

Herefordshire Business Board (HBB)

Notes / Actions from the Meeting – Tuesday 23rd January 2018

Chair: Frank Myers (FM). **Present:** David Harlow (DH), Doug Barrat (DB), Ian Peake (IP), Karen Usher (KU), Mary Thompson (MT), Sharon Smith (SS), Stephen Eckley (SE).

In attendance: Andrew Henry (AH), Duane Sanger (DS), Gill Hamer (GH), Rachel Jones (RJ), Nick Webster (NW).

Apologies: Deborah Gittoes (DG), Eric Drummond (ED), John Jones (JJ).

1. Welcome and apologies

FM welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies were noted.

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:

- 11/07 Action 1:** Copies of Job Description and Person Specification for the support roles to the Business Board will be available before the next meeting **GH**
- 12/09 Action 5:** Housing Infrastructure Fund - the Board supported writing letters of support for the bid to help in the lobbying process. **ALL**
- 14/11 Action 5:** Arrange for next meeting to be held at HWGTA in Hereford. **RJ**

The following actions are **ongoing**:

- 17/01 Action 7:** HBB nomination required for the steering group of the Marches Business Improvement Grant. **ALL**
- 11/07 Action 8:** Business representation on the Marches Skills Board needed. **FM**
- 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**
- 14/11 Action 3:** Set in place a process of monthly reporting from the Marches Growth Hub. **NW/GH**
- 14/11 Action 4:** Share information on planned projects with HBB. **NW/DB**
- 14/11 Action 6:** Provide further information on the plans for the Robert Owen Academy. **DG**

3. Herefordshire and Worcestershire Group Training Association (HWGTA) and Herefordshire and Ludlow College (HLC)

DS welcomed the Board to HWGTA and gave an overview of the organisation and its fifty year history as an employer led organisation delivering training across a variety of specialities. HBB toured the facilities to see the recent investments and improvements which were enabled by support from the Marches LEP.

The tour was followed by a presentation from IP who explained the joint £1.39m project between HWGTA and Herefordshire and Ludlow College, funded with £726,000 from the Marches LEP Growth Deal 2 funding with match from the two organisations. The funding has enabled both organisations to invest in new equipment and technology thereby expanding their training offer. To date the project has benefitted 1,000 students.

The question was asked what are the constraints and next steps for HWGTA and HLC and there was discussion about future plans, student numbers and employer engagement.

Conversation moved on to the AOB item about a proposed Marches LEP Skills Board round table and after discussion it was agreed that FM, IP, SS, DS and a representative from Cargill would meet to progress ideas.

23/01 Action 1: Meet to progress ideas around skills. **FM, IP, SS, DS.**

4. Herefordshire Vision – Herefordshire Investment Partnership (HIP)

DB updated the Board on the progress of the Herefordshire Investment Partnership, they have met with local MPs to lobby support for the bypass project in Government and met with Sir John Peace, Chairman of the Midlands Engine in Hereford in January. Sir John was very supportive of the aims of HIP and would speak with Government, he also emphasised the importance of being joined up to benefit from the support available from Midlands Engine.

HIP met with Keepmoat who have been selected as the preferred development partner of Herefordshire Council and will be kept up to date on their plans.

The focus of HIP is still on two projects: Hereford bypass and Model Farm at Ross-on-Wye and the draft development plan for Model Farm should be available for the next HBB meeting. HIP is aware of other opportunities around the county and these will become part of their remit over time. They are in the process of clarifying their offer and how to get the message out about the opportunities available in Herefordshire.

5. NMITE

Progress is going well and decisions are being made regards the campus, curriculum, staff and faculty, communications and branding. Several staff are on faculty with more announcements to be made in the coming weeks. The university has identified sites for their buildings and tender documents are being put together for the student accommodation. The university is currently working from 6a St Peters Square which will then be used for demo classrooms and student services.

The university has to raise private match funding of £50m over the next ten years to match the public funds put into the project. It is a high priority for the team and they are confident of success.

6. Horizon Scan

Advanced negotiations on the link between A49 and A465 are underway with the council agreeing to support CPOs to acquire land if needed. Work on this element of the bypass is expected to start in early 2019 with an approximate eighteen month build.

