

**Herefordshire Business Board (HBB)**  
**Notes / Actions from the Meeting held on**  
**Monday 1 August, 2022, 4.00-5.45 pm**  
**at Arctic Circle Ltd, Rotherwas, Hereford HR2 6JL**

**Chair:** Frank Myers MBE (FM) **Present:** Abigail Appleton (AA); David Williams (DW); Helen Bowden (HB); John Reed (JR); Mark Pearce (MP); Nic Millington (NM); Sharon Smith (SS); Stephen Eckley (SE)

**In attendance:** Roger Allonby, Herefordshire Council (RA); Rachel Laver, Marches LEP (RL)

**Apologies:** Christian Dangerfield; Christine Snell; David Hitchiner; Debbie Gittoes; Doug Barratt; James Newby; Paul Stevens; Gareth Williams

**Minutes:** Jan Bailey (JB)

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**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 new Declarations of Interest.

**3. Minutes of the Last Meeting (6 June 2022)**

The Minutes of the Herefordshire Business Board meeting held on 6 June 2022 were approved as a correct record.

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

4.1 The Chair announced that Elena Rodriguez-Falcon would shortly be leaving her post at NMITE to take up the role of Deputy Vice Chancellor at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David. The Board agreed that an official note be sent to wish Elena the best of luck in her new role and to thank her for her work at NMITE.

**Action: FM/JB**

4.2 DW advised that he is still awaiting the outcome of the bid to the second phase of the Strategic Development Fund, which is expected imminently. He stated that he would provide an update to the Board as soon as there is any news.

4.3 The Chair advised that a Hereford Hoard fundraising dinner would not be going ahead. Instead, he advised that the new High Sheriff of Herefordshire (Mrs Sarah De Rohan JP) would be adopting the crime aspect of the Hereford Hoard for her Shrieval lecture, taking place in September. Further details will be circulated to Board members.

**Action: FM/JB**

4.4 NM advised that the executive summary of the report on cultural experience in rural areas had now been circulated to Board members.

## **5. UK Shared Prosperity Fund Update**

5.1 RA advised that Herefordshire's bid to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) had been submitted, following Cabinet sign off of proposals from the Steering Group.

5.2 RA advised that Herefordshire's UKSPF bid comprised three elements: Communities and Place (£2.5M); Supporting Businesses (£1.6M) and People and Skills (£1.1M). There is also an additional amount allocated to improving adult numeracy skills. He outlined further details of these elements and will circulate a presentation that contains full details for the Board.

**Action: RA**

5.3 RA advised that he had not received any specific information with regard to a date for the outcome of the bid, but was anticipating this in late October/November.

5.4 The Chair invited comments from Board members. The following were noted:

5.4.1 JR expressed reservations about the processes involved in completing the bid, in particular the time pressures which meant that fuller discussions could not be held regarding Herefordshire's priorities.

5.4.2 NM asked whether the Board could earmark potential projects so that when bidding opportunities arise, there is greater scope for these to be included. He stated his particular wish to maintain relationships with the socially excluded and to work closely with community organisations rather than to take a 'top down' approach.

5.4.3 The Chair stated that the purpose of including 'Horizon Scan' and 'Sector Updates' within the Business Board meetings was to identify some of these priorities. SS stated that there is a good understanding of the main issues facing Herefordshire, which remain unchanged (particularly around skills and business support). NM agreed with this analysis and stated his view that more innovative approaches to addressing these issues may be successful in attracting investment.

5.4.4 Following discussion, members agreed that the Board should take a more direct approach by identifying and stating publicly what it sees as the top three

priorities for businesses in the county. These priorities could then easily be included within any future bids.

5.4.5 The Chair queried the decision-making process around how the investment in adult numeracy skills would be spent. RA advised that this had been decided at a number of Skills Board meetings but that short deadlines had limited the amount of engagement that was possible. However, he stated that the bid for this and the broader UKSPF were very 'high level' and that further discussions could be held to decide exactly how it would be spent.

5.4.6 RA advised that he would be happy to arrange further consultation with the Business Board in relation to the development of Herefordshire's Economic Development Strategy.

## **6. Stronger Towns Fund**

6.1 AA advised that Full Business Cases had been submitted for all the projects within Hereford's Stronger Town Fund plan. She stated that feedback from Government is expected by the end of September/beginning of October. In the meantime, projects are progressing, for example with planning applications.

6.2 AA advised that Board members are continuing to stay in contact with the various project leads; the main issues are to do with cost escalation. She advised that a project variation request with regard to the Digital Cultural Hub's change of location had been approved.

6.3 The Chair advised of an additional issue to do with VAT and said he was requested at the last PDG meeting to lobby the local MP (Jesse Norman) in this regard.

