

## **Herefordshire Business Board (HBB)**

### **Notes / Actions from an emergency meeting held via Zoom: Tuesday 19 May 2020, 2.30 – 3.15 pm**

**Chair:** Frank Myers (FM) **Present:** Christian Dangerfield (CD), David Hitchiner (DH), Doug Barrat (DB), Helen Bowden (HB), John Reed (JR), Nic Millington (NM), Paul Stevens (PS), Sharon Smith (SS), Stephen Eckley (SE),

**In attendance:** Roger Allonby (RA)

**Apologies:** Abigail Appleton, Christine Snell, Debbie Gittoes, Gareth Williams, Ian Peake, Karen Usher, Mark Pearce

**Notes:** Jan Bailey (JB)

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#### **1. Welcome**

FM welcomed PS to the Board. PS is the new Chairman of the Hereford BID and as such he has been invited, and has accepted, an invitation to become a member of Herefordshire Business Board.

#### **2 Marches Investment Fund (MIF)**

2.1 FM thanked RA for the additional work he had done on the business case; the latest version of which had been circulated to Board members before today's meeting.

2.2 RA gave a verbal summary of the business case and explained to Board members how the tabled version had been developed.

2.3 FM explained that the aim of today's meeting was to confirm that Board members were happy with the approach taken and would therefore be happy for him to sign the business case on their behalf.

2.4 Members agreed that they were happy with the broad approach of the business case, which would be further developed once funding had been secured.

2.5 Members expressed concern about the time constraints being imposed by the LEP, in particular the requirement for the fund to be defrayed by the end of October. They felt that more flexibility must be allowable as the circumstances around COVID19 and the lockdown remain changeable and unknown.

2.6 Members were unanimous that as far as possible the fund should be spent within Herefordshire.

2.7 DH stressed the importance for transparency and due diligence in the award of any contracts, particularly in cases when Board members would be the beneficiaries. FM agreed and suggested that this could be achieved by the establishment of an 'oversight board' that would make spending decisions, following proper tendering or emergency spending rules, and would comprise Board members as well as representatives from the council and relevant others.

2.8 RA advised that he had already sought help in this regard from the council's procurement team. RA agreed to work with the council's officers to develop Terms of Reference for the oversight board, as well as buying processes (tenders and emergency spending).

**Action: RA to develop with council team ToR for oversight board and buying processes for tenders and emergency spending**

2.9 RA advised that the business case summary (previously developed by NM and RA) had been shared during a meeting of business representatives last Friday, 15 May. Attendees included the Federation of Small Businesses, Herefordshire Means Business, the NFU, Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce. Broad support had been received, although similar concerns to the Board's had been expressed regarding timing constraints.

2.10 Board members confirmed that they were happy for FM to sign the business case on their behalf.

**Action: FM to sign off business plan on Board's behalf**

### **3. Economic Recovery – Feedback to Marches LEP from Board Members**

3.1 FM reminded Board members that he was still keen to receive feedback from them with regard to the two questions posed by the LEP, ie:

**Regarding Herefordshire's economic recovery after COVID19, Herefordshire Business Board members are asked to provide feedback on two questions:**

- **The type and level of support they felt businesses in Herefordshire will need. This can either be specific to their own sector or more generic in nature.**
- **How are Board Members planning to manage social distancing in the months after the lock-down in terms of their particular business sector.**

3.2 FM asked JB to share the comments already received from Board members.

**Action: JB to circulate comments already received from Board members**

3.3 Board members were asked to email any additional comments to FM as soon as possible. These will be shared at next week's LEP Board meeting (26 May).

**Action: Board members to send feedback to FM**

#### **4. Any Other Business**

4.1 FM asked for the Board's views on whether they should be asking the LEP to take action to help those made redundant due to the COVID economic repercussions to retrain or be connected with job opportunities. Any comments to be forwarded to FM. SS said that Worcestershire have launched a job matching service, the details of which she would forward to Board members.

**Action: Board members to send comments to FM**

**Action: SS to circulate details of the Worcestershire job matching scheme**

#### **5. Date of Next Meeting**

Monday 1 June, 2020 at 4.00 pm via Zoom (details to follow)