



Worcestershire
Local Enterprise Partnership

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WORCESTERSHIRE LEP NEWSLETTER

Bulletin no: 24



From the WLEP Chair, Peter Pawsey

Welcome to this edition of the Worcestershire LEP News Bulletin. It's been an interesting few weeks in the life of the 39 LEPs. Following on from George Osborne's Budget Statement in which most of the Heseltine Report recommendations were supported by Government, there has been much activity in respect of the proposed 'single pot' funding. It is however clear that some Government Departments are more wedded to the concept than others and it is, therefore, not surprising that there is still a lack of clarity as to just how large that pot will be. Indeed statements attributed to Vince Cable in the past two weeks have added to that uncertainty.

However, as you will know from the news items following, Government has confirmed that the Worcestershire LEP will receive its full allocation of core funding (£250k) for 2013/14 and also that we will receive a further £250k to enable us to establish the resources and external assistance required in order to put in place the quality of documentation needed to support our bid for a maximised share of that 'single pot'. So, we are making good progress.

I am pleased to report that each of the key sub groups of the Business Board are also functioning well and progressing effectively against the four strategic objectives set out in our Business Plan last November. In addition we now have a number of key 'task to finish' groups exploring how in Worcestershire we can develop our many strengths across a variety of work sectors.

Finally, I have previously recorded that whilst unemployment is relatively low compared with West Midlands and national levels, there is no room for complacency and we must do more to reduce figures even further, especially for young people. Figures released recently give encouragement that such messages are getting through, because in 2012 some 5700 new apprenticeships were established across the county, more than twice the 2011 level and three times the levels in 2006 or 2007, when the economy was supposed to be much better. Again we

must seek to improve this further and the LEP has set a new target of 7000 apprenticeships. How good it would be for a high proportion of those to be in manufacturing, where believe it or not, of the 39 LEP areas, Worcestershire has the 5th highest proportion of its workforce employed!

Keytec Link Road

Worcestershire LEP has supported calls for the construction of the Pershore Northern Link Road which has been backed by Peter Luff MP and Cllr Paul Middlebrough, Leader of Wychavon District Council. The proposed new road would link the roundabouts on the A44 Wyre Piddle bypass with the entry to the Keytec 7 Business Park off Wyre Road, Pershore.

This has become even more important now that the emerging South Worcestershire Development Plan identifies site allocations for 600 new homes in the area, alongside expansion to the Keytec Business Park. These two elements together will place additional pressure on the existing road system, particularly Pinvin Crossroads on the A44.

LEP Core Funding Announced

Government Ministers approved our application for the maximum award of £250,000 of core matched funding towards the running of the LEP. This will allow the organisation to increase its resources

LEP Supports Local Cyber Security Businesses to Attend National Info Security Conference

Cyber crime is estimated to cost the UK £27 billion a year; mostly as a result of crimes by well organised criminal gangs. Cyber security is an expanding business sector that Worcester LEP is keen to encourage. We already have a vital and emerging cyber security sector with the potential to embed itself further across Worcestershire in order to establish this area as the country's leaders in cyber security. To that end the LEP recently sponsored Malvern Cyber Security Cluster, a collection of around 40 small cyber security firms, many started up by ex-QinetiQ employees, to attend last month's Infosecurity Event in London's Earls Court, billed as Europe's most important gathering of cyber security experts.

Cluster members cooperated on a range of initiatives in order to grow their businesses, share best practice and improve cyber security.

The Malvern Hills Science Park has been ideally positioned to provide start up and grow-on space for many of the micro companies in Malvern. Last month the Science Park was given the green light to expand further, creating another 25,000 sq ft of office space and potentially 150 new jobs. Malvern Hills District Council gave the multimillion-pound scheme planning consent and the Phase Four development was also backed by Worcestershire County Council.

This sector has the ability to harness growth across boundaries into neighbouring LEPs, especially the Marches with its military history, and the current focus on Hereford Enterprise Zone and into Gloucestershire with GCHQ.

Growth Plan and EU Investment Strategy

with a greater number of Worcestershire businesses and to move on faster with our many initiatives.

