

**MINUTES OF THE SHROPSHIRE BUSINESS BOARD MEETING HELD ON
MONDAY 15 APRIL 2013 4.30 PM – 7.00 PM
AT MULLER DAIRY (UK) LTD**

Present:

Businesses

Shaun Carvill	Clicking Mad Ltd
Duncan Gray	Muller Dairy (UK) Ltd
Arthur Hill (Vice-Chair)	CH Hill & Sons, Much Wenlock
Nick Scott	J-Ross Developments Ltd
Mandy Thorn (Chair)	Marches Care Ltd

Representatives

Lindsay Barton (for Ann Johnson)	Federation of Small Businesses
Katie Foster	Chair Shropshire & Telford Tourism Strategy Board
Simon MacVicker	Shropshire Chamber of Commerce & Enterprise Ltd
Glynn Jones	Bank of England West Midlands
Steve Wain	Shropshire Learning Network
Marcel Lecoq	Jobcentre Plus

Observer

Will Morris (observer)	Kingsland Consulting Ltd & SSE Ltd
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Officers

Andy Evans	Group Manager, Business Growth and Prosperity
Mark Pembleton	Service Manager for Business and Enterprise
Julie Macrae	Business Engagement Officer
Amanda Holyoak	Committee Officer

In Attendance

Dr Simon Adderley	University of Chester
Russ Millhouse	University of Chester

1. Welcome, Apologies and Introductions

The Chair welcomed all present and particularly new Members Nick Scott and Shaun Carvill. She also welcomed representatives from the University of Chester who would be presenting their study findings to date later in the meeting.

Apologies were received from Tony Bywater, Ann Johnson, Fay Easton, Nick Chavasse, Karen Davies, Tudor Griffiths, Rob Hudson, Ann Johnson and Mandy Stoker

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Mandy Thorn was elected Chair and Arthur Hill Vice-Chair.

4. Minutes

- 4.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2013 were confirmed as a correct record.
- 4.2 It was confirmed that the bid for £12.8m to help regenerate Shrewsbury's historic Flax Mill Maltings had been submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). A decision on a bid for a further £6.6m of European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) funding was expected to be made shortly along with a decision on a £3.5 million bid from English Heritage.
- 4.3 The Flaxmill was a fundamental plank of the economic regeneration of Shrewsbury. The Chair said the Business Board would be happy to help if there was any further contribution that it could make.
- 4.4 It was confirmed that the Broadband Contract had now been signed with BT. Nick Chavasse had informed members where the Flaxmill stood in the roll out programme.

5. Muller Dairy – Presentation by Duncan Gray

- 5.1 Duncan Gray welcomed Board members to Muller Dairy (UK) Ltd and gave a presentation on the company covering its background and providing an overview of the business.
- 5.2 Important milestones included events such as: locating in Market Drayton in 1991; becoming market leader in 1992; acquiring the Robert Wiseman Group in 2012; acquiring the Minsterley Production facility in 2012/13 and commencing butter production in August 2013.
- 5.3 Muller had adopted the voluntary Dairy Code of Practice and 90% of its milk came from within 30 miles of the dairy. 165 farmers were totally committed to Muller and vice versa, and milk travelled from farm to pot within 24 hours.
- 5.4 In terms of employment, 800 employees were located on the Market Drayton site with 80 employees already located in Minsterley with recruitment of another 15 underway.
- 5.5 Duncan was thanked for the interesting presentation and for hosting the meeting.

6. Marches LEP Update

- 6.1 The Chair reported that Geoffrey Davies was due to stand down as Chairman of the LEP. The recent advertisement for a replacement had not drawn a large response and as the role was such a key one it had been decided to go back out to the market.
- 6.2 She asked Members to encourage anyone they thought may be of the right calibre to apply. She also confirmed it would be a non-executive role with a

All Board members

new Executive Director and support team in place. Likely time demand would be a few days a month and it was agreed that the specification be circulated to all Board members.

