

## **Herefordshire Business Board (HBB)**

### **Notes / Actions from the Meeting – Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2015**

**Chair:** Frank Myers (FM). **Present:** Cathy Meredith (CM), Clare Greener (CG), Helen Thomas (HT), Ian Peake (IP), John Read (JR), Linda Smith (LS), Stephen Eckley (SE), Sue Browning (SB).

**In attendance:** Gill Hamer (GH), Rachel Jones (RJ), Nick Webster (NW),

**Apologies:** Angela Fitch, Karen Usher, Matt Hayes, Mike Ashton, Nick Read.

#### **1. Welcome and apologies**

FM welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies were noted.

#### **2. Minutes and actions from last meeting**

The minutes of the meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2015 were approved and the actions were reviewed:

**23/6 Action 1:** Details of the LEP Board application process to be circulated. **GH**  
Action completed. Five new LEP Board members have been recruited as follows:

- The Housing Sector– Peter Brown (Group Chief Executive, Hereford Housing Group).
- The 16-18 Skills & Workforce Development Sector – Steve Wain (Principal of Shrewsbury College and Chair of the Association of Colleges).
- The Financial/Professional Services Sector – Christian Dangerfield (investment banker, managed equity investments and hedge funds).
- The Community and Voluntary Sector – Sonia Roberts (Charity Manager, Landau).
- The Large Company/Manufacturing- Duncan Barnes, GKN Land.

**23/6 Action 2:** SEP refresh to be item on future HBB agenda. **FM/RJ**  
This will be an item on a future agenda.

**23/6 Action 3:** Nominations for HBB member to sit on Growth Hub Steering Group. **HBB**  
HBB has currently sent apologies for this place, but will nominate a member as soon as possible.

**23/6 Action 4:** HBB to identify rep for the Agri task and finish group, it was suggested that the Herefordshire Strategic Food and Tourism Partnership (HSFTG) come forward with a recommendation. to the HBB.

HT has been put forward to sit on this group and the HSFTG are happy to endorse her, but would also like to offer their support and nominate a second to support the role to help with continuity and engagement. HSFTG are planning a meeting of key agricultural businesses to try and identify a second. David Llewellyn will be invited to the meeting.

**23/6 Action 5:** To continue discussions about Agri-Tech. **FM/DL**

This has not taken place yet because of diary commitments. FM will follow up. The board felt there is a need to agree the sector definition.

**23/6 Action 6:** Cllr Graham Powell to be invited to next HBB meeting. **FM/RJ**  
Cllr Powell to be invited to the next HBB meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> November.

**23/6 Action 7:** Create two sub-groups of the HBB; University and Agri-Tech. **HBB**  
This action is ongoing as part of new member recruitment.

### 3. Rural Productivity Plan

FM introduced the paper which was published by DEFRA in August 2015 and the board were supportive of the broad aims of the plan. There was a lot of discussion around “rural areas fully connected to the wider economy” particularly around broadband and mobile communications.

The board felt that they do not have a good enough understanding of what is being delivered by the Fastershire project, the additional projects they are developing and what areas are not going to be supported. The board would like to be in a position where they can help lobby for support to the “last 10%” of premises. GH is meeting with the LEP Chair and Ian Binks from BT and will feed the comments in and there is a route to lobby BT via the LEP.

**Action 1:** Invite Ian Binks from BT to attend a future board meeting. **FM**

**Action 2:** Invite Matt Smith from Fastershire to attend a future board meeting. **RJ**

There was concern from several members of the board that mobile masts are being switched off in the county. It was agreed that the best route to find out what is happening would be to speak to the local MPs and consider lobbying Ofcom.

**Action 3:** Discuss mobile phone problems in Herefordshire with Jesse Norman MP. **FM**

“A highly skilled rural workforce” was discussed; the Government is pushing apprenticeships. GH told the board that the Marches Skills Board is meeting this week and this is part of their remit. Representatives on the Skills Board were discussed and business representation is needed from Herefordshire. IP will attend in the interim.

The DEFRA plan mentions Enterprise Zones and Herefordshire and Shropshire Councils are submitting a bid for new Enterprise Zones which will be to support the food and drink supply chain.

Liz Truss MP, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs will be speaking in Hereford on 6th November. Contact FM for more information.

