

West Essex Alliance
Minutes of the meeting held on 20th November 2012
Civic Centre, Harlow

Present

Peter Andrews	Harlow & District Chamber of Commerce
Nick Barton	London Stansted Airport Ltd
Quentin Buller	Epping Forest College
Graham Clarke	Federation of Small Business
Cllr Anthony Durcan	Harlow Council
Robert Ellice	Clarke Hillyer
Michael Murray	Jobcentre Plus
John Price	Epping Forest Chamber of Commerce
Will Parkes	London Stansted Airport Ltd
Cllr Chris Whitbread	Epping Forest District Council

Officers Present

Alison Fox	Harlow Council
Jane Greer	Harlow Council
Roger Harborough	Uttlesford District Council
John Houston	One Epping Forest
Julie Houston	Harlow Council
Malcolm Morley	Harlow Council
John Preston	Epping Forest District Council
David Sellings	Harlow Council
Cath Shaw	Harlow Council
David Sprunt	Essex County Council

Also Present

David Abbot	Federation of Small Business
Lara Allen	National Apprenticeship Service
David Smale	National Apprenticeship Service
Joanne Stanesby	Blue Pig
Trevor Stanesby	Blue Pig

Apologies:

Bill Bryden	Harlow College
Glen Chipp	Epping Forest District Council
Steve Flanagan	BUPA Home Healthcare
Brian Hull	Harlow & District Chamber of Commerce
Cllr John Jowers	Essex County Council
Mike Naylor	Keepmoat
Jeremy Rose	Newport Business Association
Derick Whyte	Synthomer

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies for absence

Nick Barton (NB) welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies for absence were recorded as above.

2. Membership update

Cath Shaw (CS) reported that Synthomer wish to join the Board although have had to apologise on this occasion. Higgins does not wish to participate and CS requested that if anyone is aware of an Epping Forest district business that might add value could they please pass on the details.

3. Minutes & matters arising

Minutes of the meeting held on the 25th July 2012 were agreed as a correct record and there were no matters arising.

Delivery Issues

4. Enterprise Zone

Trevor Stanesby (TS) of Blue Pig presented a series of options for the name and logo design for the Enterprise Zone. 'Pioneer' was felt to be resonant for Harlow but 'Innovation' too well used. Feedback forms were circulated for Board members to indicate preferences. The results will collated and reflected upon by Harlow Council. TS confirmed that any preferred options would be checked for usage elsewhere and the trade marking process initiated following final approval of the name and logo.

5. Skills

Skills Plan Presentation & Feedback

Alison Fox (AF) presented an update on the progress towards development of the Enterprise Zone Skills Strategy and wider West Essex Skills Strategy. Funding has been provided by the Skills Funding Agency to deliver the Enterprise Zone Strategy by the end of March 2013. Employer engagement has been key to developing the findings and suggested actions.

Main points of feedback from the meeting included:

- shortage of engineering skills for existing key employers and the importance of STEM skills particularly in relation to the Enterprise Zone target sectors

- employability skills in some young people is lacking, intervention at school age is required including independent careers advice and guidance, and meaningful work experience

- perceived lack of understanding in schools regarding what employment opportunities are available locally – possible Careers Fair suggested and programme of engagement with schools.

- need to pinpoint skills gaps across our key West Essex sectors, this will inform a wider West Essex Skills Strategy

AF will report back progress at the next meeting.

Harlow College – University Technical College Update

CS updated colleagues on the progress towards the establishment of a UTC based at Harlow College named Sir Charles Kao UTC. It will aim to deliver learning opportunities for 14-19 year olds based on employer designed challenges and will focus on Med Tech and Environmental Engineering for associated workplaces.

The UTC will open from 2014 and placements will be drawn 50:50 Harlow and wider catchment encompassing West Essex/North London.

6. Business Support

John Houston (JH) presented a report from the Business Support Working Group, scoping the current landscape and options for development that enable businesses to help themselves.

It was further agreed that WEA would support a Broadband Summit to ensure that a West Essex Business voice is fed into the Essex Broadband Strategy and consultation.

Graham Clarke commended the Group for the report which provides a work programme to positively take forward. The report and recommendations were approved and the group asked to prioritise activity.

Campaigns

7. M11 Junction 7a

David Sprunt (DS) Strategy & Engagement Manager Essex County Council provided a presentation of early feasibility outcomes for delivering M11 junction 7a connecting to the B183 and providing future capacity for a northern relief road. The proposal has been approved by the Harlow Stansted Gateway

Transportation Board and costed at £36.8m with the inclusion of a high level of risk at £14.5m due to the early stage of feasibility.

The economic benefits are substantial, enabling both jobs and housing growth and particularly 2-3,000 jobs at the Enterprise Zone. DS advised the project would entail an 18month build phase.

The urgency of delivery was underlined and full support given by the Board to seek the earliest possible delivery timeframe with an aspiration to deliver within three years. Lobbying opportunities with government need to be sought.

8. Stansted in 30

Will Parkes gave an update on the Stansted in 30 campaign to be launched on 23rd November. The campaign aims to reduce the journey from London Liverpool St to Stansted Airport to under 30 minutes, increasing reliability and connectivity for the economic benefit of the region, particularly with the potential for Crossrail.

www.stanstedairport.com/static/Stansted/Downloads/PDF/STAL_Rail_Strategy_2012.pdf

Stansted has the highest public transport usage for access to the airport and this will enable this excellent record of sustainable transportation to be improved further.

Partner Updates

9. Uttlesford District Council - Economic Development Strategy

Roger Harborough presented Uttlesford District Council's Economic Development Strategy for 2012-14. He emphasised that the Strategy aimed to make a difference quickly pending the development of a longer term strategy. The strategy outlines a range of initiatives aimed at supporting business including

- Help to start and stay in business
- Help to start exporting or export more
- Access to superfast broadband
- Help for town centres
- Help for business to expand in or locate in Uttlesford
- Support the visitor economy
- Ensure the Council is business friendly

10. London Anglia Growth Partnership

CS reported that LAGP has recruited a new Chair – Greg Clark. His

vision is to promote the London Stansted Cambridge corridor as an important national economic growth opportunity with a basis on a real economic geography and genuine partnership. To this end Cambridge, Peterborough and SELEP have been approached to join. WEA will provide an important voice within the renamed London Stansted Cambridge Consortium.

11. Executive Arrangements

The following volunteered to form a newly constituted Executive Group.

Will Parkes – London Stansted

Graham Clarke - FSB

Peter Andrews - Harlow Chamber of Commerce

Rob Ellice - Clarke Hillyer

John Price – Epping Forest Chamber of Commerce

Elected representative – tbc

12. AOB

Sale of Stansted Airport

Nick Barton reported that the sale process commenced at the end of August. Bidder interest has been attracted from around the world and passenger numbers have grown for the first time in four and a half years.

The sale is likely to conclude February 2013 and business as usual continues at London Stansted.

EZ Business Rates

CS reported that at the last meeting it was agreed to write to the Treasury asking for Government reimbursement of Business Rates discounts to be offered in the Enterprise Zone. It has subsequently been decided to concentrate lobbying on funding for M11 junction 7a.

Skills in Schools

John Preston suggested consideration of how the West Essex Alliance employers could support the employability agenda within schools. It was agreed to refer this matter to the Executive Group.

High Street Vacancy Rate

Rob Ellice asked that WEA look at the health of our high streets in terms of vacancy rates.

- 13.** The date of the next meeting will be circulated following consideration of SELEP meeting dates.