6.4 The Chair advised that the STF Board is developing a formal communications approach to start during the next phase of the project.

6.5 HB asked if there was a timetable available that showed milestones related to the various projects. AA agreed to provide this to the Board.

**Action: AA**

## **7. Marches LEP**

7.1 RL provided an update on the latest issues from the LEP:

- VAT registration.
- An exceptional Board meeting to be held to discuss proposals with regard to changes to Shropshire Business Board.
- The recent LEP Board recruitment campaign.
- Staffing issues within the LEP, many of which were associated with the uncertainty regarding the future of LEPs.

- The recent Creative Growth Fund opportunity.
- Uncertainties with regard to the current national political landscape.
- An update with regard to the recent call for energy related projects - £25M applications for a £4M fund.
- A reminder regarding remaining ESIF funds – eg via the Business Energy Efficiency Fund and Business Growth Programmes.
- Cyber security funding.
- DTI West Midlands event programme (to be circulated to Board).
- R & D tax credits reminder.

**Action: JB (circulate DTI event programme to Board)**

## **8. Horizon Scan**

8.1 RA provided an update on the recent submission of a bid to the Levelling Up Fund. A total of three bids had been made (total £43M), including Ross Enterprise Park/Model Farm; various projects in Leominster and transport infrastructure/cycling and pedestrian improvements in Hereford city. RA advised that he had received no firm confirmation from Government as to when the outcome of the bid would be made known, but he was anticipating this in the autumn.

8.2 RA further advised that a number of projects had been included as part of the Stronger Towns Fund bid, in particular two major proposals to improve both Hereford Library and Museum.

8.3 RA provided an update regarding the Destination Management organisation, and the recently announced proposed changes to a Local Visitor Economy Partnership. He stated that funding for a number of pilot areas would be available shortly and that Herefordshire would be well placed to apply for this.

8.4 Following a request from NM, RA provided an update on the county BID, in particular that the BID Board was now in place and the levy would shortly be being collected. HB advised that a new website was being developed and that a newsletter had recently been released, which she will circulate to HBB members.

**Action: HB**

## **9. Sector Updates**

Individual members provided updates from their sectors. Please see Annexe 1.

## **10. Any Other Business**

10.1 The Chair advised that Ross-on-Wye business man, Dean Kronsbein, owner of Ultrafilter Medical, had tragically been killed in a recent boating incident.

## **11. Date of Next Meeting**

Monday 3 October, 4.00 – 6.00 pm – venue to be confirmed.

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Monday 1 August, 4.00-5.45 pm  
Annexe 1 – Sector Updates**

**1. Agriculture (JR – CS absent)**

- Withdrawal of basic payment system is a significant issue for the sector.
- Suggested that Herefordshire Business Board writes to George Eustace MP (Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs). JR to draft paragraph for Chair to include in a letter from the Business Board)

**Action: JR**

**2. Creative Industries**

**AA**

- Working with Herefordshire Cultural Partnership and other creative industries around strategic development – what we would like put in place collectively, so that projects are ready if opportunities for bids arise

**NM**

- Cultural Strategy needs to be updated
- Re Creative Growth Fund opportunity (via MLEP), Herefordshire/Marches/Worcestershire bids did not progress, however Herefordshire was included in a bid from the wider West Midlands Combined Authority, the outcome of which is still awaited.

**3. Education**

**DW**

- Skills White Paper and impact on adult skills and employer representation could result in funds being available to develop this area
- The Chair stated that discussions with regard to an Education Centre were ongoing between NMITE and Wye Valley Trust. He will provide further details to DW.

**Action: FM**

## **AA**

- FE pay issues, especially regarding recruitment and pay differentials with schools' sector

## **4. Manufacturing**

### **JR/DG (via email)**

- No change to previous updates

## **SE**

- Recruitment challenging and will impact growth. People wanting to work from home in areas where this is not possible/suitable.
- Supply chain issues acute.
- Cost escalation

**SS** – endorsed issues identified above.

## **Investment**

### **MP**

- Demand for land remains high.

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**Action Log**

<b>Minute</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
4.1	Send letter to Elena Rodriguez-Falcon on behalf of HBB	FM/JB
4.3	Details of Hereford Hoard Shrieval Lecture to be circulated to members	FM/JB
5.2	UK Shared Prosperity Fund Presentation to be circulated to members	RA/JB
6.5	STF Milestones Summary	AA
7.1	Circulate DTI Events Programme to members	JB
8.4	Circulate Herefordshire BID newsletter to members	HB/JB
Annexe 1	Paragraph re withdrawal of basic payment, for inclusion in letter from HBB	JR
Annexe 1	Provide further details on Education Training Centre to DW	FM