

Herefordshire Business Board (HBB)

Notes / Actions from the Meeting – Monday 1st October 2018

Chair: Frank Myers (FM). **Present:** David Harlow (DH), Debbie Gittoes (DG), Doug Barrat (DB), Ian Peake (IP), Karen Usher (KU), Mark Pearce (MP), John Reed (JR), Sharon Smith (SS), Stephen Eckley (SE), Andrew Henry (AH), Gareth Williams (GW)

In attendance: Gill Hamer (GH). Daisy Rees Evans (DRE), Paul Kalinauckas (PK), Abigail Appleton (AA)

Apologies: Alison Rogers (AR), Eric Drummond (ED)

1. Welcome and apologies

FM welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies were noted. The Board welcomed GW to his first meeting and JR who will be replacing Mary Thompson (MT) who has returned to the US.

2. Minutes of the last meeting and Actions Arising

The minutes of the last meeting were approved by the board.

The following actions have been **completed** since the last meeting:

15/05 Action 4 BCC Skills Letter Circulate letter from the BCC to the PM on skills shortage SS
Completed - Letter sent with Minutes of meeting on 15 May - 29/05

The following actions are **ongoing**:

14/11 Action 1: Marches LEP Skills Programme Officer to collate learning from other rural areas to help delivery in Herefordshire. **GH**

14/11 Action 2: Agree the recruitment process, role and responsibilities of the sector champions and work with the nominations committee (FM, DG, JJ) to recruit to the roles. **NW**
Set in place a process of monthly reporting from the Marches Growth Hub. **NW/GH**

13/03 Action 1: Progress the questions around skills with the Marches Skills Board and local representatives to develop a full picture of skills in Herefordshire in order to develop future plans. **FM, IP, SS, DG**

15/05 Action 1: To put forward a few paragraphs to help show a more joined up message about Herefordshire and to indicate the required budget **NM**

15/05 Action 2: To consider how to fund a budget that would help ensure that Hereford has a good joined up message. **GH**

15/05 Action 3: DS to provide updates from time to time to enable HBB Members to be fully briefed as ambassadors. **DS**

3. Access to Finance

PK is new to the Marches LEP Board and will be the Access to Finance Champion for the Marches LEP. Establishing Access to Finance in 2002 for SME's PK's purpose was to increase growth within the economy and provide commercial finance to smaller firms which can often be a barrier for many. Access to Finance interlinks with the Midlands Engine and an aim for PK is to have businesses in the Marches area maximising the allocation of funding.

There seems to be an awareness raising piece that the Marches LEP can do in order to help SME's receive the right finance and to understand the four different finance paths.

Action: To circulate the Midlands Engine Investment Funding (MEIF) poster - **DRE**

4. Why does creative education matter for business?

AA – Herefordshire College of Arts was born out of the driven need by businesses to have people with a creative skill-set. This need makes it important that the College works closer with local businesses to understand the type of skills they are looking for in certain roles and to ensure that their students are receiving the best education they can. This means that the College provides an interdisciplinary approach to teaching in order for their students to be fit for business needs.

Currently digital technology is allowing businesses to become more innovative and students are enjoying the briefs firms are giving them in order to create something practical and new. The College are therefore looking to have more businesses involved with helping young people have a breadth of experience in their education and to encourage Herefordshire to become more creative within their businesses.

There is a shift that's starting to emerge within STEM that there is an element of creativity needed and to emphasise creativity may help to break down the stigma of the creative industry. Currently there is no support for start-ups in terms of the creative industry within Herefordshire but they, the College, are working on a program that can help their students learn how to start a businesses, tapping into networks and gaining business skills.

It was discussed that the LEP needs to support start-up businesses more in terms of finance, space and advice.

5. Herefordshire Investment Partnership

DB - Since May there has been further interest from another London based investment company who plan to visit the county and assess their interest over the coming months. The Hereford Investment Partnership (HIP) will continue to promote Herefordshire with the two organisations that we think could have an interest in the county.

DH - Currently working on funding for the bypass as well as constructing a space for the arts which will hopefully start in February.

6. NMiTE

KU – NMiTE is progressing rapidly and are using the Art College to design some of their branding. Currently they're at 20 staff and have 25 young people for the year. Finding and building student accommodation as well as academic buildings is slow but will want to grow and expand so forward planning is essential.

7. Horizon Scan

GH thanked everyone who attended the Marches LEP Social Economic Plan (SEP) consultation in July, the feedback has really helped to form an economic view and the first draft was circulated at the Marches LEP board on September 25 2018. Aiming to have it approved by the 27 November 2018 and would like to have some sector focus groups in Cyber and Food & Drink to understand what these sectors need. Once the SEP has been signed off an executive summary will be produced.

Action: To send over the edited version of the SEP to the Board. **GH**

A review for the LEP is currently underway with some positive changes in order to be fit for funding post-Brexit. The LEP will have to become a limited company by the next April in order to receive more funding and work more independently which is what the government would like. This also means that the LEP will be under more scrutiny of what they're doing. The LEP board have two new Members and will soon be recruiting a new Chairman and currently looking to improve the gender balance on the board and would like to bring in sector specialists.

8. Any Other Business

FM – Proposed that someone from the tourism and gastro sector should be sitting on the Board as a Member. Board agreed for FM to go forwards and find a new Member in this sector, suggested this could be Christian Dangerfield from The Green Dragon.

FM – Anthea is holding an exhibition in February in Brussels which will be called “Showcase Herefordshire” the space will be 110 square metres and ideas/suggestions are sought on what the space should look like.

FM – Explained that governance required that the position of chairman for the next term of two years should be subject to election before the end of 2018. He explained that he would be prepared to stand for one more term, but it was necessary to invite nominations from others who may wish to stand. He proposed that the election should take place at the forthcoming December meeting. DG has agreed to be the returning officer and she will be inviting everyone to send in any nomination for Chair with a closing date of 16 November 2018. If necessary she would then make arrangements for a secret ballot at the meeting on 4th December.

GW - asked if it would be possible for the Business Board to conduct a survey of businesses' views on the emerging Brexit situation. After debate, it was decided that the Business Board would not be able to manage a process which could give a reliable conclusion and so it was decided not to do so.

9. Dates of Future Meetings:

- 4th December 2018

All meetings will be held in the Seminar Room (unless stated otherwise) 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](#)