

**Minutes of the Marches LEP Board Meeting (Redacted)
19 March 2019 at The Clive, Bromfield, Ludlow, SY8 2JR**

Present:

Graham Wynn OBE	GW	Chair, Marches LEP Board
Paul Hinkins	PH	Telford Business Board Chair; Deputy Chair, Marches LEP
Frank Myers MBE	FM	Herefordshire Business Board Chair
Paul Bennett	PB	Shropshire Business Board Chair
Dr David Llewellyn	DL	Agri-Tech Food Champion; Vice-Chancellor, Harper Adams University
Prof. Nazira Karodia	NK	Dean of Faculty of Science & Engineering, University of Wolverhampton
Paul Kalinauckas	PK	Access to Finance Champion, Chief Executive of BCRS Business Loans
James Staniforth	JS	Skills Board Chair; Principal and CEO of the Shrewsbury Colleges Group
Sonia Roberts	SR	Social Inclusion Champion; Charity Manager, Landau Limited
Andrew Manning-Cox	AMC	Hereford Enterprise Zone Chair
Cllr Jonathan Lester	JL	Leader, Herefordshire Council (part only)
Cllr Peter Nutting	PN	Leader, Shropshire Council
Cllr Shaun Davies	SD	Leader, Telford & Wrekin Council

In Attendance:

Gill Hamer	GH	Director, Marches LEP
Nick Alamanos	NA	Project Manager, Marches LEP
Hardip Begol CBE	HB	Director Integration & Communities, MHCLG and LEP Senior Sponsor
Mark Barrow	MB	Director of Place, Shropshire Council
Richard Ball	RB	Acting Director for Economy and Place, Herefordshire Council
Kathy Mulholland	KM	Inward Investment & Business Support Service Delivery Manager, Telford & Wrekin Council
Peter Collins	PC	Sharpe Pritchard
Ennis Vingoe	EV	LEP Team Support Officer
Wayne Redge	WR	LEP Office Administrator

ITEM		ACTION
1.	<p>NMiTE Briefing GW informed the meeting that the New Model in Technology & Engineering (NMiTE) Briefing had been postponed due to unforeseen circumstances and Elena Rodriguez-Falcon would be invited to brief the Board at a future meeting.</p>	
2.	<p>Welcome, Apologies & Declarations of Interest The Chair welcomed Hardip Begol CBE (HB), Peter Collins (PC) and Wayne Redge (WR) to the meeting; and Prof. Nazira Karodia (NK) who was representing Prof. Ian Oakes. Apologies had been received from Prof. Ian Oakes. The Chair reminded all members to complete a declaration of interest form for the meeting if required. Declarations of Interest were made by: DL – as an employee of a higher education institution; PB – working relationship with the LEP's legal firm</p>	
3.	<p>Minutes of last meeting held on 29 January 2019 The minutes from the last Marches LEP Board meeting on 29 January 2019 were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting.</p>	

