

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
SHROPSHIRE BUSINESS BOARD**

**HELD ON  
MONDAY 7<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2015  
4.30 pm – 6.40 pm**

**UNIVERSITY CENTRE SHREWSBURY**

**Present:**

Mandy Thorn MBE (Chair)	Marches Care Ltd
Lindsay Barton	Federation of Small Business
Paul Bennett	Shropshire Business Partnership
Tony Bywater MBE	Salop Leisure Ltd, Shrewsbury
Shaun Carvill	Clickingmad Ltd, Bridgnorth
Fay Easton	Shropshire Enterprise Partnership
Arthur Hill	CH Hill and Sons
Richard Lumby	Carrillion, Wolverhampton
Gill Hamer	Marches LEP Director
William Morris	Utilities Representative
Christine Niland	DWP
Mandy Stoker	E4 Environment Ltd & Chair of METnet.
Steve Wain	Shropshire Learning Network

**Shropshire Council Officers**

Claire Cox	Business Relationship Manager – Economic Growth
Andy Evans	Head of Economic Growth and Prosperity
Helen Hunter-Hayes	Business Engagement Officer
Mark Pembleton	Service Manager for Business and Enterprise
Julie Fildes	Committee Officer

**20 Welcome, Apologies and Introductions**

- 20.1 The Chair welcomed all, and expressed the Board's gratitude to the University Centre for accommodating the meeting and providing refreshments at short notice.
- 20.2 The Chair welcomed Christine Niland [DWP] to the Board. Ms Niland introduced herself as the Employer and Partnership Manager for the North Shropshire area for the DWP.
- 20.3 Members noted that the Leader of Shropshire Council had resigned and a new Leader would be appointed in due course.
- 20.4 Apologies were received from Matthew Snelson [Granger & Worrall Ltd], Matt Bulley [Caterpillar Shrewsbury Ltd], Tim Downes [JR & MC Downes & Sons], Roger Emery [Muller Dairy (UK) Ltd], Owen Gahan [Kerry Ingredients & Flavours], Tudor Griffiths [Tudor Griffiths Group], Nick Scott [J Ross Developments Ltd], Catherine Baxter [Harper Adams University],

Paul Kirkbright [University Centre Shrewsbury], Simon MacVicker [Shropshire Chamber of Commerce], Steve Charmley [Deputy Leader, Shropshire Council], George Candler [Director of Commissioning, Shropshire Council], Clive Wright [Chief Executive, Shropshire Council].

20.5 Keith Winter attended as substitute for Simon MacVicker.

## **21 Declarations of Interest**

21.1 Members were reminded to declare any interests either at this point or if they became apparent during the meeting.

## **22 Minutes and Matters Arising**

22.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2015 were confirmed as a correct record subject the amendment of paragraph 14.6; the words 'AD sites ceasing operation' to be deleted.

22.2 There were no matters arising.

## **23 Short Update on the Marches LEP and Devolution**

23.1 Shropshire Council's Head of Economic Growth and Prosperity outlined the progression of the Northern Powerhouse and the Combined Midlands' Authorities towards gaining devolved status. Members noted that the County of Cornwall had been successful in its application for devolution but this was likely to be the only County to gain this status.

23.2 Paul Bennett declared an interest as a representative for one of the three main political parties involved in the Government Think Tank on devolution.

23.3 Members noted that the guidance from the Department of Communities and Local Government was that for a devolution bid to be successful the bid had to be a combined approach from a number of authorities and services. Shropshire was taking a two pronged approach and was looking north to the neighbouring authority in Cheshire East and also working with Hereford and Telford and Wrekin, with an offer expected to be developed in 2016. Members noted that the Government was not proposing to provide increased funding, the devolved areas would be expected to bid for funds already in the system but with a greater degree of local determination.

23.4 The Marches LEP Director confirmed that she had met and had a positive discussion with representatives from the Department of Communities and Local Government, Local Authority Leaders and Chief Executives. She had received advice that the LEP needed to demonstrate its ability to work with other authorities and that they had the support of the business community.

23.5 Members noted that Telford and Wrekin Council had applied to become a non-constituent member of the Combined Midlands' Authority and that

Herefordshire Council was in negotiation with Gloucester Council over joint working for the CCG.

- 23.6 Members were positive about the possibility of improved efficiency resulting from joined up public services and public/private sector partnership working. Members questioned whether these proposed changes would benefit SME's that predominated in the rural counties and expressed interest in the impact that the changes would have on these companies.
- 23.7 Paul Bennett reported that he understood that George Osborne took the view that there were too many small LEPs and felt that they should pool resources. A member commented that there were twelve Regional Development Agencies and thirty-nine LEPs.
- 23.8 The Marches LEP Director commented that she had received positive feedback from Central Government on the way the LEPs had evolved and the number of private sector representatives that had been appointed to LEP Boards. She agreed that it was possible that the LEP system may undergo change, but the LEP had an important role in shaping the vision of the local economy and working in partnership and local government, particularly as Business rates would become an important part of Local Government funding.

