



Worcestershire
Local Enterprise Partnership

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WORCESTERSHIRE LEP NEWSLETTER

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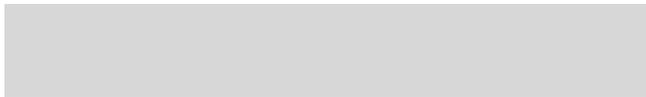
From the WLEP Chair, Peter Pawsey

May I wish you all a very happy Easter and trust that you will be able to gain some well earned rest and that you manage to keep warm. Most of Worcestershire has managed to avoid the worst of the snow experienced by those further west or north and so hopefully not too many businesses were too severely hampered by unseasonable weather.

The period up to Easter has been an interesting and rewarding time for the LEP with many key activities progressed, the Budget announcement implications for business, the closing date and first round assessment of Growing Places Fund second tranche, and an all important visit from our Whitehall Sponsor, Emma Ward, Economic Regeneration Director at BIS. Most important of all to the long term wellbeing of Worcestershire, and to the creation of a strong economy and more jobs across the county, will be the development of the key 'place changing' sites identified in our business plan. Most imminent of these is the Worcester Technology Park alongside M5 motorway, close to junction 6. We are at a critical point in seeking confirmation of funding from Government through the Regional Growth Fund and much activity has been focussed on that initiative, including the making of a promotional film and the erection of sign boards on site.

In addition, we are well advanced with the recruitment process for strengthening our small secretariat based at Brindley Court, Warndon, so it feels that we are now seeing some real momentum and achievement on several fronts. This should become more and more apparent in the months ahead and I look forward to keeping you all well informed.

Government responds to Heseltine Last week, the



Government published its response to Lord Heseltine's report 'No Stone Unturned in Pursuit of Growth'. 81 of Heseltine's 89 recommendations have been accepted in full or in part and the stage is set to decentralise responsibilities to LEPs to broker solutions with wide ranging interests to maximise economic growth and create jobs locally. LEPs have been asked to develop new Strategic Growth Plans and to include a high level investment plan which connects delivery and resources. The Growth Plans will form the basis of negotiation between the LEPs and Government. Worcestershire LEP's Business Plan "The Outlook is Bright in Worcestershire" meets many of the Government's criteria and will form a sound basis for development into a Growth Plan over the next few months. Our ever growing engagement with our business community will be the key to its success.

LEP hails happy Worcester survey

WLEP hailed Rightmove's 2013 Happy At Home Index which put Worcester as the happiest place in the Midlands and one of the top ten happiest in the UK.

This is a vote of confidence in our County – confirming what those of us who are resident in Worcestershire already know ... that it is a great place in which to live – and to work and play! Worcestershire was deemed very strong for recreation which is not a surprise given its fantastic sporting and cultural attractions – all set in breathtaking landscape and areas of outstanding natural beauty in the heart of England. Worcestershire combines city and urban energy with refreshing rural peace. It is also a magnificent business location with great transport connections and hosting a flourishing business community with world class companies successfully competing in diverse markets at home and abroad. It offers a high quality workforce with skilled and talented people, who possess ideas and innovation, breaking new ground in industry sectors such as cyber security and high tech manufacturing.

Rightmove are absolutely right – we have lots to offer and, with the help of independent reports such as this, we are getting the message across.

Regulation supporting Growth Businesses and regulators got together recently under the leadership of LEP Board Member, Ed Webb, to formulate priority actions to ensure regulatory compliance helps businesses thrive and does not hinder them. In looking at ways in which the Regulator and Business Partnership Charter will deliver constructive support to help new start up business as well as helping expanding established businesses, many

Whitehall advocate for Worcestershire LEP

In a welcome move by Government which parallels the Growth Plan announcement, Worcestershire LEP welcomed Emma Ward, Economic Regeneration Director at the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) as our newly allocated senior Whitehall sponsor, champion and constructive critical friend. In a packed day Emma was shown a few of our current exciting projects including Malvern Hills Science Park expansion plans, the rapidly growing cyber security sector, development at the County Cricket Ground, the Arena and Hive in Worcester, the site for Worcester technology park and the innovative anaerobic digester plant and associated tomato and other growing

worked up for delivery over coming months.

Planning Charter Gears Up

Business Board Member, Jacqui Bayliss, is leading the WLEP's drive forwards to deliver the Planning Charter with fellow business leaders. A joint meeting with Worcestershire Planning Officers and representative statutory consultees will be held shortly to confirm joint initiatives which will transform and simplify planning experiences and benefit economically important schemes. This joint approach will make significant contributions to the emerging WLEP Growth Plan and will enhance the County's profile in attracting inward investment

FORTHCOMING DATES AND EVENTS

8 April
Worcester Flag Launch - Worcester Cathedral

10 April
LEP Away Day

18 April
LEP National Network Conference - London

25 April
Briefing on EU Investment

Fladbury.

In between all this Emma met WLEP business and local authority leaders to gain an overview of ambitions and the challenges ahead including also the South Kidderminster Enterprise Park and Hoo Brook Link road. Emma was impressed with the WLEP plans and achievements so far and is keen to advocate Worcestershire's advantages and opportunities through close collaboration with the WLEP in future. Her next visit will be mainly focussed on the northern parts of the county.

Worcestershire LEP praises budget incentives for business

Worcestershire LEP has praised the incentives for business in the Chancellor's Budget as it will help boost economic growth in the County. The Government's extra £3 billion a year in infrastructure spending is particularly welcomed as we have identified key projects which will unlock growth and jobs. These major Worcestershire schemes will be unveiled shortly and we are confident that we can present a good case for them to attract financial support. Budget tax changes, particularly the reduction in corporation tax, will further strengthen the County's inward investment offer and attract international investors as the UK now proves to be a very attractive place to locate a business. The Chancellor's decision to scrap the earmarked fuel duty rise is also vital in Worcestershire's rural context and this will make a significant difference to our local businesses.

Armed Forces and Worcestershire LEP

Brigadier Gerhard Wheeler, who is the Army's senior representative in the West Midlands, met the WLEP Business Board recently to form a strategic alliance between Worcestershire businesses and the Armed Forces in tackling the employment and skills agenda. LEP Board

10 May

LEP meeting with
Worcestershire Chief
Planning Officers

ambitions to place existing Armed Forces personnel and find Reservist opportunities which will contribute to job creation and help Worcestershire business growth over the next few years.

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