Consultation on the Hereford bypass will be starting in early February 2018 for six weeks, where seven possible routes within the broad corridor will be considered. When a single preferred route has been identified it will be taken to Cabinet for decision and then a planning application will be submitted. The aim is to have planning in place in 2019 and for work to commence in 2020.

NW is working with the Chamber to arrange direct consultation with businesses and companies with logistics requirements are encouraged to have input. There are plans to put together some case studies to promote the positive outcomes of the scheme.

Highways England is undertaking a strategic network review to update their Route Investment Strategy (RIS2) and Herefordshire needs to be part of the conversation in relation to the importance of the A49.

23/01 Action 2: Circulate links to the Bypass Consultation and RIS2 when available. **NW**

7. Marches LEP

Consultation on the Energy Strategy is taking place but the meeting planned for Herefordshire has been cancelled due to low numbers; people who had booked on will be contacted directly instead. The Energy Strategy will be brought to the HBB as it is developed.

GH extended her thanks to Herefordshire Council for the work on the city link road project, which was

delivered on budget and ahead of time. A key project for Hereford, the link road was funded by Growth Deal funding from the Marches LEP with match funding from the Council.

Work is ongoing to access funding for the Shell Store project on the Enterprise Zone, which will include incubator units and have links to the university.

Representatives from the three Marches LEP local authorities will be attending MIPIM in March to promote the opportunities in the region. A showcase brochure and video has been produced.

Government is asking for information about the impact of the failure of Carillion locally, anyone with information is asked to let the LEP know and they will report back to Government.

8. Any Other Business

The job description and person specification for the administration support to the Business Boards has been written and tender opportunities for self-employed roles are currently being advertised for the support roles for the Telford & Wrekin and Shropshire Business Boards. The Chair explained that he had met with IP and DG in order to discuss the merits of employing someone instead of tendering and they had reached a preference for the role to be an employed post and several options were discussed. The Board concluded that the preferred approach would be to employ someone via the Chamber as paying agent and that FM and SS would arrange this.

23/01 Action 3: Meet to discuss recruiting and employing HBB support. **FM, SS.**

The Enterprise Zone has a new Chair Andrew Manning Cox who has been invited to take a place on the Herefordshire Business Board. The EZ Chair and the EZ Managing Director had decided to deputise the place on the HBB to the EZ Managing Director Mark Pearce (MP). The HBB acknowledged the role and seniority of MP and the valuable contribution he would make to board business but wanted to extend the invitation to Andrew to attend future HBB meetings. After discussion it was proposed that whilst the Managing Director would be welcomed to attend the meeting as a deputy, the Chair should be asked to attend at least twice in a year. This proposal was unanimously accepted.

FM asked for clarification from GH on the roles of sub group members and how they get involved with the LEP sub groups. This will be addressed in line with the work agreed in the previous HBB meeting, see action 2 from 14th November 2017.

Funding from the Midlands Engine Investment Fund is now available and includes proof of concept, small business loans, debt finance and equity finance: <https://www.marchesgrowthhub.co.uk/assets/meif-quick-ref-guide.pdf>

There are several events being planned by the Chamber over the coming months:

- HW Chamber Business Expo: <https://hwchamber.co.uk/events/business-expo>
- HW Chamber Business Awards: <https://hwchamber.co.uk/events/awards> nominations are open until 23rd March and applications from Herefordshire should be encouraged
- Food & Drink Conference: <https://hwchamber.co.uk/events/conferences/food-and-drink-conference-20-03-2018>
- Queens Awards Event: information to follow

Herefordshire and Ludlow College are considering a merger with North Shropshire College and are currently exploring options for funding support to allow the merger to go ahead.

AH provided a quick snapshot of Allensmore Nurseries. They have a planning application in for their site at Madley airfield with the aim of doubling turnover in the next two years. They have just been awarded LEAF accreditation for their environmental practices and have plans to start taking on apprentices in the next year.

9. Dates of Future Meetings:

- Tuesday 13th March
- Tuesday 15th May

- Tuesday 17th July
- Tuesday 18th September
- Tuesday 20th November

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 – *to be confirmed*