

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SHROPSHIRE BUSINESS BOARD

HELD ON
MONDAY 22nd MAY 2017
4.30 pm – 6.30 pm

Present:

Mandy Thorn MBE (Chair)	Marches Care Ltd, Shrewsbury
Lindsay Barton	Golden Kite Solutions Ltd
Catherine Baxter	Harper Adams University (Agri-technology sector rep)
James Staniforth	CEO and Principle of Shrewsbury Colleges Group
Arthur Hill	CH Hill & Sons, Much Wenlock
Gill Hamer	Director Marches LEP
Paul Kirkbright	University Centre Shrewsbury
Matthew Snelson	Grainger & Worrall Ltd
Mandy Stoker	E4 Environment
Gareth Niblett	Department for Work and Pensions
Tony Bywater	Salop Leisure
Chris Lewis	Cyber Security Representative
Lindsay Barton	Golden Kite Solutions Ltd, FSB Representative
Tim Downes	JR & MC Downes & Son
Catherine Armstrong	Representing Shrewsbury Colleges Group
Alison Wright	Starfish Advertising and Marketing Ltd
Richard Sheehan	Shropshire Chamber of Commerce
Richard Lumby	Carillion PLC
Cllr Nic Laurens	Portfolio Holder for Enterprise and Growth, Shropshire Council

In Attendance

Katie Foster	Shropshire Tourism and Wider Economy
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Shropshire Council Officers

George Candler	Director of Place and Enterprise
Lisa Ashby	Economic Growth Coordinator

19 Welcome, Apologies and Introductions

- 19.1 The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and congratulated Cllr Nic Laurens on his new role as Portfolio Holder for Enterprise and Growth. Cllr Laurens thanked the Chair and confirmed he was looking forward to his new role and gave his assurance that he fully intends attending every Business Board and sees working together as key. The Chair also welcomed new members and observers to the meeting including Alison Wright from Starfish Advertising and Marketing, Chris Lewis from a cyber security perspective and Simon Thorley from Midcounties

Cooperative Society although Simon had sent apologies for this meeting. The chair confirmed that recruitment to the Board is still ongoing in terms of broadening the business representation.

- 19.2 Apologies for absence were received from, Gemma Davies [Head of Economic Growth], William Morris [Utilities Representative – Managing Director of SSE Retail], Simon MacVickar [Shropshire Chamber/Bridgnorth Aluminium], Paul Bennett (Vice Chair) [Shropshire Business Partnership], Tudor Griffiths [Tudor Griffiths Ltd], Simon Thornley [Midcounties Cooperative Society] and John Pitchford [Barclays Bank, Local Banking Representative]

20 Declarations of Interest

- 20.1 The Chair gave a reminder to the board on declarations of interest. No declarations of interest recorded.

21 Minutes and Matters Arising

- 21.1 The minutes of the meeting on the 13th March 2017 were checked for accuracy. No matters arising were recorded and the minutes of the meeting were confirmed as a correct record and that actions had been followed up.

- 21.2 The Chair noted that the July meeting date had been changed from Monday 10th July to Friday 7th July and confirmed that this meeting would be kindly hosted by James Staniforth at Shrewsbury College. Lisa Ashby confirmed that she would send an outlook meeting amendment out to members. The Chair also noted that Catherine Baxter who had originally offered to host the July meeting had kindly offered to host September's meeting, again Lisa Ashby confirmed that she would send an amended outlook invite.

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22 Terms of Reference

- 22.1 The Chair introduced the revised Terms of Reference following on from previous meetings where the board agreed that the role and purpose of the Board would need to be reviewed and updated. The Chair proposed going through the draft terms starting with the purpose of the Board which was to provide business leadership to the Council.

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- 22.2 A discussion took place on the benefits of working with other business boards, specifically Telford. The Chair mooted the idea of having a joint meeting with the Telford business board and whether this should be a full meeting or considered as part of a working group. The Board agreed after discussion that it would be useful to have a joint meeting. Mandy Stoker alluded to how businesses see Shropshire as a whole and not necessarily the administrative boundaries and there was opportunity through joint working to break some of these prejudices down. The Chair agreed that it was appropriate to have joint meetings but also advised caution in that the Shropshire Board had made a

