

Herefordshire Business Board (HBB)

Notes / Actions from the Meeting – Tuesday 14th December 2016

Chair: Frank Myers (FM). **Present:** Bill Jackson (BJ), David Harlow (DH), David Sheppard (DS), Debbie Gittoes (DG), Gill Hamer (GH), Ian Peake (IP), John Jones (JJ), Mary Thompson (MT), Mike Ashton (MA), Stephen Eckley (SE).

In attendance: Christian Dangerfield (CD), Nic Millington (NM), Nick Webster (NW), Rachel Jones (RJ).

Apologies: Karen Usher (KU)

1. Welcome and apologies

FM welcomed everyone to the meeting, introductions were made and apologies were noted. David Sheppard was standing in for Karen Usher. Declaration of Interest Forms were completed, these will be scanned and kept on file.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting were reviewed and approved.

3. Midlands Engine Investment Fund

CD presented an overview of the Midlands Engine Investment Fund which is expected to launch in April or early May this year. Funding will be competitive but there is £3m in the fund guaranteed for the Marches LEP area with the rest of the funding available on a first-come first-served basis. It was agreed that HBB should do all that they can to acquaint potential applicants with news of this forthcoming scheme as soon as possible. It was agreed that HBB would be the lead body in order to let people know about the opportunities available and ensure businesses (SMEs) in the area are ready to compete for the different funds available.

NW presented a decision paper to the board (copy attached) all four of the recommendations were accepted and the HBB agreed that a member of HBB would be nominated to a working group to manage a local launch and promotional event for the fund. MA nominated Sharon Smith to be on the group. Support for the working group will be available from the council's Economic Development team. Christian Dangerfield would be available to act as liaison with the British Business Bank (BBB) and the various fund managers.

17/01 Action 1: Arrange for the working group to organise the launch event. **NW**

4. Great Place bid

NM presented an overview of the cultural sector in Herefordshire. The competition for the bid for Hereford to be UK City of Culture in 2021 opened on 12th January with a closing date for the initial application of 28th April. If successful, the full bid will need to be submitted by 29th September with the winners being announced in Hull (current UK City of Culture) in December 2017.

Herefordshire is in a strong position as a rural city and county making an application to be UK City of Culture, the other bidders are all urban. Herefordshire has a strong cultural sector which is represented by the new Herefordshire Cultural Partnership, launched 12th January and chaired by Roger Morgan, who is leading the bid for UK City of Culture. The Cultural Partnership will be producing a Cultural Strategy for Herefordshire with a long-term vision for a coordinated approach to the sector and a view to integration with other local plans.

An application has been submitted to the Great Place scheme (funded by Arts Council, Heritage Lottery Fund and Heritage England) which will fund projects in areas where there is a commitment to embed arts, culture and heritage in local plans and decision-making. This reflects the vision of the Herefordshire Cultural Partnership and once again being a rural county is beneficial to Herefordshire; the scheme will invest in twelve areas of England, four of which are to be rural. The bid is worth in the region of £900k to Herefordshire and will cover a three year period. The announcement of the winning bids is expected at the end of March.

17/01 Action 2: NM is invited to update the HBB with developments and submit proposals on how HBB can support the sector. **FM**

17/01 Action 3: HBB members to show their support for the City of Culture bid through the various routes suggested here: <http://www.herefordcityofculture.org/index.php/how-do-i-get-involved/>. **ALL**

5. NMiTE

The Founders Fund has been successful in meeting its target of 100 donors, a press release will be published this week.

There has been no announcement from Government on the funding from the Growth Deal; it is likely that they will hear more after the launch of the Midlands Engine Strategy w/c 7th February. The timing of all the different funding routes is key for the project, announcements in February would enable NMiTE to hit its planned targets, and announcements made any later would mean a delay of twelve months.

Plans are being put in place for the recruitment of a Programme Manager, Chief Executive and an Academic registrar.

6. Horizon Scan

Herefordshire Council will be going out to consultation on the Hereford area Plan and how it relates to Hereford City. HBB can be involved by responding to the consultation and raising the profile. Further consultations for the market towns and other area plans will come forward over the coming months.

17/01 Action 4: Circulate links to consultation(s) when launched. **NW**

The city link road is progressing well, demolitions are underway on Widemarsh Street and the road is due to be completed by the end of August 2017.

7. Marches LEP

The Government is releasing its Industrial Strategy Green Paper next week. The MLEP is planning to undertake research in four key industrial sectors; defence and cyber; advanced manufacturing and engineering; food processing and packaging; environmental technology. Regeneris have been contracted to undertake the work, there may be some results in time for the next HBB in March. HBB members will be contacted to take part in the research.

A piece of work has been undertaken to look at the food and agriculture sectors in four LEP areas – Stoke and Staffordshire, The Marches, Cheshire and Warrington and Worcestershire. This is available to download from the MLEP website: [Scoping Report Agri-Tech West](#)

The MLEP Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) will be updated over the coming months.

8. Any other business

FM has identified a potential member for an agri-tech sub group and will discuss with David Llewellyn, the chair of the group before issuing an invitation to see if he is interested in being involved.

17/01 Action 5: Proceed with the suggested appointment. **FM**

A nomination was put forward, and was approved by the HBB, to ask Doug Barrat to join the HBB. His expertise on infrastructure projects will add a new area of expertise to the membership. DB will be invited to join the board from the next meeting.

17/01 Action 6: Chairman to issue an invitation to Doug Barrat. **FM**

The Redundant Building Grant is being re-launched in the Marches shortly as the Marches Building Improvement Grant (MBIG). The Board were asked to nominate a representative to sit on the Steering Group, with a commitment of 1½ days every six to eight weeks, this could be a CPD opportunity for staff of HBB member businesses.

17/01 Action 5: Nominate staff for Steering Group membership. **ALL**

MA announced that his replacement will be Sharon Smith and she will be taking over from 1st April, SS will also take MA place on the HBB. This was the last HBB that MA will attend and the Chair extended his thanks to MA for all that he has done in his role as Chief Executive of the Chamber and wished him well for the future.

9. Dates of Future Meetings:

- Tuesday 14th March
- Wednesday 17th May
- Tuesday 11th July
- Tuesday 12th September
- Tuesday 14th November

Please note that the September and November dates are different to those previously published.

All meetings will be held at the Hereford Business Solutions Centre, Skylon Court, Coldnose Road, Rotherwas, Hereford, HR2 6JS

10. Close

Links to Marches strategic boards (ctrl & click to follow the links):

[Hereford Enterprise Zone / Skylon Park](#)

[Herefordshire Business Board](#)

[Marches LEP](#)

[Shropshire Business Board](#)

Telford Business Board – *to be confirmed*