FEP Stakeholder Group Summary notes 6 August 2018

Welcome and meeting opening

Andrew Callard opened the meeting with an **'ONIONS'** model in relation to the work of the Forest Economic Partnership:

- **O**bjectives Engagement & Action - consultation engagement including railways to enhance rural economy
- **N**oise for awareness - create and build awareness of FEP – 150 organisations now involved, including the South West Chamber of Commerce
- **I**nformation - gathering of perceptions
- **O**pinions informed by facts - opinions backed up by data are forming key objectives
- **N**eat solutions which address all issues - well thought out solutions using subgroups
- **S**ignificant Action - strong robust ideas that stand the test of time and that are understood by the majority. FEP is here and is responding to key consultations in line with sub-group missions and objectives

Sub-group Missions

Andrew presented the sub-group missions:

- **Education & skills** - Within a lifelong learning context, how do we get the workforce we need for the District now and in the future to power and sustain economic growth by removing barriers and raising aspirations?
- **Transport & infrastructure -** The District Plan guides future development that gives us the space to work, live and play. Once those uses are known we can consider the transport routes in the District to enable them become fit for purpose. What is the practical new vision that defines the Forest we want to be and the balance between the use of space
- **Digital connectivity** - We are told we live in a digital world. What practical steps can we take to get the speed, reliability and connectivity to support the ways we increasingly work, live, study and play now and in the future?
- **Bridges & Borders -**The Severn and Wye have preserved the Forest. The best future protection is connection with all those around us to ensure a mutual understanding of

economic needs. Looking outwards, if we are to participate in the South Wales-West of England Economic Powerhouse **and** be considered in our neighbours plans, what do we need and want to trade for bridges?

Sub group summaries

Group leads from each working sub-group fed back:

Education & skills – Julian Grail

- Lifelong learning is not just young people being employed in jobs, we need to consider the education and skills of the whole population of the Forest of Dean and look at the short, medium and long term solutions to our problems
- Reducing barriers to work experience and other business-school engagements is priority
- Engaging with Schools and other Public Sector Bodies to highlight the work of the group and understand what else is going on in the county
- Continuing to find existing data to better understand the Forest's Needs.
- Introducing IF - Inspiring the Forest
    - Raising aspirations amongst the young, parents and generally across the Forest of Dean
    - Raising awareness of the businesses in the District
    - Increasing awareness of the types of jobs available in the District
    - Increasing awareness of the skills required for jobs locally at all levels from apprenticeship to management
    - Creating closer links between schools, colleges and universities and business organisationally and personally
    - Laura Hurcombe leading a project group to create a proposal for IF

Transport & infrastructure – Marcus Morley Jones

- Hospitals – submitted consultation response from FEP perspective in relation to restrictive nature of the consultation, location, structural design and transport assumptions
- Forest Boundaries – open conversation with Forestry Commission in relation to ownership and 100 year planning cycle
- Balance of space – a need to fully understand all needs of the Forest, live, work, play and study
- Definition of 'The Forest' – the definition and boundaries are different from different perspectives and needs clarity

Digital connectivity – David Trevelyan

- Context that 90% of today's data has been created in the past 2 years and currently there are 2.5 quintillion bytes of data created every day.
- Modern industrial strategy – consideration that it's not just about connectivity but about individuals having the skills required to use them.
- Fact finding – Fastershire delivery update
- Linked actions to the Glos2050 big ambitions & ideas (see link to full presentation)

- Utilising other rural communities that are well connected – what technology are they showcasing that could be utilised by the Forest of Dean

Bridges & borders

- Group name changed from Severn Bridge/Cross border working – to factor in need for multiple bridge building, both Wye, Severn and metaphorical
- Need to identify the problem you are trying to solve and a requirement to collaborate outside of the Forest if we are to achieve a physical crossing
- Toll removal – no economic impact assessment took place in relation to the toll removal. Clear lack of information & data
- South West Economic Powerhouse – requires a united business voice to move forward (not Council)
- Making contacts and starting conversations – understanding other organisations/authorities plans in order to understand how they involve us

Tier 2 Growth Hub Update

- New location adjacent to main lift and entrance
- Reduced time line for project
- Revised costings submitted for audit
- Work to commence last quarter 2018
- Opening first quarter 2019

Innovation Lab – Jill Barker

- Coleford Library acting as a flagship innovation lab in order to better understand what people want and need
- Possibility for the 2nd innovation lab to be mobile
- Offers an exciting resource to expose small businesses to technology that may otherwise be prohibitive to product and business development
- Engaging young people to embrace a digital future
- Creative industries strong in Gloucestershire in particular animation, the innovation lab will support this growing sector

SWOT analysis workshop – Andrew Maliphant

- Creating a bold vision to promote sustainable economic growth in the Forest of Dean for 2050 – how do we create a shared vision?
- By understanding the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats for the Forest of Dean and reaching agreement will enable a sustainable and realistic vision and aligned action
- Group split into four facilitated groups to address the SWOT's for the Forest of Dean. Results to be consolidated and circulated early September