

Herefordshire Business Board

Notes / Actions from the Meeting – Tuesday 24th April 2012

Present:

Chair: Neil Kerr (NK), **Vice Chair:** Ray Stone (RS). Andrew Sanders (AS), Angela Fitch (AF), Andy Edwards (AE), Cathy Meredith (CM), Helen Thomas (HT), Jonathan Hines (JH), John Jones (JJ), Joseph Connor (JS), Paul Sinclair (PS), Peter Brown (PB), Rachel Jones (RJ), Nick Webster (NW).

Apologies: Ian Hilditch (IH), Mike Ashton (MA), Phil Collins (PC), Richard Garnett (RG), Cllr Roger Phillips (RP), Stephen Eckley (SE)

1. Apologies

Apologies noted.

2. Notes of Last Meeting

The notes were approved.

Action: All in future all updates should be presented as a paper.

3. Chair Update

Marches LEP

The MLEP board has not met since the last HBB meeting however they held a business planning meeting on 23/4/12. The LEP is working with consultants to complete the work, decisions to date include:

- Business plan must be based on proper economic assessment,
- County plans already exist and must be referred to, as should all the current economic data,
- LEP plan should add value to, not replicate, county plans,
- LEP business plan should be evidence based and distinctive.

HBB Business Plan

The board discussed writing a business plan for the Herefordshire Business Board to feed into the LEP plan. It should refer to existing documents such as:

- Herefordshire Economic Development Strategy,
- Food and Drink Strategy for Herefordshire.

And include:

- 4 or 5 specific initiatives,
- Targets and timescales,
- Indicators of success.

National Funding

The board discussed funding, how to prepare projects for future funding streams, find out what funding is coming up and the types. What is the role of the HBB in lobbying?

Action: NK, to meet with Clem Attwood, Herefordshire Council Researcher re Herefordshire statistics in relation to the LEP and HBB Business Plans and for supporting funding applications.

Action: NW, PS, JC to meet to define role lobbying on behalf of HBB,
Action: RJ, NW to arrange facilitated session for business planning on 12th June.

4. Presentation on Hereford Retail Quarter

Alistair Shaw and Gary Bourne of Stanhope along with Kate Bourne and Angus Adamson of Redwood Consulting presented on the Hereford Retail Quarter and answered questions from the board.

Action: JJ to liaise with AS of Stanhope around being involved with some future work around the Portas pilot in Hereford City.

5. Enterprise Zone Update:

The EZ went live at the beginning of April. There have been 40+ responses to the LDO and it is hoped that the LDO will be signed off by the Secretary of State (and Prime Minister) at the end of April. There have been over 50 enquiries from businesses wanting to move onto the site, with a potential of 2,000 jobs. Two companies that are close to signing up will both create in the region of 700 jobs each.

6. Working Group Updates

Small Business Support

Hereford has put in a bid to the Portas / Town team project and has created a very workable project that could be used throughout the County. The bidders received 400 submissions and results are due in May.

BEF grants are on-going, although it is proving difficult to award as many grants as the steering group would like, due to the eligibility criteria and some inflexibility in the scheme.

Action: JJ to bring a proposal to the next HBB based around work from the Portas project,

Action: RJ to ask L McCron to forward the BEF advert to AE and AF for circulation.

Development Land

The group has not met yet, although they have been able to verify from the Employment Land Survey that there are 74 sites across Herefordshire. This project may tie in with the proposal put forward by CM under item 7.

Action: CM, RS to identify links between the two pieces of work.

High Growth

JC circulated a paper with a proposal for support to High Growth businesses in Herefordshire and the Marches LEP area. The project involves on-line face to face support. A future action would be the development of an online diagnostic tool for businesses to self diagnose and then be referred to support. There is a possibility of creating a training voucher/High Growth voucher to support the scheme.

Action: JC, AE, RG to develop the proposal and look at ways of supporting the scheme through a "voucher scheme".

Action: JC to bring the proposal for inclusion in the HBB business planning meeting

7. Growth and Sustainability in Rural Businesses

CM presented a paper with a proposal for a pilot project to support business growth and sustainability in Herefordshire. There is also potential to link with the Shropshire Rural Hub on the project. The paper will be discussed as part of the business planning workshop at the next HBB meeting.

Action: CM to bring the proposal for inclusion in the HBB business planning meeting.

8. HBB Review – New Members

The process and papers are in place for advertising the new member places on the HBB and will be released w/c 30th April 2012. There are two or three places available and any geographical or sector gaps that are currently missing from the HBB will be prioritised as part of the process.

9. HBB Website

RJ had circulated the website link and log in details for the HBB website and comments were received from the board.

Action: RJ to email the board on a regular basis letting them know which sections have been added for review.

Action: All to review and comment on updates and let RJ have information or links to be added to the site as necessary

10. AOB

The LEP chair updates do not always get circulated as a result the LEP website often has information that has not been circulated. This is a cause for concern.

Action: NK to raise the concern about circulation of updates and suggest that the LEP Chair to report back on specific issues in each the monthly email e.g. funding, training etc.

Cabinet representation on the board has not been consistent and the board feel that it is an important element to ensure balance in the board meetings.

Action: RJ to let Cllr Phillips have future meeting dates

RS has met with UKTi and we now have access to their enquiries for inward investment for the whole Marches LEP area

11. Date of next meeting: Tuesday 12th June, time and location tbc

12. Agenda items next meeting:

- Business planning workshop plus presentation of various proposals as indicated in the minutes