



FOREST

ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP

Delivering a thriving economy

Stakeholder Meeting Agenda – 09:30 -11:30 on 25 March 2019

Main Place, Old Station Way, Coleford, GL16 8RH

“The Forest Economic Partnership (FEP) is bringing together business, education, public sector, people, ideas and resources to give the Forest of Dean a voice and to help deliver a thriving and sustainable economy”

Notes

1. Review of Progress of Forest Economic Partnership (FEP) & Sub-Groups

FEP Achievements:

- FSB Most Innovative Small Business Campaign
- Agreed SWOT
- Enabling each proposed project to have SMART (Specific, Measurable, Agreed, Realistic, Time-bound) aims and build upon agreed strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

Sub-Group - Education & Skills:

The Education and Skills Sub-Group, chaired by Julian Grail key discussions have been based around Forest of Dean Youth Council; T Level Awareness, Cyber-Security Newent community School leads; Engagement with GCC and Gfirst initiatives; Inspiring the Forest Action Group.

The Sub-Group submitted one of their projects for consideration.

Sub-Group - Transport & Infrastructure:

The Transport & Infrastructure Sub-Group, chaired by Paul O’Flynn, key discussions have been based around the Forest Community Hospital, Community Transport Provision, Bus Services, Chepstow Transport Study, Biosphere Reserves, Leadership Gloucestershire 2050 consultation; New District Planning Round.

The Sub-Group submitted one of their projects for consideration.

Sub-Group - Bridges & Borders:

The Transport & Infrastructure Sub-Group, chaired by Andrew Callard, key discussions have been based around Stroud District & Monmouthshire County Councils the squeezed areas; Chepstow Transport Study and wider strategic transport involvement; Let’s Grow Future of Rural Businesses & Communities; UoG CCRI ROBUST project; Western Powerhouse; Severn Bridge and Open for Business Request.

Sub-Group – Digital Connectivity:

The Digital Connectivity Sub-Group, chaired by David Trevelyan, key discussions have been based around Identified opportunities; Understanding weakness; Proposed Solutions.

The Sub-Group submitted four of their projects for consideration.

2. Community Interest Company (CIC)

Chair, Andrew Callard advised of the intentions to create a CIC to become the legal body for due governance, risk management for the FEP and Various forms discussed by working group of which a community interest company limited by guarantee is best fit.

The key activities of the CIC will Deliver a thriving economy in the Forest of Dean by connecting businesses, public sector, people, ideas and resources; Create a vision to deliver sustainable growth in the District through research & collaboration into the rural economy; Create data-based baselines to identify areas and opportunities for growth and leadership; Develop projects that provide effective responses in the District to the needs of individuals and organisations and to source funding to take them forward; Enable the District to make positive choices on its economic future and to share those with the widest audience to inform county & national planning and policy making.

As a CIC there is a requirement for individuals to act as Company Directors. They will be responsible for compliance to HMRC, employment and other laws. The proposed directors:

- Chairs of the Sub-Groups, if they are willing and able to take on the legal duties of a Company Director
- Chair of FEP, if they are willing and able to take on the legal duties of a Company Director

- The District Councillor holding the Business, Infrastructure and Economic portfolios (following due selection process)
- The District Council Officer leading Business, Economy & Regeneration service delivery
- Other individuals deemed appropriate by the Directors or Stakeholder Group eligible for a CIC e.g. Finance Director.

The board will meet monthly to review progress by designated Project Managers, receive updates on bidding and other matters around financial management and policies. Of which when needed other critical friends may be invited to participate. In addition to this they may act as a project steering group, if required.

There is no proposal to pay Company Directors, however there is a proposal to use a mix of paid and voluntary staff on projects as dictated by the time commitments of the projects and individual choice. FEP recognises that as the size and complicity of FEP grows well as inherent risks that there will be a point where remuneration may be considered appropriate for the legal Company Directors. In all cases the Stakeholder Group will determine whether it is warranted and if so the payment offered.

Andrew Maliphant, Forest of Dean Entrepreneurs, called for a clear definition of the roles of the Sub-Groups, Stakeholders and Directors. It was advised that this will be clearly outlined in the organisation structure, if the vote was to form a CIC.

A robust discussion followed regarding the proposal of Remuneration. Some Stakeholders advised their discomfort in the potential to reimburse Directors when their involvement in the FEP was voluntary and it is the choice of the volunteer to give up their time, with the sole purpose to benefit the Forest of Dean and stating that the community is at the heart.

Whilst the consensus amongst Stakeholders that it was too early to discuss remuneration, it was also identified by some stakeholders, that they were concerns that by completely removing Remuneration from the proposal, it endangered the FEP with risks that once the momentum of the initial projects have passed that the partnership will fold due to not being able to complete tasks, such as bids and struggling with participation.

Any remuneration to a Director would be approved by the Stakeholders. No remuneration would be available to The District Councillor holding the Business, Infrastructure and Economic portfolios or The District Council Officer leading Business, Economy & Regeneration service delivery.

Questions arose regarding the decisions on payments. Andrew Callard confirmed that most funding bids would include payment for time a revenue bids. FEP would use a gross flat rate of £10.00 per hour as a token payment based on the living wage. This would be outlined in the specific bids for funding and reflect time demands.

A motion to vote on the formation of a CIC with the inclusion of remuneration and without remuneration was made by Paul O’Flynn, Chair Transport & Infrastructure.

Vote:

No vote was made against the formation of a CIC.

Formation of a CIC with the inclusion of remuneration clause	Formation of a CIC without remuneration clause
9	18

Stakeholders agreed to the formation of a CIC with remuneration clause.

