding has come forward from MLEP for Hereford Enterprise Zone.

RS: since the PM visit of 5<sup>th</sup> January, several companies have been in touch offering sponsorship for the Enterprise Zone.

PS: pointed out the discrepancy in funding available across the region; Marketing Birmingham has a budget of £8.2m from Europe.

RS/RG: talked about pooling projects and ideas about rail infrastructure across MLEP area.

**HBB Review 2011**

The chair gave a brief overview of the responses to the 2011 HBB Review from the responses received. Those who haven't yet responded can still send their response in to be added into the feedback. A full report back will be given at the next HBB in February.

Key points arising at this point include:

- HBB needs to review its goals (Marches LEP are also doing this)
- HBB should have consistent goals
- Project groups should be revised and refreshed
- Has been a good first year, meetings, projects all good
- Some grey areas around role of HBB and role of LEP

- Too much time spent on reporting back
- Questions around membership, new recruits and process transparency

### 3. Enterprise Zone Update:

Hereford Enterprise Zone had a visit from David Cameron on the 5<sup>th</sup> January. RS and NW also had a visit to DCLG on 7<sup>th</sup> December which has helped put Herefordshire on the map. There have been several expressions of interest and letters of intent from businesses interested in moving onto the Enterprise Zone, from the UK and abroad.

NK: presented the Skylon Park idea and the proposal to build a new Skylon on the Enterprise Zone; a feasibility study is to be done. There is a proposal for a masterplan competition for the Enterprise Zone, which would be a plan for the whole site and include opportunities to upgrade existing buildings within the Zone.

### 4. Retail Support for Herefordshire

#### **Portas Review**

NK gave a quick overview of The Portas Review into the future of the high streets before introducing Shelagh Callaghan (SC), City Events Manager for Hereford.

#### **Hereford City Events**

SC presented an overview of her role within Hereford and the fact that city centres can no longer expect to be what they were, they are losing a lot of household names and the city needs to work to be a destination in itself without reliance on shops alone. Much of what Portas suggested is being done within Hereford for example SC arranges lots of events and markets within the city, which increases footfall and the length of time people spend in the city centre. Anecdotal evidence from TXMaxx shows that in 2010 they had more income on the day of the Historic Hereford event in the city than they did on the Saturday before Christmas. Work is commencing with the Herefordshire brand to link it with a whole city offer linking the City, Stanhope, Hereford Futures with their own sub brand. One of the areas highlighted by Portas which might be key for the future of the city and market towns is the idea of Town Teams.

#### **Retail and E-tail in Herefordshire**

JJ and HG presented findings and some ideas around support to retail in the County and ideas for increasing the number of people using the city through proposals for changes to parking in the city.

A key idea is to link up with new (large) businesses on the Stanhope development with existing independents to offer mentorship and marketing support. Truffle are in an ideal position to work with all the different businesses. Mary Portas customer service training is being run again by Truffle. Planning has some issues, with such as some retailers flouting their planning permissions, particularly in out of town situation. There could be potential within the city to rezone some of the secondary shopping areas to more appropriate things such as housing, restaurants or offices.

HG presented some findings around parking and had some potential projects which could save the Council money and increase the numbers of people shopping in the city during the afternoons. There is evidence to show that car parks are underused in the afternoons, so a "Free after three" campaign could be piloted in Hereford.

**Action - JJ, GW, SC, RJ** to create a list of quick wins around creating a town team, parking ideas, mentoring, etc. to cover Hereford and the market towns and to report back at the next HBB.

**Action – NW** on behalf of HBB a letter to be written to the Leader of the Council outlining the proposals.

### 5. Working Group Updates

#### **Small Business Support**

The Training Voucher scheme is still working well. The original Business Booster grant is completed with some money to be paid out which will finish the scheme. The new Business

Booster and Start-up grants (the Business Enterprise Fund) have received a small amount of applications and the first panel meeting will be on the 17<sup>th</sup> January and will be held monthly going forward. The Redundant Building Grant is not yet live, being subject to due diligence.  
**Action – RJ**, update the table showing current funding streams available in MLEP area.

### **Inward Investment**

The plan to appoint a company for inward investment has been stalled due to capacity and funding. The EZ board is due to meet to discuss funding and this will be brought up then. Questions were raised about what has happened since the MOU was signed with UKTi and discussions with MOD before Christmas.

**Action – RS** to update at next HBB meeting

### **High Growth Businesses**

JC presented information about a new government scheme, being run by Grant Thornton, to support High Growth businesses. Suggested that it is important to identify and support our high growth businesses and work with them by getting support into the County.

**Action – JC**, GW to put a proposal together, identifying local (MLEP area) high growth businesses and proposals to get support for them to present to HBB, MLEP Board and Grant Thornton.

## **6. AOB**

PB: Concerns around how to show evidence of delivery for the work HBB is doing. Currently we have nothing to evidence the work when questioned.

JH: Suggested creating a Risk Register to evidence the projects we are involved with, what risks are involved and provides evidence of what HBB are doing.

RJ: The Third Sector Board has sent a business case to HBB for the inclusion of the Third Sector Board as members of the HBB. They have been told that there is currently a review taking place and that should any places on the board arise they will be invited to apply at that point.

All: Concerns were raised about the resource and support available to HBB.

Website: people still don't know about HBB or where to find out about HBB. For various reasons there have been significant delays getting the HBB website ready to launch, but expectations for a launch in January are high. RJ presented screen shots of the HBB website.

**Action – RJ**, Holding pages for HBB and Enterprise Zone to be put up as soon as possible

**8. Date of next meeting:** Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> February 2012, 3pm, to be confirmed

## **9. Agenda items**

- Presentation from Herefordshire Young Enterprise
- Results of the HBB Review 2011