

Herefordshire Business Board (HBB)

Notes / Actions from the Meeting – Tuesday 28th May 2019

Chair: Frank Myers (FM). **Present:** Christian Dangerfield (CD), Debbie Gittoes (DG), Doug Barrat (DB), Sharon Smith (SS), John Reed (JR). Mark Pearce (MP), Nic Millington (NM) and Stephen Eckley (SE)

In attendance: Daisie Rees-Evans (DRE), Roger Allonby (RA) and Kathryn Jones (KJ)

Apologies: Abigail Appleton (AA), Andrew Henry (AH), Eric Drummond (ED), Gareth Williams (GW), Ian Peake (IP), Karen Usher (KU), and Gill Hamer (GH).

1. Welcome and apologies

FM welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies were noted. Due to the election results, David Harlow will no longer be attending Herefordshire Business Board.

Action 1: FM to ask Roger Allonby who should be replacing David Harlow for future meetings

2. Minutes from Previous Meeting and Actions Arising

The minutes of the last meeting were approved by the Board.

The following actions are **ongoing**:

13/03/18 Action 1: Progress the questions around skills with the Marches Skills Board and local representatives to develop a full picture of skills in Herefordshire in order to develop future plans.
FM, IP, SS, DG

DRE to set up meeting.

02/05/2019 Action 5: KJ to provide Marches LEP Board Terms of Reference, Conflicts of Interest policy and Articles of Association – these are contained within the Accountability and Assurance Framework which is linked from this page.

Conflict of interest was addressed as an issue at the Marches LEP board meeting, but no further progress. FM to discuss with Gill Hamer.

3. Hereford Enterprise Zone

The Shell Store project is now into its sixth week of renovation. Currently they are stripping everything back to the steel frame of the building and work is expected to finish at the end of June 2020. If people would like to visit the site and see the progress please let DRE know if you're interested. Visits will most likely take place week commencing the 27th June.

Hereford Enterprise Zone wants the incubator process and management of the site to run as smoothly as possible. Therefore, they have decided they want an independent operator to manage all of this. This will also help them communicate what service offerings they can provide businesses who want to use the space. They are now soft market testing for operators for the centre.

Currently the Cyber Centre is 8-weeks behind schedule and will want help from Herefordshire Business Board to raise awareness of the centre closer to the completion date. They're hoping to discuss the projects with the new administration at the Council to receive support and to demonstrate how beneficial the project will be for the County.

Action 2: Add to the agenda in October to discuss how Herefordshire Business Board can help to raise awareness of the centre **DRE**

4. Herefordshire Vision - Herefordshire Investment Partnership

There is some interest in investing in the County currently, but yet to see if this will follow through. Currently waiting to see if there will be any investment with Maylord Orchard as this is a crucial place in the city that can help to rejuvenate the town centre; an update will follow at a later day on the progress.

Currently Herefordshire Investment Partnership have a difficult relationship with ENGIE in terms of supporting projects. This could have a negative impact on long-term investment for the county as Engie could be seen as having an advantage as HCC partners over other potential investors by taking an early interest in the more commercially attractive projects. DB will be meeting with the Chief Executive of Herefordshire Council, Alistair Neill, to discuss how to move forwards with ENGIE and the issues they are currently facing.

5. NMiTE

Recently a presentation was given to the Marches LEP Board on progress for the project. They are currently in conversations about a lease for student accommodation by the train station.

6. Horizon Scan

After the recent elections Herefordshire Council have a new Cabinet. These are members who should help to drive the vision of the local economy and if they do not choose to support infrastructure projects this could have a negative impact.

It's important to know that (Cllr) David Hitchiner is now the leader of the Council, (Cllr) Felicity Norman is the Deputy Leader and (Cllr) Trish Marsh has replaced David Harlow.

The Board agreed that we need to tell them what projects are going on in the county to help them understand the importance of their continued support for these projects.

Action 3: FM to meet formally with Cabinet Members: Trish Marsh and David Hitchiner and to invite Trish Marsh to sit on Herefordshire Business Board. If Members of the Board would like to join in on this discussion, please let Frank know. **FM/All**

Action 4: All Members to send across to FM 3 priorities they wish to have vocalised at the meeting as well as how we can engage with the new administration **ALL**

Heritage High Street Fund has been launched and the Council will be applying for this to be used in Leominster and Hereford city. The Future High Streets fund that they have sent expression of interest for may help to cover the rejuvenation of Maylord Orchard. However, there have been over 300 applicants for this fund already.

