

Herefordshire Business Board

Notes / Actions from the Meeting – Tuesday 7th August 2012

Present:

Chair: Neil Kerr (NK), Angela Fitch (AF), Andy Edwards (AE), Cathy Meredith (CM), Helen Thomas (HT), John Jones (JJ), Mike Ashton (MA), Paul Sinclair (PS), Peter Brown (PB), Phil Collins (PC), Cllr Roger Phillips (RP), Stephen Eckley (SE), Nick Webster (NW).

Apologies: Ian Hilditch (IH), Joseph Connor (JC), Richard Garnett (RG), Ray Stone (RS), Rachel Jones (RJ).

1. Apologies

Apologies noted.

2. Broadband for Herefordshire

(In attendance - Cllr Graham Powell (GP) and Natalia Silver (NS) – Herefordshire Council, Michael Dunn (MD) BT.)

NS gave update on the progress of the Borders Broadband project – have issued call for final tenders, these are being evaluated now, will be going to HC Cabinet on 13th Sept for authority to award the contract. Selected supplier will then plan out deployment, will take six months, roll out to begin in March 2013.

Trying to get Next Generation Access (qualified at 30 MB's) to as many properties as possible, likely to be 90% coverage. Remaining 10% will have a minimum of 2 MB, going for 100% coverage of the County, available to all who want it.

Funding coming from three sources - £10.1m from BDUK, contributions from HC and end supplier. Need to get around State Aid issues, applicable to all who going through this process, must prove market failure.

GP to brief NK and other nominated HBB member prior to Cabinet meeting. Emerging technology will change during the roll out period, take up of Next Generation Access is currently poor but trying to future proof the network in the county. Upload speeds will be technology dependant but a higher percentage of users will have a greater speed than currently.

All cabinets in the project area will be enabled by March 2016 going for the best value roll out which will be determined in consultation with chosen partner.

MD gave presentation (see attachment) on the enabling of cabinets within Hereford City, looking to enable up to 80 Cabinets within next twelve months, which ones are enabled is a commercial decision for BT. Fibre will be provided from the exchange direct to the cabinet, looking to start the project in late September 2012.

Considerable discussion on the need to enable Cabinets within the Enterprise Zone, MD reiterated that the decision over which Cabinets to enable was taken on a commercial basis by BT. NS mentioned that enabling the Rotherwas Cabinets would be part of the Borders Broadband project.

3. Chair Update

Marches LEP

NK reported that the MLEP Business Plan was not action led and the LEP Board expressed a general dissatisfaction over its quality. Suggested that the LEP should concentrate on broad strategy and attracting resources and attention, whilst delivery was focused locally on Business Board led initiatives with the LEP in a supportive role.

NK would be looking to refresh the plan and would be speaking with businesses, Cllr's and other relevant groups to influence the direction of the LEP Business Plan and identify actions.

HBB Business Plan

NK went through Work Plan with the Board, looking at a number of issues – including skills, educational attainment, and availability of employment land. Board Members were asked for their ideas for inclusion in the Business Plan and to suggest their own list of top six priorities for forwarding to NK. These suggestions could be used to inform the LEP Business Plan.

Action – Board Members to forward any priorities for inclusion

4. Enterprise Zone Update:

NK gave update

5. Working Group Updates

Sub groups presented updates

6. AOB

Car Parking Charges. The Board were informed of a consultation paper HC were circulating regarding the imposition of parking charges across the County and were looking for responses from interested parties. NW confirmed that he would circulate the consultation paper.

7. Date of next meeting: Tuesday 2nd October, 4pm Croma House, Rotherwas.