



FOREST
ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP

Delivering a thriving economy

CIC Number: 12262533

Stakeholder Meeting Notes (Online) 30 June 2020

“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:

Due to the COVID-19 the stakeholder meeting was held as a question and answer session via Zoom on 30 June 2020. Presentations were circulated prior to the meeting and can be found at <https://fep2050.co.uk/events/>

Community Interest Company (CIC)

The presentation by Wendy Jackson highlighted the changes in the board since the last meeting in December 2019.

<https://fep2050.co.uk/assets/Uploads/FEP-Stakeholder-30.06.20-CIC-Update.pdf>

Wendy Jackson advised that Cllr Richard Leppington resigned his position as CIC Board Member due to changes in FoDDC Cabinet Portfolio responsibilities and as such, Cllr Bernie O’Neill has been duly appointed as CIC Board Member and Vice-Chair of the FEP Stakeholder Group. All changes are being formally notified to Companies House and will be completed by the end of the summer.

The board have also now completed their annual skills matrix and have confirmed that if there is an area that 3 or more board members have little or no knowledge of that they will arrange for training for these members and open these opportunities out to the wider stakeholders group.

To be in compliance with regulations the board is currently compiling all the necessary policies to operate as a CIC. These are available upon request.

Questions from Stakeholders:

Laurence Mosley queried the board approach to monitoring of data. The board confirmed that this is an ongoing discussion within the board meetings with suitable metrics chosen for each activity.

If any member of the stakeholder group is interested in becoming a stakeholder director, please speak to one of the directors for more information on how to get involved.

FoDDC Business Support

Wendy Jackson presented on behalf of Bernie O'Neill on the update from FoDDC on Business Support.

<https://fep2050.co.uk/assets/Uploads/Foddc-Business-Support.pdf>

Discussion focussed on the High Street recovery and effects of COVID-19 on the economy.

Questions from Stakeholders:

Q: Where does the money come from for the High Street Recovery and Business Grants

A: The monies have come from the government and as such are subject to their criteria.

Q:

1. How many businesses have been refused a grant.
2. How many businesses were not awarded the full amount of the grant applied for
3. How many businesses have applied for a grant but have still to receive a grant.
4. Is there an appeals procedure for businesses that were refused a grant.
5. How many of the businesses that have been refused a grant has the DC been in contact with.

A: **Pending a response from FoDDC**

Q: Is there an appeal process to the discretionary grants?

A: There is no formal appeal process, however a couple of businesses have queried the eligibility.

Q: Are there any discretionary grants for NFP freelance, non-buildings based economy, as in cultural economy?

A: **Pending a response from FoDDC**

Q: Is the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure grant still available?

A: **Pending a response from FoDDC**

Further Comments from Stakeholders:

Comment from Chris McFarling: I think the ending of the furlough scheme is a worry for us in the Forest and we are unsure how many employees will be made redundant.

Comment from Laurance Mosley: To monitor our success or lack of it in any dimension, board members need to be able to understand data. That involves not only understanding data, but also commissioning any further data collection which may be needed

Comment from Sarah Taylor: Some businesses have pivoted and fast forwarded new delivery models very successfully and it has been great to see how businesses have collaborated - especially manufacturing companies across the county, country and globally.

Comment from Stuart Emmerson: We need to look at student placements and work placements to support local businesses.

What is FEP's role going forward?

Following a presentation from Andrew Callard, the stakeholders discussed what FEP's role will be going forward.

<https://fep2050.co.uk/assets/Papers/FEPs-Role-going-forward.pdf>

The group made the decision to continue to take an action-based response. With businesses still looking at the short term rather than the long term. Sam Holliday informed that the FSB have received over 40k phone calls to the legal advice line.

An Economic Case for Cultural Economy

Carolyn Black from Canopy spoke about her economic case for cultural economy.

<https://fep2050.co.uk/assets/Uploads/carolyn-black-canopy-making-an-economic-case-for-the-arts-WEB-version-250620.pdf>

The stakeholders were supportive of the initiative and the Forest of Dean's culture contributing to the integrity and sense of place. The group asked for there to be a reflection of culture in Transport, Infrastructure, Bridges and Borders Sub-Group.

Projects Update:

Inspiring the Forest - IF

Andrew Callard presented an update on the IF Project.

<https://fep2050.co.uk/assets/Uploads/FEP-project-Inspiring-Forest-IF-update-June-2020.pdf>

A question arose whether the project should aim to focus on those 16-24 and 50+ who have been most affected by COVID-19. The question will be addressed with the Education and Skills Sub-Group.

Digital Projects

David Trevelyan presented the ongoing updates on the Digital Connectivity Projects previously approved by stakeholders.

<https://fep2050.co.uk/assets/Uploads/FEP-Digital-Connectivity-Projects-June-2020-Update.pdf>

David informed that the Bridging the Gap project has come to a close with a case study to be published shortly on the findings of the project.

In July 2020 the second phase of the [How Fast: How Good?](#) project will be launched.

Mobility as a Service (Maas) is pursuing opportunities for funding which will be discussed further at the next meeting of the Digital Connectivity Sub-Group Meeting.

Forest of Dean Heritage Biosphere Reserve

Andrew Callard presented an update on the Biosphere Reserve Project.

Severn Vale Board

Andrew Callard informed stakeholders that the Leadership Gloucestershire team have reviewed the proposed 3 board structure for Gloucestershire and have decided that it is no longer needed, the Severn Vale Board has therefore disbanded.

2020 Meeting Dates

- Thursday 17 September 2020, 9:30am to 11:30am - Hillside Brewery
- Thursday 17 December 2020, 9:30am to 11:30am - To be confirmed