Stronger Towns Fund – the Council are still uncertain what this will consist of but may focus more on areas of deprivation.

Visit Herefordshire – The Council have taken over the lease of the website and social media for the next three months while they meet with partners to look at how to support the takeover of Visit Herefordshire. They are also looking at the feasibility for electing to pay for funding the tourism industry county wise.

7. Marches LEP Structure

Marches LEP now operates as a Company Limited by Guarantee. Each Chairman of the Business Boards is a Director for the LEP.

Currently the LEP are using services provided by Shropshire Council rather than putting staff in post e.g. HR. Members of Herefordshire Business Board are not sure whether this is a good approach to take. The Business Board recommends that this is reviewed once the recent changes have bedded in.

8. Marches LEP Update

The Marches LEP now have a Delivery Plan which sets out what they intend to deliver in the 2019/20 financial year. This is a dynamic document and may be subject to change, as the LEP seizes significant opportunities or responds to key challenges that might impact on the national and local economy. Where that is the case and it results in a material change to any of the data, timelines or objectives shown in the Delivery Plan, this will be reflected in an updated version posted on the LEP's web site and shared with government as soon as is practicable. The Business Board is invited to submit changes at any time.

The LEP will soon be selecting the recruitment agency for the recruitment of LEP Chair. FM is concerned that it will be impossible for someone in Herefordshire to do because of where the office is based. The LEP Board now has now appointed new Board Members which KJ will circulate.

Action 5: Circulate Chair vacancy advert to Herefordshire Business Board Members DRE
Action 6: Circulate the names of the new LEP Board Members KJ

The Marches LEP are wanting to develop the LIS document, working closely with business groups to deliver consultation groups. They will be holding the Food & Drink consultation group in Herefordshire end of June. Hoping to have 8-12 businesses around the table from this sector who have strategic importance to help understand and sense-check the data that the LEP have.

The next Marches LEP Board meeting will be on 23 July to discuss:

1. Skills Advisory Panel
5. LEP Board Recruitment
2. Transport
3. Telford Land Deal
4. LIS

9. Sector Update

CD –Tourism

Not much to update for this sector. Tourism has massively dropped because of the lack of movement from people due to Brexit.

JR/SE/DG - Major Company Engagement Programme

There is a lot of uncertainty due to Brexit. With the local changes in administration this could cause some issues for current and future projects. It's really important that the Herefordshire Business Board is vocal about the priorities for Herefordshire and that we need backing on projects from the new Cabinet.

Currently the Major Company Engagement Programme has been disbanded but it was a good vehicle to have direct dialogue with other businesses. Starting this group up again needs to be considered and instead of it being a programme it should be a process of engagement.

10. Any Other Business

Update from NM and SS on the Business and Culture Working Together project:

Despite the ongoing challenges of a sparsely populated rural county, Herefordshire is undergoing a remarkable period of business and cultural development.

A new confidence and ambition is evident in policy (Marches LEP SEP; Herefordshire Destination Management Plan 2018-22; Herefordshire Cultural Strategy 2019-29; Invest Herefordshire; Herefordshire Council's Local Plan, etc.) and in practice (Skylon Park; Centre for Cyber Security; Shell Store; Hereford Enterprise Zone; NMiTE; Green Dragon Hotel; Old Market, Hereford College of Art's creative business start-ups support, etc.).

Interwoven between these initiatives is a new generation of entrepreneurs establishing award-winning cultural businesses in food & drink, fashion, video, design and marketing, games and immersive technology, and health and leisure.

Working collaboratively the aim of the project is to create a polished and compelling information resource video to promote Herefordshire as an exciting and vibrant county in which to work, invest, study, train and visit. It will include a two-minute video for sharing across business development, commercial, public and third-sector websites as well as a 60-second video for global viral distribution.

The Marches Building Investment Grant

The Marches Building Investment Grant is a scheme part-funded by the European Regional Development Fund which is available to small and medium-sized enterprises. This is due to come to an end soon and the Council are now giving information on the evidence to help secure the next phase of funding. Herefordshire had a lot of strong applications for the MBIG and are hopeful this will continue for other grants. Due to Brexit, there is a lot of uncertainty around funding as many grants are coming to an end and currently there isn't anything else that's available.

Community Strategy

The Council are currently developing the community strategy and would welcome business comments. Keen to discuss this at the next board meeting on how to engage with the community and community issues.

11. Dates of Future Meetings:

- Tuesday 30th July
- Tuesday 1st October

- Tuesday 3rd December

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

12. 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](#)