

Herefordshire Business Board (HBB)

Notes / Actions from the Meeting held on Monday 4 October 2021, 4.00-6.00 pm at Arctic Circle Ltd, Rotherwas, Hereford HR2 6JL

Chair: Frank Myers (FM) **Present:** Abigail Appleton (AA); Christian Dangerfield (CD); Cllr David Hitchiner (part) (DH); David Williams (DW); Debbie Gittoes (DG); Helen Bowden (HB); James Newby (JN); John Reed (JR); Nic Millington (NM); Paul Stevens (PS); Sharon Smith (SS); Stephen Eckley (SE)

In attendance: Roger Allonby, Herefordshire Council (RA)

Speakers: Charlotte Worthy (CW) and Dave Helm (DHe), Herefordshire Council; Paul Walker (PW), Herefordshire Council

Apologies: Christine Snell; Doug Barrat; Gareth Williams; Mark Pearce; Kathryn Jones; Rachel Laver

Minutes: Jan Bailey (JB)

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

Apologies are as noted above. There were no Declarations of Interest.

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The Minutes of the Herefordshire Business Board meeting held on 26 July 2021 were approved as a correct record.

4. Matters Arising (not covered elsewhere on the agenda)

Ref 5.4.1: Link to COVID Recovery Plan: will be circulated to members with the Minutes from today's meeting.

Action: JB to circulate

Ref 6.7: Facilitate link between Chamber's Young Professional Group and HBB – ongoing.

Ref 12.1: Presentation on Three Marches Colleges' Strategic Development Fund – deferred.

Action: FM/JB for future Agenda

All other items on the Summary of Actions (circulated) have been completed.

5. Data Collection and Its Relevance to HBB Activities

5.1 The Chair welcomed CW and DHe to the meeting.

5.2 CW and DHe gave a presentation to Board members entitled 'Understanding Herefordshire'. The aim was to raise awareness and understanding of the work undertaken by Herefordshire Council's Intelligence Unit as well as to encourage Board members to engage with the team, particularly to share any statistical information they may collect within their own organisations. In addition, the presentation featured a section on the impact of COVID19 on the local economy. The full presentation will be circulated to Board members with the Minutes from today's meeting. In addition, CW referred members to the website <https://understandinghereforeshire.gov.uk/> where they can sign up to receive latest news updates from the team.

Action: JB to circulate

5.3 Comments were received from Board members as follows:

5.3.1 FM referred CW/DHe to the work of the 99% organisation. He stated the importance of Business Board members understanding all of this data and its implications for future planning.

5.3.2 SS agreed that this information is important, but wanted to know what businesses could do to help. She highlighted the challenges that different demographic groups would be facing, only some of which could be addressed by business. FM advised that this question would be addressed in today's later presentation from PW.

5.3.3 FM mentioned an additional major change being implemented from 2022 in the delivery of healthcare – Integrated Care Systems – which would have major implications for everyone. He offered to invite a speaker on this subject to a future Business Board meeting.

5.3.4 DG asked whether the numbers and types of jobs/employment available were analysed as part of the Intelligence Unit's work as there are significant difficulties in recruiting to positions of all types in the county. DHe agreed that this was important and advised that some analysis was carried out in the monthly economic summary. He agreed that more analysis on this aspect is important, but was constrained by current available resources.

5.3.5 JR echoed DG's concerns and stated that the county would be facing curtailed economic growth in the future unless businesses were able to recruit the staff that they needed.

5.3.6 DW offered data that is currently collected by the college, eg students' demographic information, subject area, etc. CW/DHe said they would be happy to receive this. DW/CW/DHe to link up after today's meeting.

Action: DW to contact CW/DHe

5.3.7 NM queried whether data specific to Herefordshire's creative industries was collected by the Unit. He stated that Rural Media and Hereford Cultural Partnership had recently secured funding for research and would share any data that comes out of this, when available.

5.3.8 The Chair proposed that the Board revisits this subject in a few meetings' time to discuss further and decide how to progress. He thanked CW/DHe for their presentation and invited them to forward any future information which may be of interest to Board members to JB for onward circulation.

Action: FM/JB for future Agenda

6. Presentation from Paul Walker, Chief Executive, Herefordshire County Council

6.1 The Chair welcomed PW to the meeting.

6.2 PW gave a presentation to Board members which was a summary of a presentation he had recently given at the Herefordshire Economic Summit. The presentation highlighted the key challenges being faced by the county and what could be done to resolve them. The full presentation will be circulated to members with the Minutes from today's meeting.

Action: JB to circulate

6.3 Comments were received from Board members as follows:

6.3.1 SS offered the Chamber's support to communicate key messages to business leaders, women's group, young leaders, manufacturing forum, etc.

6.3.2 PW offered the City Council's support, particularly with Herefordshire Council's stated aim to establish a Youth Forum.

6.3.3 NM stressed the importance of Herefordshire's place within the West Midlands and Welsh borders. This had, he said, not always been capitalised upon, for example with reference to the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, with which Herefordshire had had very little involvement. He stated his view that increased

focus should be given to improving relationships within the region and to sharing best practice. PS and HB agreed with this analysis.

6.3.4 The Chair expressed his disappointment that previously the Business Board had not been asked by Herefordshire Council to help with the 'Big Plan', or been seen as an important reference group. He hoped that this would change, for example by including real opportunities in the 'Horizon Scan' item on the Board's agenda (presented by RA) for members to have an input and involvement.

6.3.5 AA stressed the importance of any future plans for the city/county addressing the needs of young people.

6.3.6 JN stated the importance of there being a city master plan that incorporated a long term joint strategic vision that was shared and integrated between partners. Without this level of integration, he said it was difficult for organisations such as NMITE to develop their own vision.

6.3.7 The Chair proposed a standing invitation for PW to attend future Herefordshire Business Board meetings. This was agreed by Board members.

7. Marches LEP

7.1 No-one was available from the LEP to attend today's Business Board meeting. However, Kathryn Jones has provided an update, which will be circulated to members with the Minutes from today's meeting.

Action: JB to circulate

8. NMITE

8.1 JN advised that the first cohort of NMITE students had now commenced their studies. However, because there are fewer students than had been planned, a staff restructure had been necessary with consequent reduction in external engagement resources. This was regrettable, but he stressed that the university's priorities hadn't changed and neither had its long-term vision.

8.2 The Chair offered Business Board members' support with NMITE external engagement activities. He stated that the difficulties experienced by the university were probably a direct consequence of COVID and restrictions on visiting, open days etc. AA and other Board members supported this analysis and anticipated increased numbers in future years.

9. Updates and Progress Report

9.1 **Marches Investment Fund:** HB advised Visit Herefordshire marketing campaigns are continuing until March 2022. The launch of the Destination Improvement District (DID) is imminent. A presentation on this subject will be made at the next Business Board meeting. RA to circulate papers in advance.

Action: RA – circulate paper
Action: FM/JB to add to December Agenda

9.2 **Stronger Towns Fund:** No update provided.

9.3 **Knife Angel:** FM advised that the project had finished with a surplus. Ambitious plans are now in place to continue the momentum to highlight, especially to young people, the futility of knife crime and crime generally. Bishop Richard is leading the initiative.

10. Horizon Scan

No additional updates provided.

11. Herefordshire Vision – Herefordshire Investment Partnership

No updates (DB apologies)

12. Sector Updates

None.

13. Any Other Business

None

14. Date of Next Meeting

Monday 6 December, 4.00 – 6.00 pm, Arctic Circle, Rotherwas, Hereford HR2 6JL

2022 Meetings – currently being scheduled. Further information to follow.