Mandy
Thorn

6.3 *The Marches Skills Plan*

The Chair referred to the Plan circulated with the papers for the meeting. Concern was expressed regarding both the data used and presented by the consultants and whether this accurately reflected the Shropshire position.

6.4 The key findings, strengths and challenges were presented and upskilling remained an urgent priority. Steve Wain referred to an increase in demand for non prescribed Higher Education courses at Levels 4 – 6/8, for example, accountancy and marketing qualifications.

6.5 Glyn Jones drew attention to the 'Jobs Growth unlikely until 2015' statement in the presentation which might be true in net terms but with an increase in private sector jobs this would present increasing skill challenges.

6.6 Some Members felt that sweeping statements were being released by the LEP in relation to skills, but the Chair reminded Members that these had come from the LEP's Strategy to 2022 which had been prepared for the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills to release core funding.

6.7 Lindsay Barton reported on a course for start ups run by the University of Wolverhampton with the aim of helping sustain businesses beyond five years.

6.8 Glyn Jones commented on the relationship with other parts of the West Midlands region which was critical in the light of the skills leakage to these areas. He also suggested using Institute for Employment Research regional reports as a context for the report.

6.9 Other issues identified in the report included: low levels of work experience; remote locations and poor transport; shift work/unsociable hours and poor terms and conditions.

6.10 Responding to comments about the research undertaken, Mark Pembleton explained that the consultants had been engaged to conduct a desk top exercise only, and no primary research had been undertaken.

6.11 Steve Wain commented on the accountability columns in the Action Plan, none of which referred specifically to Shropshire organisations. He did feel that the Plan contained a mix of positive actions and included some good insight but was concerned about some naivety too. Other Board members commented on lack of depth, and the need for more clarity in the conclusions. Priorities were felt to be sensible but needed to be more relevant to the geographical areas the Plan related to.

6.12 The Chair reported that the LEP Board had accepted the Plan in principle

All Board

but had accepted that there was more work to be done. She asked all Business Board Members to read the Plan and send comments to Mark Pembleton and Julie Macrae as soon as possible.

- 6.13 The Board agreed to defer endorsement of the Plan until its comments and feedback had been taken into account and reflected within it.

7. Terms of Reference

- 7.1 Mark Pembleton explained changes to the Board's Terms of Reference which had been made to reflect: the Board's key role in feeding information to and influencing the work of the LEP; the Board's role in delivery of the Shropshire Growth Strategy and the Board Champion role.
- 7.2 Arthur Hill and other members referred to the need for the Board to influence Shropshire Council so that both were going to the LEP with a common case. He felt that Businesses should be driving the LEP, not Councils, and the current period of change for the LEP would help businesses to take a stronger role.
- 7.3 The Chair reported that she had regular meetings with the Leader of Shropshire Council, particularly in advance of LEP meetings, and the Operations Director was willing to work with and promote the private sector. She also reported on strong links with the Council's Enterprise and Growth Scrutiny Committee and the Chairman of that Committee.
- 7.4 William Morris felt the Board should be viewed as a non-executive Board to the Council for all things business related, rather than as a 'protector'. He felt its role should be to help the Council set strategy and help in the delivery and that should be made clearer in the introduction to the terms of reference and endorsed by the Leader. The Chairman agreed, and added that any decisions the Council made impacting on businesses should be brought to the Board. Will Morris agreed to send in some changes to reflect this. Mark Pembleton agreed to strengthen them as regards to the Marches LEP. Subject to these minor changes the Terms of Reference and Register of Interests were approved.
- 7.5 The Chair drew attention to the Code of Conduct and asked all Members that had not done so already to complete and return a declaration of interest form.
- 7.6 It was agreed that the Terms of Reference should remain a live document with opportunity to revisit and strengthen them if necessary

Will
Morris

Mark
Pembleton

All
Business
Board
members

8. Shropshire Higher Education Opportunities

- 8.1 The Board welcomed Dr Steve Adderley and Russ Millhouse of the University of Chester, to the meeting. They reported on work they were undertaking on attitudes towards Higher Education in Shropshire.
- 8.2 The research to date had involved talking to large private sector businesses, micro businesses, business ambassadors, Shropshire Council and pupils in Year 12 at a number of schools and Colleges. The following

had been established:

- There was an agreed 'emotional' demand for an 'HE Centre'
- A clear demand for HE to feed into the local economy
- A view that students 'should' study away
- A need to engage with local stakeholders

8.3 Primary drivers for Year 12 pupils seeking Higher Education were 'a big city', and there was lower demand for 'Shrewsbury' as a location. However programme and reputation were now the most important factors and the introduction of fees meant that more were likely to want to stay at home and study.