- 22.3 conscious decision to not be prescriptive and other boards may have different approaches.
- 22.4 Further discussion on roles and responsibilities ensued and it was agreed that within section 1 the role of monitoring performance and the state of the economy should be elaborated on in terms of what would be required.
- 22.5 Catherine Baxter highlighted that playing an active role in the scrutiny Committee of the Council would be a challenge. It was agreed that 'active role' should be amended to 'advising'.
- 22.6 Richard Sheehan noted that the Board was a conduit for the wider Business community and this could be made more explicit in terms of the duty of the business board.
- 22.7 Locality was also discussed and the importance of not limiting the Terms of Reference just to Shropshire. Gill Hamer also agreed that there are area development plans stretching from Mid Wales to Shrewsbury so the wider locality should also be addressed.
- 22.8 The role of sector champions was discussed with the Chair asking the Board whether this should be sector champions or task and finish groups. It was felt that sector champions were important alongside the task and finish groups.
- 22.9 The representatives list was discussed. Arthur Hill noted that a farming representative from the NFU should be included. The Marches Skills Providers network was also discussed, together with the NHS. George Candler confirmed that it was for the Board to talk through in terms of representation and who will add value to the discussion. George agreed that the NHS being the largest employer would be a useful representative. There were some slight amendments to the representative list discussed which included the addition of Harper Adams, NFU and Marches Skills Providers Network. It was also raised that UK Trade and Investment should be amended to Department for International Trade (DiT)
- 22.10 All Board members agreed that they were content to adopt the new Terms of Reference subject to the amendments above.

23 Shropshire Tourism Update – Katie Foster

- 23.1 The Chair introduced Katie Foster who is a trustee of the Wildlife Trust and is chairing a new group called Discover Shropshire which has been formed from the Local Nature Partnership. Katie also clarified that this group was separate to the body, Shropshire Tourism but highlighted opportunities for working together as Shropshire Tourism is currently going through restructure. Katie pointed to issues within the tourism sector including Shropshire Tourism being fragmented with the current CEO retiring and the Council's lack of Tourism Officers, although Cllr Laurens highlighted that Shropshire Council will have an Officer working in conjunction with the Shrewsbury BID, AONB and the Outdoor

Partnerships team. Katie noted that there was opportunity for partnership working with the new group and that by working together this should alleviate difficulties for the consumer.

23.2 There was discussion around the table on the benefits of pulling together and also discussion on tourism supporting the wider economy. Richard Sheehan pointing to not losing sight of the opportunities around business tourism. Cllr Laurens noted that it would benefit Katie to have further discussion with Lezley Picton the new Portfolio Holder for Culture and Leisure.

23.3 The Chair thanked Katie Foster for her presentation to the Board and agreed it was a call to action in terms of tourism and the visitor economy as a whole.

24 Key Strategic Sites Update – George Candler, Shropshire Council

24.1 George Candler gave a high level overview of the sites Shropshire Council are currently delivering on either through themselves or with partners and noted that delivering on key employment sites is a key strand of the draft economic growth strategy.

24.2 George highlighted that the recent call for sites had been successful as there was a need for readily available and operational sites for developers and existing companies across the County in order to deliver on the Council's key objectives for Economic Growth and that the provision of these sites was key in retaining and supporting growth.

24.3 George went through the schemes we are currently supporting which include Ironbridge Power Station, Clive Barracks, Flaxmill Maltings, SUE West and Oxon Link Road and Oswestry Innovation Park. George Candler to send through timescales for the Flaxmill for inclusions within the minutes.

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24.4 **Addendum – Timescales for Flaxmill Maltings**

Main Mill and Kiln HLF Scheme

Phase 1 works (Main Mill structure and roof)

- 19/06/2017 - work starts on site
- 14/12/2018 - work complete

Phase 2 works (Main Mill and Kiln repairs and re-fit)

- 03/11/2017 – appointment of interpretation designer
- 20/04/2018 – detailed interpretation designs complete
- 20/11/2018 – Contractor appointed following OJEU tender process
- 14/01/2019 – work starts on site
- 22/03/2021 – works complete

A detailed programme is currently being developed for works to the wider site.

- 24.5 There was discussion around the table on developing and generating the right jobs in key sectors and also having the infrastructure in place for growth. Mandy Stoker also pointed to environmental considerations being important such as electric charging points across the county and widening cycle ways and footpaths. George pointed out that these considerations were being given to the proposed schemes. Matt Snelson pointed to an engineering business that was looking for sites but it was confirmed that Gemma Davies had already met with them. George asked the Board to let the Council know if they were aware of any other businesses who needed assistance with looking for sites.
- 24.6 The issue of utilities was also raised, particularly the issues in Bridgnorth. Gill Hamer confirmed that there was ongoing lobbying with meetings taking place with the utility companies to try to relieve the issues. A response was also included within the industrial strategy. Arthur Hill pointed to the TG Builders Merchants in Bridgnorth still being run on a generator. The Chair confirmed that lobbying was taking place at every opportunity.
- 24.7 The Chair thanked George for his presentation and on behalf of the board said it was great to see the Council investing in the development of these key sites.

