

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SHROPSHIRE BUSINESS BOARD

HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 15th JULY 2015
4.30 pm – 6.25 pm

SALOP LEISURE SHREWSBURY LTD

Present:

Board Members

Mandy Thorn MBE (Chair)	Marches Care Ltd
Matthew Snelson (Vice-Chair)	Grainger & Worrall, Bridgnorth
Tony Bywater MBE	Salop Leisure Ltd
Arthur Hill	CH Hill and Sons
Mandy Stoker	E 4 Environment & Chair of MeETnet.

Representatives

Lindsay Barton	Federation of Small Business
Dr Catherine Baxter	Harper Adams University and Agri-technology sector rep
Paul Bennett	Shropshire Business Partnership
Steve Charmley	Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder Economic Growth & Commissioning [North] Shropshire Council
Nicole Howarth	Shropshire Chamber of Commerce & Enterprise Ltd
Chris Hyde	Handlesbanken - High Street Bank Representative

Shropshire Council Officers

George Candler	Director of Commissioning
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

In Attendance

Gill Hamer	Marches LEP Director
Paul Kirkbright	Deputy Provost, University Centre Shrewsbury
Simon Alford	Chester University
John Britain	Chester University
Carolyn Wakefield	Chester University

1 Welcome, Apologies and Introductions

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed all and proposed a vote of thanks to Tony Bywater for his generous hospitality.
- 1.2 Apologies were received from Matt Bulley, Caterpillar Shrewsbury Ltd, Roger Emery, Muller Dairy (UK) Ltd, Tudor Griffiths, Tudor Griffiths Group Ltd, Nick Scott, J Ross Developments Ltd, Fay Easton, Shropshire

Enterprise Partnership, Simon MacVicker, Shropshire Chamber of Commerce, William Morris, Utilities, Paul Noon, UK Trade and Investment, Steve Wain, Shropshire Learning Network, Tim Downes, JR & MC Downes & Sons Shrewsbury, Christine Niland, DWP, Shaun Carvill, Clickingmad Ltd, Cllr Keith Barrow, Leader Shropshire Council.

- 1.3 Ms Nicole Howarth attended on behalf of Simon MacVicker, Shropshire Chamber of Commerce & Enterprise Ltd

2 Declarations of Interest

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

3 Minutes and Matters Arising

- 3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 22nd April 2015 were confirmed as a correct record.
- 3.2 Members discussed the Business Summit held in June 2015. They agreed it had been a great success, although noted that a number of presenters, whilst knowledgeable, lacked energy and some of the presentations had been difficult to read due to the amount of information the slides contained. The Chairman commented that the slides had been circulated to delegates after the Summit. A Member noted that the Tourism Sector had given positive feed back on the opportunity to engage and collaborate. He continued that the Board might consider providing opportunities to enable collaborations in particular business sectors leading to them being less dependent on public sector support.

4 Terms of Reference

- 4.1 The Chair referred Board Members to the revised Terms of Reference sent with the Agenda papers. She explained that a simple revision to the Membership was proposed due to the establishment of the University Centre Shrewsbury and the impact this would have on the economy of the County. It was proposed that the terms of reference are amended to include University Centre Shrewsbury
- 4.2 **Agreed:**
That the revised Terms of Reference be adopted.

5 Refresh of Shropshire Economic Growth Strategy 2012 - 2026

- 5.1 The Chairman asked Board Members to consider whether the work of the Business Board was enabling the delivery of the Shropshire Economic Growth Strategy and whether the work undertaken reflected the requirements of the business community.

- 5.2 She explained that she had invited Paul Kirkbright of the University Centre Shrewsbury to work with Board Members to assess the purpose and function of the Business Board and whether changes were needed to improve its operation.
- 5.3 Paul Kirkbright introduced a series of activities to
- Understand how the members of the Business Board perceived its function and role of the membership, focusing on governance, ambassadorial and advice;
 - Understand the motivation, achievements, challenges/opportunities of the Business Board;
 - Understand what Members expected the Board's future function to be.
- 5.4 Members noted that the exercises were designed to allow Board Members to reflect on the issues faced by the Board and look towards to its future role.
- 5.5 The Chairman confirmed that Paul Kirkbright and his team would analyse the information gathered and produce a report which would be circulated to Members.

9 Any Other Business and Future Agenda Items

Marches Update: The Marches LEP Director was invited to give a verbal update on the progress of the Marches LEP.

Members noted that information on the Marches Investment Fund had been circulated prior to the meeting. She confirmed that Central Government had established a loan fund of £8.5m which was being administered through the Marches LEP. The fund was accepting applications until 11th September 2015 and applicants could apply for a capital loan and revenue funding for feasibility work.

She continued that the LEP was supporting a small group of manufacturing companies based in the Marches to address the challenges of middle and advanced level training and the perceived lack of provision in the Marches. Board Members noted that there was skills capital funding available for investment in training and equipment. The Marches LEP Director added that a consortium of training providers was being sought. She added that the Skills Board was looking to recruit both large and small employers.

Members heard that new LEP Board Members were being recruited to strengthen its skills base. The number of Board Members was increasing from ten to fifteen and it was hoped that the new Members would take forward subgroups establishing new projects for the sectors they represented to promote growth.

A Board Member expressed concern about the Government's drive to increase manufacturing and related employment and the effect that this would have on the County's rural economy. He continued that this was particularly worrying at a time when Council funding was reducing and the

rural commitment to tourism and the GVA it generated was unrecognised.

The Marches LEP Director commented that the DEFRA Food and Farming Strategy was about to be published and she had attended a NFU event at Stonely with LEP representatives from other areas. She added that there had been much discussion regarding the establishment of new Food Enterprise Zones.

University Update: Paul Kirkbright, Deputy Provost University Centre, Shrewsbury, was invited to give a verbal update to Members.

Board Members noted that refurbishment work on the Guildhall was about to commence with the work anticipated to be completed before the first cohort of students began their studies in September 2015. The Deputy Provost added that academic recruitment was also gearing up and he continued that the refurbishment of Mardol House for student accommodation was well underway.

In response to a Member's question about the length of time it would take for the University Centre to become financially viable, the Deputy Provost explained that there were 3 financial projections based on the primary driver for growth which was the number of undergraduate students. In the scenario where more students applied than expected the point of financial independence could be reached in 4 to 5 years, but in the worst case scenario it could take 10 to 12 years. It was anticipated that the deficit model would move to a surplus model in around 5 to 6 years. He confirmed that the projections were based on the University Centre receiving no external funding.

Jobs Fair being held at Shrewsbury College: Members noted that this would take place on 25th September 2015 and organisers DWP, Shrewsbury College and Shropshire Council, were seeking more employers to attend. The well-appointed interview rooms at the college, which were free to hire if interviewing students, were discussed. Agreed that employers to send interest to attend to Mark Pembleton.

10 Dates of Next Meetings

The next meeting of the Business Board to be held at 4.30pm on Wednesday 7th October 2015 at University Centre, Shrewsbury at the kind invitation of Mr Paul Kirkbright. Members were asked to suggest items for the Agenda by mid-September.

The Chair again thanked Tony Bywater of Salop Leisure for his kind hospitality and for arranging the guided tour of the premises which had been greatly enjoyed.

Meetings for 2015:

7th October 2015

University Centre Shrewsbury; and

