

Minutes

Herefordshire Business Board Meeting
Cargill, Grandstand Rd, Hereford HR4 9PB
Tuesday, 7th April 2015
4pm – 6pm

Present:

Frank Myers, Matt Hayes, Stephen Eckley, John Reed and Angela Fitch.

Apologies:

Cathy Meredith, Clare Greener and Mike Ashton, Linda Smith, Nick Read and Helen Thomas

FM welcomed all, including David Shepherd and David Nolan from the New Model in Technology and Engineering (NMITE – the proposed new university for Herefordshire).

NMITE presentation

Prior to the main meeting representatives from the new university project presented a brief summary of the project itself and progress to date.

NMITE is a project supported by Warwick University, Bristol University and Olin College of Engineering, Massachusetts, US.

Key areas of learning will include: agritech; cyber, green renewable, hi-tech manufacturing and security.

NMITE will adopt a new, business led, model to learning (something which Olin College has already done to great success). The lecture schedule will be made up of tutorial style sessions, with groups of 20-30 students. The university will expect significant contact with and support from businesses.

The initial cohort of 60 students is expected to arrive in 2017. It is anticipated that NMITE will attract a higher than average proportion of overseas students.

The project requires £350m over the next 10 – 15 years to cover the overall spend for both teaching space and student accommodation.

The presenters would welcome support from MLEP. A key issue at this stage is the physical location and built environment. The two Hereford City sites currently being considered are not ideally suited

to a high end educational offer, though the project team does not wish to become too entrapped with the functionality of the project.

FM thanked both presenters for their time and will raise the issue at a future MLEP Board meeting.

HBB Board Meeting

FM reported that his meeting with the recently appointed MLEP CEO, Gill Hamer, was a positive one, both being in full agreement that two way engagement and communication between the three Business Boards and the main LEP Board is paramount to future successes.

LEP Governance – the Board debated the current reliance on local authority input and management of MLEP. Shropshire Council is the accountable body. The debate included an analysis of the role of the three Business Boards and the risk of losing Board Members if they don't feel their presence is of use to the LEP or the county. JR proposed that HBB monitors its efficacy over the next three months and then review its continuance after that time. FM will meet with Gill Hamer and his opposite Business Board colleagues from Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin to gain soundings and explore productive ways forward for all parties.

Gill Hamer will be notified of all future HBB dates and invited to attend any or all of them, as her diary and the agenda permits/demands.

FM to draft a policy document which the three Business Boards would endorse and work within its framework.

AOB

FM reported on his recent meeting with the Association of Ross Traders (ART), a town centre group of mainly business to consumer enterprises, which seeks to attract sustainable business and businesses to the town.

AF reported that FSB was keen to fund a Superfast Broadband seminar in Herefordshire, Autumn 2015.

Actions

1. FM will take the suggestion that MLEP creates a digital working sub-group.
2. FM to talk to MA regarding the possibility that CoC would take over the running of Flavours of Herefordshire, as it has successfully done for Worcester's Victorian Fayre.
3. FM to draft Tri-Board Policy Document.
4. FM to invite Gill Hamer to future HBB meetings.
5. AF to arrange bi-monthly meetings with ART and FM.

Date of next meeting – to be agreed by email

ENDS