

## **HEREFORDSHIRE SUSTAINABLE FOOD AND TOURISM PARTNERSHIP, 18<sup>th</sup> December 2015**

**Present:** Jenny Beard (JB), David Curtis (DC), Cathy Meredith (CM), Nick Read (NR), Clare Greener (CG)

**In attendance:** Karen Usher (KU)

**Apologies:** Matt Smith (MS), Rachel Jones (RJ).

### **NMiTE**

KU gave a presentation on the New Model in Technology and Engineering (NMiTE), i.e. the new university for Herefordshire. [www.nmite.org.uk](http://www.nmite.org.uk), which was an idea that started in 2011. 1400+ students leave Herefordshire each year. Although there is only 0.6% unemployment the county has the third lowest wages in the UK. A university can help to transform the local area.

Engineering accounts for 30% of the economy but there is a 5:1 skills deficit for graduate engineers. The average age of working engineer is 58 and 2.56m new openings are required by 2015, Only 6% of engineers are female.

46,625 companies employ engineers in the West Midlands and 50%+ of these will need new entrants, creating 149,000 jobs. NMiTE students will have a 9 month internship and paid industry projects as part of their training. NMiTE will award an MEng, delivered in three, rather than four, years because each year will be 46 weeks of block teaching, including “green, renewable and smart living.” Both campus and student accommodation will be developed in Hereford shortly and a Vice Chancellor has been appointed.

### **Agri-tech Group**

The original meeting of the agri-tech group proposed by David Llewellyn was postponed. Gill hosted a meeting with LEP Chairs to develop the group and Helen Thomas has been appointed. Staffordshire LEP are proposing to support this with a regional agri-tech initiative.

### **Marches LEP Food and Drink Task and Finish Group**

There has been little contact with this initiative and Hereford Business Board has not issued any further details.

### **Food Champion**

Food is now under-represented on HSFTP and we need to bolster this.

### **Fastershire**

Matt was unable to attend the meeting and there was no further update.

### **Herefordshire Community Network CiC**

DC updated the group on this initiative to support superfast broadband on Duchy premises. Jonathan Hinds of Architype had given evidence to a Parliamentary Select Committee of the deleterious effect on his business of poor broadband and, since then, action had been taken. The Council had provided a grant to help connect the Duchy offices and the CiC has been formed out of 26 businesses (6 on Duchy land).

**LEADER**

35 applications had been sent out and 3 drafts had been submitted to date. The first stage has to be approved by Defra. Training is to take place on technical appraisals though Defra says that experts are required and that local LAG members will not be suitable. Herefordshire and S Shropshire LAGs are investigating whether they might jointly appoint an appraiser. The full application guidance notes are still not available. A LEADER LAG meeting is scheduled for February 12<sup>th</sup>.

**HSFTP Membership**

Are there other organisations that should be included within the group e.g. WIRE, Hereford Museums or FSB?

**Destination Plan**

JB explained the background to the DP. Letters requesting support for the Expression of Interest had been dispatched and replies were coming from a wide variety of organisations. NR and JB would draft and submit the EoI by January 8<sup>th</sup>. Defra had queried some of the language used within the letter and JB would respond.

**Herefordshire Farming, Food and Community Awards**

JB had attended a dinner with representatives from Cargill who offered to sponsor one of the awards.

**Annual Report**

NR would draft the HSFTP Annual report for 2015

**Date of Next Meetings**

19<sup>th</sup> Feb at 2pm at the Cider Museum

18<sup>th</sup> April at 2pm at the Duchy offices

20<sup>th</sup> June – Away Day