

Herefordshire Business Board (HBB)

Notes / Actions from the Meeting – Monday 15th September 2015

Chair: Frank Myers (FM) **Present:** Catherine Every (CE), Cathy Meredith (CM), Clare Greener (CG), Helen Thomas (HT), John Read (JR), Linda Smith (LS), Mike Ashton (MA), Nick Read (NR), Stephen Eckley (SE), Matt Hayes (MH).

In attendance: David Llewellyn (DL), Gill Hamer (GH), Ian Peake (IP), Jaclyn Kitson (JC), Paul Hinkins (PH), Phil Collins (PC), Nick Webster (NW),

Apologies: Rachel Jones (RJ).

1. Welcome and apologies

FM welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made. Apologies noted.

2. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting on 7th April 2015 were approved as an accurate record.

3. Gill Hamer, Marches LEP Director

GH attended and provided updates on current projects and Marches LEP activities including her intention to attend future HBB meetings to bring updates on projects:

- The outcomes wanted by DCLG from the LEPs are jobs, increased GVA, housing and apprenticeships.
- 15% of Homes and Communities deal to be recycled across the LEP area.
- There is £2.5m available in the Skills Capital Fund which is part of the Marches Growth Deal funding awarded by Government
- Core funding and Heseltine funding for the Marches LEP is being used to develop the Marches Growth Hub which will be pushing local events and business support activity. A Project Manager has just been appointed
- Green Shoots funding is available locally it aims to help small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs) operating in the areas below to create new jobs and promote growth in the region: (<http://www.wolverhamptonbsc.com/greenshoots>)
- The LEP relationship with the Business Boards is important and BBs are being asked to nominate champions to sit on sub groups/working groups and to have involvement in shaping and positioning of various projects and policies
- The Marches Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) can still be refreshed – to be the subject of a future HBB meeting
- The Marches LEP is advertising for new Board members and LEP sub groups are to be refreshed.
- A question regarding RDPE funding; what influence does the LEP have? LEP influence is minimal because programmes are set at national level.

Action: Details of the LEP Board application process to be circulated. **GH**

Action: SEP refresh to be item on future HBB agenda. **FM/RJ**

Action: Nominations for HBB member to sit on Growth Hub Steering Group. **HBB**

4. Paul Hinkins, Chair Telford & Wrekin Business Board

PH was asked to share good practice on Business Board sector Champions. He has been on the Telford Business Board (TBB) for a year which is business led, has 28 members and meets bi-monthly. Members are interviewed before joining the board and when setting up sector champions

each member was visited. TBB is still developing as a public/private relationship, and has support from Telford & Wrekin Council. The terms of reference are being finalised.

The role of sector champions is developmental and is to support inward investment and provide advice to TBB on the type of support required by the sector – provision of evidence. Business development officer assigned to work with champion to ensure access to services

Feels it is important that the three BBs work collaboratively.

5. David Llewellyn, Harper Adams University

- Discussed the Agri-Tech and Agri-food sectors in the Marches and what the Government means by these definitions.
- A LEP task and finish group came up with the concept of an innovation park at Harper Adams, it is not just about agri-tech but is tied into the housing growth in Newport. They would like to expand the group into a sub-group or strategy group (of the LEP) with BB representatives.
- Within the SEP there is a focus on Food and Drink, and Food Technology and the LEP is looking at what already exists in this sector in the Marches area. Part of the national focus for this group should be to work with UKTI and to look at funding proposals from ESIF and EAFRD funding proposals. It would be good to develop a “West” proposal with links to neighbouring LEPs and WAG similar to Agritech East which has received funding.

Action: HBB to identify rep for the Agri task and finish group, it was suggested that the Herefordshire Strategic Food and Tourism Partnership come forward with a recommendation to the HBB.

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

6. Next steps towards an action plan

Discussions around developing the action plan for HBB centred round the role HBB can take in establishing what will influence jobs, GVA and housing, and how to get projects into the pipeline.

The focus of Herefordshire Council is infrastructure, sites and implementation of the LDF. HBB can help take forward the Herefordshire Economic Masterplan on the business support side, potentially by specific sectors. It was suggested that work should align with the Marches SEP to show the connections. An evidence based approach is required and there is a need to engage with strategic economic partners.

University and skills are a common purpose for the HBB and Herefordshire.

Action: Cllr Graham Powell to be invited to next HBB meeting. **FM/RJ**

Action: Create two sub-groups of the HBB; University and Agri-Tech. **HBB**

7. Date of Next Meeting:

HBB to meet bi-monthly. Date of next meeting to be confirmed.

8. Close

Key to acronyms:

DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
DEFRA	Department for the Environment, Food & Rural Affairs
EAFRD	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
ESIF	European Structural and Investment Funds
GVA	Gross Value Added
LDF	Local Development Framework

LEP	Local Enterprise Partnership
SEP	Strategic Economic Plan
UKTI	UK Trade and Industry
WAG	Welsh Assembly Government