	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p>Annual Performance Review – it was noted the LEP had received ‘Good’ ratings for Governance; Delivery; and Strategy for 2018/19. GH expressed her disappointment at the ‘Good’ rating awarded for Governance, which had been ‘Excellent’ the previous year. GW commented that the outcome was positive when compared nationally and due to the changes that the organisation was going through, was a fair reflection of the current risks in terms of governance.</p> <p>LEP Geography – GH said that there was nothing further to report. Discussions were still taking place at Ministerial level.</p> <p>Board Member Recruitment – GH reported that there had been significant interest in the role and 7 formal Expressions of Interest had been received so far. She asked members for their continued assistance in promoting the vacancies up to the closing date of 28 March 2019, particularly in the Herefordshire area. It was noted that the majority of current interest had been from women which was encouraging following the targeted PR campaign and other initiatives. GH thanked SR for her involvement in this campaign.</p> <p>GH would be circulating the approved Job Description for the Marches LEP Chair role to the business community for consultation at the start of April 2019, prior to the role being advertised at the start of May 2019.</p> <p>Work to set up the shortlisting/interview panels would be undertaken during April 2019. Interview panels would consist of an equal split of male and female members. SR had been asked to take part and additional female panel members were currently being sought from the local authority Cabinet membership. GH thanked those Board members who had already expressed an interest in being part of the panels.</p> <p>Confirmation of Appointment of Deputy Chair – following the call for nominations at the last board meeting GW confirmed that PH was the only private sector member who had put themselves forward. The Board unanimously agreed that PH assume the role of Deputy Chair with immediate effect.</p> <p>SEP Publication – the Marches Enterprise Joint Committee held its final meeting on 19 March 2019 where the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) was approved for publication. A limited number of hard copies would be produced and circulated to Board Members.</p> <p>LIS - Members were invited to attend a Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) planning event at Ludlow Racecourse on 11 April 2019 facilitated by Metro Dynamics. A formal invitation would be issued.</p>	<p>All</p> <p>GH</p> <p>EV</p> <p>EV</p>
4.	<p>Update from Hardip Begol CBE, Senior LEP Sponsor</p> <p>HB commented on the Marches LEP Annual Review and said that the 2018 National LEP Review outcomes had ‘raised the bar’ in terms of governance requirements in particular, and that a ‘Good’ outcome in this criterion for the Marches LEP had been a fair judgement based on these higher expectations.</p> <p>On his 2-day visit to the Marches LEP area HB said that he had so far met with Shropshire Council, the Shrewsbury Flaxmill Maltings Project, Shrewsbury Business Improvement District and University Centre Shrewsbury, and was due to meet with Telford Business Board, attend a Marches Growth Hub event and meet with SR on 20 March 2019. He commented that the great work being done in the Marches area needed to be promoted farther and suggested that Ministers would be very interested in the ‘good news stories’ of the new developments, innovation and economic growth taking place across the area. In terms of Brexit preparations HB noted that contingency planning had been implemented in Government departments and elements such as the Green Paper on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund had been delayed.</p> <p>HB reported that the Stronger Towns Fund would have proportionally more impact in the West Midlands region than some others which better reflected the lower Gross Value</p>	

	<p>Added scores and was a fairer distribution of funds. £212 million had been allocated to the West Midlands. Members discussed the eligibility criteria and HB agreed to query the metric of towns with a minimum 30,000 population, which would effectively rule out many of the smaller towns in the Marches area.</p> <p>GW suggested that the Board could have more regular direct conversations with HB who could feed back points to Government. HB confirmed that he would be very happy to do so.</p>	<p>HB</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Governance</p> <p>GH explained that the plan was to move to a second part of this Board meeting following general business in order to formally appoint the Board of the new company and adopt the new Articles of Association. A number of documents had been circulated:</p> <p>Step Plan – PC explained the proposed plan for the first Board Meeting of the new incorporated Marches LEP Co Limited by Guarantee. The new company had been registered in February 2019. The Chair and Deputy Chair were the two initial named Directors. This was done in order to secure the name at Companies House. The balance of the Board would be appointed at this meeting, less the 3 Local Authority Leaders who required 28 days’ notice prior to appointment. PC proposed that the Board would be appointed at this meeting but that it would recommend that, subject to the approval required for the 3 Local Authority Leaders to become Directors being received, the 3 Leaders would be appointed at the next Board meeting (of the new Company).</p> <p>Following a query regarding the status of the Business Boards, PC confirmed that the period of notice required by the local authorities did not also apply to them.</p> <p>Draft Articles of Association – PC explained the evolution of the document through the LEP Network. He said that the document governing process and procedure for the new company should be the Accountability and Assurance Framework (AAF), with as little duplication as possible in the Articles.</p> <p>Members raised a number of queries on specific points in the draft document which were discussed in detail including public/private funds; potential conflicts of interest and payment for services; Terms of Office; election of Chair for Board Meetings in the event of non-attendance by the Board Chair or Vice Chair; there being no shares and the definition of ‘officer’.</p> <p>GH said that she, Gareth Wilson BEIS and PC had met a number of times with local authority Monitoring Officers and the Heads of Economic Development to discuss the implications of the closure of MEJC and the requirements to maintain democratic accountability in the new company. A form of words had been drafted for the AAF which included a list of key strategic issues that the LEP Board would consult the local authorities on. JL commented that the Local Authority Leaders were always accountable to the electorate and that democratic accountability should be at the forefront of LEP considerations. GW acknowledged that this ethos was part and parcel of the operation of the LEP and would continue to be so. GH said that discussions had taken place about the work of the LEP being subject to Local Government Scrutiny. GH said it was proposed that the LEP would report to the three local authority scrutiny panels twice a year on the progress on implementing the LEP Delivery Plan, and to discuss a forward work plan. DL referred to the requirement for ‘consultation and engagement’ and members agreed that ‘consultation’ would be the provision of advice, information and/or opinion but did not necessarily require agreement. GH would meet with local authority Monitoring Officers to draft the form of words for the AAF and circulate this to the Board via email.</p> <p>Members discussed the wording of Article 7.2 and the potential mandatory obligation on directors and suggested the use of the phrase “reasonable endeavours...” where relevant. PC agreed to review and circulate the amended Articles.</p>	<p>GH</p>