25 Round Table Update from Business Board Members

- 25.1 The Chair highlighted that due to extended discussion the update from members would need to be brief.
- 25.2 Gill Hamer – Marches Local Enterprise Partnership
Gill thanked members who contributed to the response on the Industrial Strategy, particularly the response on advanced manufacturing. Gill also confirmed that developments on the Industrial Strategy are currently on hold due to the elections. Gill also confirmed that she had copies of the Marches LEP Annual Report to distribute to members.
- 25.3 Matthew Snelson - Grainger and Worrall Ltd
Gave an update on The Marches Centre of Manufacturing and Technology which should also be up and running for September although they were still looking to find the additional funding. They are in process of implementing a membership scheme for SME's joining where they can access world class technology for £2,000 per month. Access to technology is a big barrier to SME growth which this membership model will seek to address. It was agreed around the table that this was an excellent opportunity for Shropshire in terms of removing barriers to growth and opportunities for young people in manufacturing.
- 25.4 Lindsay Barton – FSB
Lindsay confirmed that she has submitted a response on behalf of the FSB to the draft Economic Growth Strategy Consultation. Lindsay also pointed to the revaluation of business rates causing some issues for

businesses. Brexit is also another issues creating uncertainty, particularly around ensuring good trade deals.

- 25.5 Richard Lumby –Defence and Construction - Carillion PLC
Richard noted that the defence sector has been hit by the current exchange rate and also tension in the defence budget. Richard also gave a good overview of facilities, estates and construction confirming that there were developments in the construction sector as a result of influences in the general housing market.
- 25.6 Alison Wright – Starfish Advertising and Marketing
Pointed to the fact there are not currently any creative industry groups operating in Shropshire for businesses within this sector so this should be seen as an opportunity to address.
- 25.7 Mandy Stoker – E4environment Ltd
Mandy reported job losses in the renewable sector.
- 25.8 Gareth Niblett – DWP
Gareth gave an overview of Universal Credit rollout and for Shropshire all claimants will be claiming Universal Credit from February 2018. Gareth also advised that there will be an employee advisor in post shortly looking at retention and opportunities.
- 25.9 Tony Bywater – Salop Leisure
Tony gave an update on the caravan park and glamping site development and also on the camping site development in Wales. Tony confirmed that he was confident in the tourism market as there had been an influx of visitors from abroad, which has been bolstered by the strength of currencies against the pound. Tony also noted it was important to work on the welcome to tourists to ensure longer stays and repeat visits.
- 25.10 Arthur Hill - CH Hill & Sons, Much Wenlock
Pointed to issues with energy, purdah and renewable heat incentives all having an impact on the agricultural sector.
- 25.11 Richard Sheehan – Shropshire Chamber of Commerce
Went through the results of the British Chamber of Commerce Q1 Economic Survey, both national and local and also the International Trade figures for Shropshire from the Department for International Trade. Lisa Ashby to circulate the local information.
- 25.13 Tim Downes – JR & MC Downes & Son
Tim Downes gave an overview of the recent NFU Manifesto. Lisa Ashby to circulate. Tim also noted that for every £1 invested in UK farming it was generating £7.41 return.
- 25.14 Mandy Thorn – Marches Care Ltd
Mandy confirmed that there was still a huge skill shortage in the care sector which is raising a lot of concern.
- 25.15 The Chair apologised to the Higher Education members that they had

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been unable to give an update but they were invited to send one for inclusion and circulation.

25.16 **Addendum** – Update from James Staniforth, CEO Shrewsbury Colleges Group

- James started on 15th April as new principal and CEO.
- College Group is the merged college providing all further education for Shrewsbury and Shropshire more widely.
- Successes include everything from Oxbridge places for five students to one of their students winning the national barbering competition for all colleges nationally.
- Origins restaurant is in the final three for college restaurant of the year in the competition sponsored by the AA, with the final judging in June.
- Relaunched their engineering centre three weeks ago with £1mn of investment from the LEP, local companies and the college.

26 **AOB**

26.1 Nothing recorded under AOB.

27 **Next Meeting Dates 2017**

Friday	7 th July 2017	Shrewsbury College
Monday	18 th September 2017	Harper Adams
Monday	27 th November 2017	Shirehall, Shrewsbury