Actions

- To circulate week commencing 1st April proposed Articles of Association, Memorandum of Association and Governance Framework to Stakeholder Group to receive feedback and comments by 12th April 2019.
- To submit CIC application duly signed to Companies House week commencing 15th April 2019.
- To put in place the appropriate insurances, notifications, policies and web presence at the earliest opportunity.
- To confirm the first year operational budgets week commencing 8th April.

3. Annual Review of Terms of Reference

Wendy Jackson, confirmed the changes to the Terms of Reference to include the formation of the CIC.

Stakeholders agreed to all tracked changes.

4. Policy Drafts

Andrew Callard, advised of the circulation of Policy Drafts.

Actions

- Stakeholders to review and provide feedback/comments by 8th April 2019

5. Proposed Projects:

Inspiring the Forest Proposal

Presentation from Tracey, Ashford, Chair IF Action Group, advised of the proposal to hold a 3 year rotating programme of inspirational events:

- Celebrating the strength and diversity of District business,
- Showcasing the skills and opportunities available for young people within these businesses and sectors,
- Enabling individuals to consider a full range of employment opportunities available.

The events would focus on the key employment sectors identified in the District. Businesses operating in these sectors would be invited to offer creative experiential content.

Discussions commenced regarding:

- The breakdown of the expenditures
- Concerns regarding teacher investment
- Location of the District Inspiring Forest Festival

Vote:

No vote was made against the Project. Project agreed.

Actions

- Education & Skills Sub-Group to move forward with their proposal
- An initial 'LIFE' to be held at Dene Magna in July 2019 run with a voluntary project team.

How Fast; How Good?

Presentation from David Trevelyan, Chair Digital Connectivity, proposing the delivery of the How Fast; How Good? 3 stage project.

The 3 projects are to outline the lack of awareness of infrastructure already in place; lack of understanding of individual expectation of what 'fast' means; lack of ability to connect expectations to local infrastructure by creating an accurate picture of speed and coverage for data, enable the efficient planning of projects to resolve the issue and provide practical solutions and to Understand users expectations to avoid the one person's slow being another's superfast.

Questions were raised to the duration of the project, David confirmed all 3 stages of the project would be completed within a 12 month period.

Vote:

No vote was made against the Project. Project agreed.

Actions

- Digital Connectivity Sub-Group to move forward with their proposal

Bridging the Gap

Presentation from David Trevelyan, Chair Digital Connectivity, advising that not all premises in the Forest of Dean will benefit from the roll out of Fastershire Gigabit Fibre Project. The 'Bridging the Gap' project proposed the Creation of a knowledge base of available voucher schemes so that the most appropriate might be selected; Facilitation of suitably qualified contractors to complete the work efficiently to time and cost. This may include handling the customer facing activity if necessary charged to the contractor as a project manager.

Vote:

No vote was made against the Project. Project agreed.

Actions

- Digital Connectivity Sub-Group to move forward with their proposal

Smart Rural Leadership Strategy

Presentation from David Trevelyan, Chair Digital Connectivity, advising of the proposal of the Smart Rural Leadership Strategy.

The objectives of the project are focused on developing and sharing knowledge and raising the profile of the Forest of Dean as a place to test and trial technology sensitively and pragmatically.

Vote:

No vote was made against the Project. Project agreed.

Actions

- Digital Connectivity Sub-Group to move forward with their proposal

Tech Nation Area Baseline

Presentation from David Trevelyan, Chair Digital Connectivity, advising of the proposal of Tech Nation Project. The objectives of the project are to gain access to the Annual Tech Nation Report:

- Gain Entry to the report by 2023
- Ongoing Monitoring and Measurement processes to track Tech Nations Information
- Tech Nations Report KPI growth

Vote:

No vote was made against the Project. Project agreed.

Actions

- Digital Connectivity Sub-Group to move forward with their proposal

Economic Case for a Forest Biosphere Reserve

Presentation from Andrew Callard on behalf of the Travel & Infrastructure Sub-Group, proposing a study to validate the case for a Forest Biosphere Reserve.

The study will be carried out by ONS at no charge.

Vote:

No vote was made against the Project. Project agreed.

Actions

- Transport & Infrastructure Sub-Group to move forward with their proposal

6. AOB:

Andrew Maliphant, Forest of Dean Entrepreneurs, reminded Stakeholders of Forest Enterprise Fair at Vantage Point Business Village, Mitcheldean on 8th May 2019.

7. Summary of Actions:

- To circulate week commencing 1st April proposed Articles of Association, Memorandum of Association and Governance Framework to Stakeholder Group to receive feedback and comments by 12th April 2019. ***(Post Meeting Note: Due to time constraints this has been put back to after Easter)***
- To submit CIC application duly signed to Companies House week commencing 15th April 2019
- To put in place the appropriate insurances, notifications, policies and web presence at the earliest opportunity
- To confirm the first year operational budgets week commencing 8th April 2019
- To review and provide feedback/comments on draft policies by 8th April 2019
- Sub-Groups to move forward with agreed proposals

Next Meeting: 09:30 – 11:30 on Tuesday 11th June 2019
Conference Suite, Vantage Point Business Village, Mitcheldean, GL17 0DD

Documents for Reference:

- *Terms of Reference 2019*
- *FEP: Draft Policies v2 22nd March 2019*
- *FEP Digital Connectivity: Bridging the GAP*
- *FEP Digital Connectivity: How Fast; How Good?*
- *FEP Digital Connectivity: Smart Rural Strategy*
- *FEP Digital Connectivity: Tech Nation*
- *FEP Transport & Infrastructure: Economic Case for Forest Biosphere*
- *FEP Education & Skills: Inspiring the Forest*