

FEP Stakeholder Group Summary notes 5 November 2018

Gloucestershire College Cinderford Campus

Welcome and meeting opening

Open by Andrew Callard, with welcome from Sandra Tyrell on behalf of the hosts, Gloucestershire College.

SWOT Analysis & Next Steps – Turning ideas into action

Andrew Maliphant presented the findings from the FEP SWOT analysis categorised by physical, economic and social factors that affect the Forest of Dean.

In summary

Strengths – natural beauty, diverse businesses, strong communities

Weaknesses – infrastructure, low business awareness, insularity

Opportunities – natural resources, FEP, flexible work experience

Threats – businesses and people leaving, poor outside involvement

It was understood that the SWOT is a snapshot of the District as it is today and will be used as a benchmark moving forward. It will not be an evolving document.

It was observed that climate change as a Threat was an important missing element, so was added post-meeting following Chair's action.

The SWOT analysis for the Forest of Dean was agreed by a majority vote: 24 for / 6 against.

Draft strategic objectives:

1. To raise wider awareness, both inside and outside the Forest, of local businesses and business opportunities
2. To support the development of ~~successful~~ businesses to provide wider employment options
3. To improve the local infrastructure to sustain businesses
4. To use natural resources sustainably to support the Forest economy
5. To connect local students and residents to economic opportunities

It was suggested the word 'successful' should be removed from the second objective – as FEP is here to support the development of ALL businesses.

The issue of long-term viability was raised by Julian Grail who asked how do we make FEP a self-sustaining entity? This was later addressed by Andrew Callard in discussion about **Project Delivery Bodies**.

How are we doing? Sub-Group progress report

- House of Lords Select Committee on the Rural Economy Submission September
- Cross-Country Rail Franchise Submission August
- Gathering a wealth of information, approaches and views
- Moving forward to solutions
- Sub-group attendance

Sub-groups are working on IF and Digital Connectivity proposals for Stakeholder approval

Andrew Callard provided a summary of the sub-group progress to date (see presentation for full details).

The Chair advised that with the move from gathering views to creating solutions if 3 consecutive sub-group meetings are missed, members will automatically be removed from that sub-group to avoid significant repetition of discussions.

Project Delivery Bodies

- **Key issue is staff time**
- Up to 20 options to choose from, depending on circumstances, but all with terms of reference that regulate how partners work together e.g.
- Unincorporated voluntary body with “accountable body”
- Local council (power of competence) with project partners
- Community Benefit Society with local membership
- Community Interest Company (CIC)
- Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) – e.g. FoD Entrepreneurs

Forest means business, Ian Mean

Ian committed to supporting the Forest voice in his new role as small business champion for GFirst LEP. His over-riding message was the Forest MUST shout more about its successes and marketing the District.

The Local Plan, Nigel Gibbons

Forward Plan Manager from Forest of Dean District Council updated the group on plans and timelines for the local plan 2041. FEP is actively encouraged to engage in this process which is a huge milestone for FEP in terms of influencing the future of the District. How would FEP like to get involved? Now is the time to get involved.

Commercial Workspace Investment, Wendy Jackson

Wendy Jackson updated on the Council's investment into commercial workspace. For the first time in 20 years we are investing in new FoDDC owned workspaces to rent, in response to current waiting list for starter units.

Plans included Forest Vale North - Cinderford Northern Quarter, Five Acres re-development and Foxglove Gardens, Coleford Town Centre.

For more information please see:

- [5 November presentation deck](#)
- [Agreed District SWOT](#)