## **24 Engaging with Shropshire's Young People**

- 24.1 Steve Wain of Shrewsbury College shared a presentation that he had previously used with teaching staff at the college, showing the differences between Generation Z (born after 1995) and the Baby Boomers Generation (born in the post war years).
- 24.2 Members noted the 5 markers of maturity:
- Finishing education;
  - Leaving home;
  - Becoming financially independent;
  - Getting married; and
  - Having a child
- In 1960 around 70% of the population would have achieved all five by the age of 30, today this was only 30%. It was noted that whilst in the 1960's these were identified aspirations and young people expected to achieve them, Generation Z did not see them as so important or even achievable.
- 24.3 The impact of social media on the way people thought was also considered. Generation Z had grown up with a wide range of technology and social media unavailable to previous generations, this affected the way they preferred to communicate and how they thought. It had been identified that Generation Z preferred to receive information pictorially, whereas earlier generations tended to favour the written word.
- 24.4 Generation Z also had a far shorter attention span of only 8 seconds and poor interpersonal communication skills, although they were skilled multitaskers who were happy to communicate on social media, and were far more open than previous generations in the information they disclosed

about themselves. Members discussed how earlier generations had been able to 'fake it till they made it' but with the world of Generation Z being so transparent this was not so possible.

- 24.5 Changes in parenting practices and better education had led to generation Z having greater self-confidence coupled with greater liberty. Although decreased economic opportunities often frustrated their ambitions. 90% of generation Z reported feeling under-utilised but the confidence instilled during their up-bringing and the lack of financial opportunities and responsibilities meant that they were more likely to become entrepreneurs than previous generations. Generation Z also blamed earlier generations for wasting resources which had led to the lack of economic opportunities for them. They also tended to be more community orientated.
- 24.6 In response to a Member's suggestion about making Company Handbooks more visual, Paul Bennett commented that he had experience of representing several firms who had tried this approach and where the information had been misinterpreted and had led to workplace disputes. A Member suggested that businesses should have a policy on the use of emoticons in company documentation.
- 24.7 A Member suggested that the older generation should accept that they are responsible for Generation Z and should help them to shape the world to meet their expectations. Another Member observed that while there were many positive aspects to Generation Z it would be irresponsible not to set standards just because this would make them happier. He continued that structure was needed as well as tolerance from all.
- 24.8 The large volume of inadequate information available on the internet was noted and how it was difficult to sift through this. A Member also commented that although young people understood how to use the technology available to them they often did not understand its full impact.
- 24.9 A member observed that 16 and 17 year olds in Scotland had fought to be included in the Scottish Independence Referendum but it was unlikely that this age group would have a voice in the European Referendum.

## **25. Future Work Streams of the Business Board**

- 25.1 Members discussed the future operation of the Business Board and its role in shaping the vision for Shropshire's future. It was recognised that the Business Board should be a forum where intelligence and feedback collected from the different business sectors could be shared with the Local Authority and LEP in a meaningful way, enabling the Local Authority to develop policies which would allow businesses to thrive and add value to the economy for the benefit of all.
- 25.2 It was recognised that the business community network could identify opportunities quickly. Although businesses were often in competition with each other, they could be stronger together if they shared good practice. It was suggested that the Business Board could play an important role in this co-ordination and the creation of a common vision through sector

leadership and the appointed Business Champions.

- 25.3 A Member commented that the Business Board was under resourced which restricted the work it could undertake and resulted in its potential being unfulfilled. The Chairman agreed that resources were required to support the work undertaken by the Board but Members were reminded of the successes of the Business Board despite this. She observed that the Board's primary resource was its Members.
- 25.4 A Member suggested that the Business Board should have a Business Plan setting out its objectives and aims with both the roles and responsibilities of the Business Board and Local Authority clearly identified. The Business Relationship Manager commented that the Economic Growth Strategy, which had been jointly prepared by the Local Authority and the Business Board, had been a joint vision. A Member observed that there was danger that the Board had become a 'talking shop' without holding anyone to account. It was agreed that the work done to produce the Economic Growth Strategy had been a model of collaborative working and had resulted in some excellent achievements through the projects which had come out of it.
- 25.5 Members considered the operation of the Telford and Herefordshire Business Boards. It was noted that they both concentrated on fewer projects than Shropshire; working on only 2 to 3 key projects which had been agreed by the Local Authority. It was suggested that this model could be developed for the Shropshire Business Board.
- 25.6 Members agreed that the Board would attempt to re-engage with the Council Leadership, particularly with the new Council Leader. Consideration would be given to matching resources against identified priorities and working with Council Officers and developing a joint philosophy to work together in a meaningful way.

## **26 Any Other Business**

- 26.1 The Chairman on behalf of the Board presented Mark Pembleton, Service Manager for Business and Enterprise, with a card and gift and thanked him for all his work with the Business Board and wished him well with his future career. This was endorsed by Board Members.
- 26.2 Members noted a flyer which had been tabled giving details of the Enterprise Nation event, to be held on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2016 at the Clayton Hall, Shrewsbury.

## **27 Dates of Next Meetings**

- 27.1 The next meeting of the Business Board to be held on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2016 at the Harper Adams University. Start time to be confirmed.

### **27.2 Future Meetings:**

7<sup>th</sup> March 2016

Ludlow Football Ground

23<sup>rd</sup> May 2016  
11<sup>th</sup> July 2016  
12<sup>th</sup> September 2016  
21<sup>st</sup> November 2016

Shirehall, Shrewsbury  
University Centre Shrewsbury  
Tudor Griffiths, Wood Lane, Ellesmere  
Shirehall, Shrewsbury