LEP Staffing

We are pleased to advise that Jan Bailey has accepted the role of Communications and PR Executive at the LEP. Jan will be commencing her role on 13 May and will be looking for positive Worcestershire stories to promote the county and the LEP.

I am sure you will all join me in welcoming Jan to our organisation and wishing her well in her new role in the Worcestershire LEP.

Russian Visitors

Through the good offices of Harriet Baldwin MP, we jointly hosted a party of Russian officials from the region of Bryansk, led by Governor Nikolay Denin, Governor of Bryansk Oblensk. Our visitors are particularly interested in forming relationships in the horticultural and agricultural sectors. After an exchange of business and economic presentations and of gifts at Wychavon District Council's offices, the party moved to Pershore College where a draft agreement for co-operation between the College and its counterpart in Bryansk was exchanged. Finally a site

importance of local solutions for growth. Local Enterprise Partnerships are at the centre of this agenda, and the Government has announced that responsibility for delivery of a large part of European funding will be placed on the LEPs.

This will bring together all types of EU funding under one model for distribution. LEPs will be responsible for designing and delivering their strategies for best use of this funding within a formal Growth Plan. Worcestershire and every other LEP will each receive a basic allocated sum of money from the Fund. Further allocation of funds will be competitive against the other LEPs and we will be required to bid for additional funding against well set out and reasoned applications.

We have an excellent foundation on which to build in the form of last November's LEP Business Plan. However, the Growth Plan will have to go further, taking in new partners in the rural environment and voluntary and community sector. The LEP has to consider the local growth needs of the county and build plans for innovation, support for small businesses, the low carbon economy, skills, employment and social inclusion. We are already starting to produce the delivery plan and have begun to talk with stakeholders who can support us in building the most ambitious plan for the Worcestershire economy. If you would like to know more, contact the LEP office.

National LEP Conference

Worcestershire LEP was well represented at the National LEP Network Conference, which was sponsored by Barclays, and had an attendance of over 250 delegates from the 39 LEPs. Speakers included Mark Prisk (Dept for Communities and Local Govt), Patrick McLoughlin (Dept for Transport) and Vince Cable (Dept for Business Innovation and Skills). LEPs are still very much seen as the vehicle to create local growth and jobs. The Conference was brought to life with a speech from Lord Heseltine, who outlined his report 'No Stone Unturned' and the challenge that now faced LEPs if they were to be successful.

Growers in Birlingham, primarily to see the process for growing, cutting and packaging asparagus.

Pinch Point Programme

We are delighted to end on some further good news. In a recent announcement it was confirmed that £1.65m has been approved for improvements to the A46 trunk road through Ashchurch and to Junction 9 on the M5 motorway. Whilst these roads are in Gloucestershire, the present congestion during peak times has a serious detrimental effect on travel between Evesham and the east of Worcestershire and the south west of England.

It is for this reason that it was the Worcestershire LEP and Worcestershire County Highways that together lobbied the Highways Agency to include the necessary funding in phase 3 of the national Pinch Point Programme. Gloucestershire LEP was then happy to add its support and the resultant improvements should start later this year or early next. This adds to the M5 Junction 4 reconstruction which was approved under phase 2 of the same programme and which should start later this year.

Manufacturing Sector Study Launched

Local company Worcester Research has been commissioned by the LEP to undertake research on the Worcestershire Manufacturing Sector. The sector remains strong in Worcestershire, with a number of nationally recognised brands and successful manufacturers located here, employing 14% of our workforce - one of the highest proportions in the country. The sector has a wide definition covering production in a broad range of sectors including automotive, construction, food and drink, clothing, defence and aerospace.

Many agencies and organisations support the sector, but in order to decide on the appropriate interventions by the LEP and its partners, it will need to be further investigated and quantified. The research will create a basis for support going forward and identify the conditions that would allow the county to attract further manufacturing companies to the region.

If you wish to participate in the study please contact the LEP Office.

Work begins at New Road

Work has begun at Worcestershire County Cricket Club to construct a new 120-bedroom hotel and improved hospitality areas, including conferencing, spectator and administration facilities. The project has been aided by a loan of £750,000 from Worcestershire LEP's Growing Places Fund.



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