

Herefordshire Business Board

Actions from the Meeting – Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> February 2012

Present:

**Chair:** Neil Kerr (NK), **Vice Chair:** Ray Stone (RS). Andrew Sanders (AS), Andy Edwards (AE), Cathy Meredith (CM), Helen Thomas (HT), Jonathan Hines (JH), John Jones (JJ), Joseph Connor (JS), Mike Ashton (MA), Peter Brown (PB), Phil Collins (PC), Rachel Jones (RJ), Richard Garnett (RG), Cllr Roger Phillips (RP), Stephen Eckley (SE), Nick Webster (NW).

Apologies: Angela Fitch (AF), Paul Sinclair (PS), Ian Hilditch (IH)

1. Welcomes and Goodbyes

Since the last meeting Heather Gorrington has sent in her resignation, although she is likely to be involved with some of the group work. Gary Woodman has become Executive Director of the Worcestershire LEP and Mike Ashton, Chief Executive of the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce has taken his place on the board. Fenella Tyler has also withdrawn from the board. This means that there are two spaces available. The Chair thanked the leaving members for their input and support and welcomed Mike as a new member.

2. Notes of Last Meeting

The notes were approved.

3. Chair Update

**HBB Review 2011**

A paper had been circulated beforehand which the Chair summarised. The model of the HBB and LEP are working well and HBB in particular are becoming recognised within the County and has a strong presence on the LEP board. Resources to support HBB is highlighted as a problem

- RS has been speaking to private sector and has three sponsors on board for the Enterprise Zone; there is the potential to do the same for HBB
- RG stated the need to ensure any methods of engagement are open and transparent
- NK proposed that the roles of Chair and Vice-Chair be for two years rather than the one year proposed at the beginning of the process. This was approved by the board.
- It was discussed that when HBB recruits new members, people who could move into those roles are considered as well as the project groups
- **Action - RJ:** Add as an item on the next agenda for further discussion and agreement of process, skills gaps, sectors and specialities.

The Marches LEP has been officer-led to date and has had been largely responding to pots of money rather than strategic delivery. HBB needs to have its own business plan which is in synch with the LEP business plan (currently being written).

**Marches LEP**

RJ had sent round a paper with a summary of funding bids within the LEP area. MLEP is being strongly led by Shropshire Council and there is a lack of balance. EU funding for 2014 – 2020 is coming on line and there is a need for it to be Marches LEP focused for us to benefit – this will require lobbying.

#### 4. Enterprise Zone Update:

RS circulated a paper with his update on the EZ. UKTI has 2000 enquiries in the pipeline but only one has come to the Marches LEP area in Telford. RS has met with a Canadian company and will be having further discussions with them shortly. The EZ board have been looking at opportunities to help businesses moving to the EZ and has been approached by the Hope Centre in Bromyard about setting up a crèche on site, PC informed the group that there are plans for a crèche to open shortly at Thorn, but there may be room for more than one.

#### 5. Young Enterprise Presentation

John King and Kirsty Sockett gave an overview of the Young Enterprise scheme in Herefordshire and how it links with employability and business skills for young people. This was followed by a presentation from students at Hereford 6<sup>th</sup> Form College who are running a Young Enterprise company this year. Young Enterprise are always on the look out for business mentors for the school groups so if any of the board members or their staff would be interested in getting involved please contact Kirsty Sockett via RJ.

**Action:** All Please let RJ know if you or your company would like to get involved with YE and she will forward your details to Kirsty.

#### 6. Working Group Updates

##### **Small Business Support Group**

The Business Booster and Start-Up grants are ongoing, take-up is not great so far but flyers are going out with all business rate letters shortly. There is some funding remaining in the Training Voucher pot but it is likely to all be committed in the next month.

JJ had circulated a paper on the retail proposal coming out of the HBB meeting of 10<sup>th</sup> January, but this has been tabled while the Portas Pilot is being developed. There have been a couple of meetings to coordinate a bid for the Mary Portas/Town Team bid and some good ideas are on the table to include Truffle and Open High Street (project being piloted in Herefordshire by RG). HBB Supports the pilot bid and would like it to be HBB led.

##### **Development Land Group**

This group was one of the initial groups but got sidelined as the EZ took off. The aim of the group is to look at employment land within the County. AS pointed out that there will be approximately 90 acres of employment land taken up in the city due to regeneration work on top of 20 acres which has been lost over the past few years in the city. The new Link Road will be started within the year and this will affect 14 businesses which will need to relocate.

RS stated that some employment land is coming into use north of the river at Three Elms and out of town at Moreton-on-Lugg. Moves from the old cattle market have been very positive.

RP: The Council has a legal obligation to produce the LDF and a lot of the mapping required will be in that documentation. Problems arise where potential employment land is in private ownership and encouraging that land to be put forward for employment use.

There is potentially an opportunity to link this group with the Herefordshire element of the unsuccessful RGF bid.

The group will include NW, AS, RS and PC

**Action:** NW Bring a paper to the next HBB outlining role and remit of Development Land group.

#### 7. PERA / High Growth Business Support

The expected presentation from PERA did not happen and JC presented his understanding of the offer. The programme will go live on 1<sup>st</sup> April and supports access to 10 days consultancy for High Growth businesses, which is paid for by the business. Unsure of the incentive but there was a proposition that 50% would be paid by Government but this is not clear. The programme would be subcontracted to local delivery.

JC Had previously circulated an email with proposals for High Growth support and this was supported as a way forward for High Growth support in Herefordshire.

RC applied and has been accepted on the Goldman Sachs programme and will receive six months free training and access to Goldman Sachs advisers.

MA: The Chamber is running two groups Start to Grow and Powered Growth.

**Action: JC, MA, AE, RG** To be part of the group working on High Growth for Herefordshire

## 8. AOB

RJ: Website pages are being drafted.

MA: Herefordshire Business Expo – Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> March, 9:30am–3pm at Hereford Leisure Centre.

RJ: Had circulated a paper with the agenda about employability and skills. There is a Jobs Fair held in September and RJ will look at opportunities for HBB to be involved.

RJ: The brand toolkit has been launched, HBB members have had the link and several are already using it.

CM: The rural hub in Herefordshire is one of the 14 networks in the UK and has a feed in to DEFRA. HBB supported

PC/All: Eric Pickles is visiting Herefordshire on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> March. He will be visiting the EZ amongst other engagements.

AE/NK: There was an article in Hereford Times last week about Skylon. NK confirmed that a feasibility study is underway. Painter Brothers (now part of Balfour Beatty) have been approached and are supportive of the project. It is the intention to find sponsors to fund the cost of the build. There was a proposal to hold an open day for existing Rotherwas businesses to get them on board with Skylon Park. **Action: NW** to organise an open day at TRP.

RS: RS and RJ have met with Jobcentre and will be meeting a group of Jobcentre staff in March to tell them about the opportunities coming with the EZ.

JJ: Any help with the submission for the Portas Pilot would be appreciated.

8. Date of next meeting: Tuesday 24th April, 3pm, location to be confirmed

## 9. Agenda items next meeting:

- Discussion on process and procedures of HBB moving forward
- Paper on Development Land group propositions
- Stanhope presentation on Hereford Retail Quarter (originally on Agenda 10/01/12)