8.4 The research had also established that the following was in demand:

- Something different and distinctive
- A Local place, focused on economy
- High quality
- Distinctive
- Aspirational
- Accessible
- Economic catalyst
- Coherent
- An entrepreneurial university focused on developing enterprise

8.5 Business Ambassadors had identified the need for an HE 'place', with a focus on quality, rather than quantity, and the need for HE to support the local economy.

8.6 Shaun Carvill reported on difficulties he was having recruiting people into the creative industry. He felt that this was partly due to the perception that Shropshire was 'far away'.

8.7 Katie Foster commented on a previous experience she had had finding people to talk to at the Council about potential higher education opportunities.

8.8 Glynn Jones drew attention to a HEFCE methodology note on work done by Exeter, Plymouth Universities with a similar rural and remote setting as Shropshire.

8.9 FE Colleges in the county were already providing good HE courses, but the Board acknowledged need for a place in the county to deliver Higher Education, perhaps by a series of providers.

8.10 The Chair reminded all that the Growth Plan undertook to champion growth of HE in the County, supported by the businesses of Shropshire.

8.11 Steve Wain reported that SCAT had taken proposals to the Council for a dedicated HE Centre in Shrewsbury, in conjunction with Walford and North Shropshire College, University of Staffordshire, and Glyndwr University at Wrexham. The Board was encouraged to hear that a submission to HEFCE for funding to take proposals forward was being considered.

8.12 It was agreed that the presentation be e-mailed to all Board Members. Dr Adderley was thanked for attending the meeting.

Julie
Macrae

9. Economic Growth Strategy – forthcoming session

Members who were Champions were reminded of the forthcoming session on Friday 24 May at 7.30 am to share progress on each of their action plans. This would be with officer supports and the Chair and would prepare for the Business Summit on 10 June at 5.30 pm at the Football Club in Shrewsbury.

10. Economic Update – State of the Economy and Bank of England Update

The Board received an update on the State of the Economy from Shropshire Council. Unfortunately there was not time for Glynn Jones to cover the Bank of England update, this will be done at the next meeting.

11. Any Other Business

Shrewsbury Bid

Members were encouraged to read the Shrewsbury Bid factsheet circulated with the papers for the meeting. Timescale was as follows:

- Consultation on-going but particularly focussed presently through to June/July.
- Early summer – draft business plan
- Summer period- consult and finalise business plan
- Autumn- ballot

All
Business
Board
members

M6 Toll

Mark Hemming, Facilities Director of Stadco in Shrewsbury, had asked the Business Boards to write to the M6 toll operators asking for a special deal for Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin businesses. The Chair agreed to talk to Graham Wynn, Chair of Telford and Wrekin Business Board with regard to this.

Mandy
Thorn

Voluntary and Community Assembly

Information was circulated regarding the Voluntary and Community Assembly CSR and members were asked to read this.

Start Up Bus Tour

Members were encouraged to vote for Shrewsbury and Oswestry as locations for the Start Up Bus Tour via Twitter (further information available from www.startupbritain.co./tour)

Business Summit

Members were reminded that the Business summit would take place on **10 June 2013 at 5.30 pm** at the Football Club. All were requested to attend.

12. Date of Next Meeting

Friday 24 May 2013 at 7.30 am - Special meeting for Champions at the Food Enterprise Centre in Shrewsbury, breakfast included.

Monday 1 July 2013 at 4.30 pm at Bridgnorth Aluminium, courtesy of Simon MacVicker