	<p>PC informed the Board that in Article 20.1 the second sentence would be removed as it was now factually incorrect.</p> <p>GW proposed that the Articles of Association be approved subject to the amendments as discussed. The Board agreed.</p> <p>GW proposed that the AAF be circulated with amendments to the Board for them to provide feedback.</p> <p>Draft AAF - GH said that a draft version of the AAF was required to be on the LEP Website by 31 March 2019. The LEP had formally requested an exemption until the end of May 2019 on this but had not yet received a response from MHCLG. HB said that he would follow up on this.</p> <p>GW proposed that the final sign-off of the Articles and AAF would take place at the Board meeting on 21 May 2019. The Board agreed.</p> <p>GH requested that members read the Conflict of Interest section in the AAF in detail.</p> <p>Draft Scheme of Delegation – the Board approved the document.</p> <p>Draft LEP Board Terms of Reference – the Board approved the document.</p> <p>2019/20 LEP Delivery Plan – GH said that a draft Plan would be circulated before the end of April 2019 in order to be signed off at the Board meeting on 21 May 2019. The document was required to be on the Marches LEP website by 31 May 2019.</p>	<p>PC</p> <p>GH</p> <p>HB</p> <p>All</p> <p>GH</p>
6.	<p>Growth Deal Update (Confidential Item)</p> <p>NA presented the Growth Deal Update report to the Board detailing the difficulties in generating spend for the 2018/19 financial year. NA went through the proposals to minimise the impact of a known underspend. Members discussed the proposals in the report. NA explained that the success of the proposed solutions was dependent on the projects spending their funds.</p> <p>The Board discussed the staff resources available in the LEP Team to contract and monitor the projects. GH explained that recent gaps in staffing were due to a sector-wide shortage of experienced capital project officers. The LEP had engaged a contractor to assist on a short-term basis and also taken on a temporary member of staff. A full-time Project Officer was due to start in April 2019 on secondment from Shropshire Council. Members also discussed the assessment of project risk and compliance processes. GW thanked members for the discussion and proposed that the Board approve the recommendations set out in Section 3 of the report – the Board agreed.</p>	
7.	<p>Marches Growth Hub Update</p> <p>PH briefed the meeting on the current status of the Marches Growth Hub (MGH) as presented in the report at Item 7. The budget for MGH was £205k and a significant amount of support was provided by the 3 local authorities, University of Wolverhampton and University Centre Shrewsbury. GW thanked PH for his report and asked him pass on the Board's congratulations to the Steering Group on the MGH achievements.</p> <p>JL left the meeting.</p>	
8.	<p>LEP Programme Risk Register</p> <p>The Board noted the report.</p>	
9.	<p>Any other Business</p> <p>Future High Streets Fund – GH reported that the LEP was providing letters of support for the 5 bids from the local authorities.</p> <p>MPs Briefing Event, London – an event would be held at the House of Commons on 8 May 2019. An afternoon session in conjunction with Midlands Connect would have a focus on transport which would be followed by an event to launch the SEP and publicise the LIS development. Members would be invited to attend.</p> <p>MIPIM 2019 – MB reported that the Marches LEP, represented by the local authority partners had had a successful event with a number of discussions had with overseas</p>	<p>GH</p>