### 4. Membership of the Business Board

IP led a discussion about membership of the Business Board in a way to best reflect the needs of Herefordshire and feed in to the Marches LEP Board and its sub-groups. It was agreed that it was sensible to recruit membership from the key sectors identified in the Marches LEP SEP, as follows:

- Food and Drink
- Agricultural Technology
- Defence and Security
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Automotive Manufacturing
- Visitor Economy
- Environmental Technologies and Services

The board has representation from the agricultural sector, manufacturing and the visitor economy and the membership organisations help disseminate information to and from the wider business community. It is key to fill the gaps with businesses that have expert knowledge, are well-informed and networked within their sector and able to widely represent Herefordshire. It was agreed to recruit to the key sector groups first, then to identify any Herefordshire specific requirements for the board at a later state. It was also agreed that there was an imbalance towards the food and drink sector and that this should be progressively addressed as the Board is expanded.

**Action 4:** Identify potential business representatives from Defense and Security. **LS**

**Action 5:** Discuss potential manufacturing business representatives. **NW/SE**

**Action 6:** Ideas for any businesses to be sent to Rachel for coordination. **All**

## **5. NMITE / Herefordshire University**

Karen Usher has been invited to join HBB while the University project is being developed. She provided the following update:

- Interviews for the CEO role are being held in London on 28<sup>th</sup> September and they hope to announce the successful candidate in the New Year. There has been international interest.
- Fundraising is underway and members have managed to raise £500,000.
- The Business Plan is complete and NMITE members have met with the LEP, BIS and today (15<sup>th</sup> September) were meeting with the Treasury, Ministers, BIS and MPs.

It is important to ensure that there are links between the University and businesses. It was agreed this is a top priority for the Business Board and the Board should be vocal about their support.

## **6. Schools Curriculum Initiative**

FM has been in discussions with KU and the Head of John Kyrle High School about developing some links between the curriculum, business and careers in order to directly influence the curriculum and the way it is taught. The purpose is to start to make links between what is learned in school with career opportunities and type of work it directly links to by making relevant links with business. John Kyrle School are happy to test out the idea and help influence other schools in Herefordshire.

**Action 7:** Anyone interested in taking part to contact FM. **HBB**

Government is also pushing STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) subjects to young people and have expressed an interest in coming to speak to the Marches Skills Board and the Business Boards. Local STEM ambassadors are co-ordinated by Worcester University.

FM will be meeting with Young Enterprise to see if there are any opportunities to develop this with their Young Enterprise businesses; linking a business project with a Young Enterprise project to give them a real life experience of developing a project for and with a client.

## **7. Information Sharing – Marches LEP**

- The Marches LEP has recently undertaken a manufacturing survey on behalf of the Skills Board with the aim of getting information to aid the development of sector specific skills support with Skills Capital funding from Government. Responses have not been great, only 36 received back so there is more work to be done. RJ has written a paper for the Skills Board with the background which will be circulated to the Business Board for information (attached).
- A longlist of Marches LEP projects has been created to show what has been funded and delivered across the LEP from the different funding streams. This will be circulated to the Board when it is available. There is also the opportunity to shape and develop new projects for the next SEP and round of Growth Deal funding. Some key projects for Herefordshire are already noted including broadband, NMITE and the relief road. The next Growth Deal fund is likely to support skills and apprenticeships and the aims of increasing GVA, jobs and housing.
- The Marches Growth Hub website is now in its test phase and should be going live shortly. Herefordshire Council's business support offer will sit within the Growth Hub in future with council officers providing local support and signposting. There will be a single phone number point of contact with enquiries being directed to the relevant local support. Within each local authority there is going to be a physical hub, in Herefordshire it will be at Skylon Court on the Enterprise Zone. Wolverhampton University will be hosting the Herefordshire Growth Hub in their new Skylon Court offices and there will be hot-desking, information sharing, meeting and conference rooms available. Colleagues from national support offers such as UKTI, MAS and Growth Accelerator have been invited to use the space for hot-desking and meetings. Wolverhampton University will be running their business start-up provision.

**Action 8:** Summary information about the Growth Hub to be provided when available. **NW**

## **8. Any other business**

None.

## **9. Date of Next Meeting:**

10<sup>th</sup> November 2015. 4pm – 6pm. *Location will be confirmed.*

## **10. Close**

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Key to acronyms:

BIS	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
DEFRA	Department for the Environment, Food & Rural Affairs
LEP	Local Enterprise Partnership
MAS	Manufacturing Advisory Service
NMITE	New Model in Technology and Engineering
SEP	Strategic Economic Plan
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
UKTI	UK Trade and Investment