

**THE MARCHES LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP LIMITED
BOARD MEETING**

Tuesday 29 September 2020

4.30pm – 6.30pm

Remote access via Zoom

AGENDA

Item	Time		Lead	Discussion/ Decision	Paper
1	4.30 pm	Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest	MT		
2	4.30pm	Minutes of Marches LEP Ltd Board meetings on 21 July 2020 and 11 August 2020; and Matters Arising not already on the agenda: Board Meeting 21 July 2020 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Item 2 - Transport Officers' Group update • Item 4b – update on Shropshire Council staff resourcing • Item 8 – update on the cross-border Growth Deal 	MT NA JW GH	Discussion	x
3	4.40pm	2020/21 LEP Annual Delivery Plan report and Feedback from LEP Mid-Year Performance Review by MHCLG	GH	Decision	x
4	4.55pm	Overview of the LEP strategic risk register and how it is developed and reviewed	SR	Discussion	x
5	5.15pm	Briefing on the River Severn Partnership action plan	MB, HD	Discussion	
6	5.45pm	Business Board Chair Updates	FM, PB, PH	Information	
7	6.05 pm	Growth Deal Programme update and Getting Building Fund update	NA, JW	To follow	
8	6.20pm	LEP Chair and CEO Report	GH	Information	x
9	6.25pm	Any Other Business	MT		

Date of next Marches LEP Ltd Board meeting – 24 November 2020

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Item 2 (1)

**Draft Minutes of the Marches LEP Ltd Board Meeting
21 July 2020 at 4.00pm
Meeting held via Zoom
(Company Number: 11822614)**

Present:			
Mandy Thorn MBE	MT	Chair, Marches LEP Board	
Paul Hinkins	PH	Telford Business Board Chair	
Frank Myers MBE	FM	Herefordshire Business Board Chair	
Paul Bennett	PB	Shropshire Business Board Chair	
Andrew Manning Cox	AMC	Hereford Enterprise Zone Chair	
Cllr David Hitchiner	DH	Leader, Herefordshire Council	
Cllr Peter Nutting	PN	Leader, Shropshire Council	
Cllr David Wright	DW	Cabinet Member for Economy, Housing, Transport and Infrastructure, Telford & Wrekin Council	
Paul Kalinauckas	PK	Access to Finance Champion	
James Staniforth	JS	Skills Advisory Panel Chair; Principal and CEO of the Shrewsbury Colleges Group	
Sonia Roberts	SR	Social Inclusion Champion; Charity Manager, Landau Limited	
Ruth Shepherd	RS	Director, Results Communications	
Sara Williams	SW	Marketing Manager - Northern Europe, Protolabs	
Christine Snell	CS	Business Partner, AJ & CI Snell	
In Attendance:			
Maria Machancoses	MM	Director Midlands Connect	
Sarah Spink	SS	Strategic Partnerships Lead, Midlands Connect	
James Walton	JW	Section 151 Officer, Shropshire Council	
Roger Allonby	RA	Head of Economic Development, Herefordshire Council	
Mark Barrow	MB	Executive Director for Place, Shropshire Council	
Katherine Kynaston	KK	Director Housing Economy & Infrastructure, Telford & Wrekin Council	
Ollie Hindle	OH	Assistant Director, West Midlands & South West, Cities & Local Growth Unit, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy	
Chris Buss	CBuss	Interim Governance Programme Lead	
Gill Hamer	GH	Chief Executive, Marches LEP	
Kathryn Jones	KJ	Partnership Manager, Marches LEP	
Nick Alamanos	NA	Programme Manager, Marches LEP	
Ennis Vingoe	EV	Marches LEP Team Support Officer	
Wayne Redge	WR	Marches LEP Office Administrator	
ITEM			ACTION
1.	<p>1. Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest MT welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending the meeting. She also welcomed Maria Machancoses, Director and Sarah Spink, Strategic Partnerships Lead at Midlands Connect. Apologies were received from Dr Catherine Baxter. It was noted that arrangements had been made to enable members of the public to join the meeting as observers via Zoom but no one had applied to be given observer access to the meeting. It was also noted that the meeting was being recorded to aid the production of the minutes.</p> <p>2. Declarations of Interest The Chair reminded members to complete the form for Declarations of Interest and forward to EV if required.</p>		

	AMC – for item 4 as Chair of Hereford Enterprise Zone (HEZ).	
2.	<p>Midlands Connect Update and the opportunities for the Marches</p> <p>MM gave a presentation on the current priorities for Midlands Connect. The main points covered were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background and the focus of the work of Midlands Connect; • Midlands Engine Rail – 7 projects to improve East-West (E-W) connectivity and how the Midlands interfaces between the rest of the UK including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Midlands Rail Hub – in particular Birmingham New Street and Moor Street capacity/connectivity; ○ Hereford Corridor – to double the services between Hereford and Birmingham; ○ Shrewsbury-Birmingham Corridor – including Telford and the Black Country, using HS2 released capacity; • Cross Border Work – initiated by the MLEP Freight Strategy; the Marches Transport Officers Group will set out the roadmap for taking proposals forward; • Road investment – important for the freight and logistics agenda. Midlands Connect had submitted a strategy to government for the next 5 years. A fund will become available to facilitate the development of business cases for potential projects; • Alternative futures – innovation and the digital agenda; • Midlands Connect Strategy will be refreshed in response to changes in travel patterns and behaviour; • Government announcement in Autumn 2020 will focus on infrastructure – we will need to work together to make our submission. <p>A discussion followed on the improved decision-making in the Midlands compared to other parts of England and the challenges of rurality in the Marches area in terms of travel to work and education. Proposals for ideas that would make a real difference to communities were required well in advance of investment calls. Midlands Connect had consulted on a piece of work on indicators taking rurality into account when assessing road and rail projects. MM agreed to provide a short briefing paper on this. An update from the Transport Officers Group would be provided for the September 2020 Board Meeting. MT thanked MM and SS for the informative presentation. The slides are available here Midlands Connect Update</p>	MM NA
3.	<p>Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 26 May 2020</p> <p>The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 26 May 2020 were approved and would be signed (electronically) by the Chair as a true and accurate record of the meeting.</p> <p>Minutes of the Emergency Board Meeting held on 14 July 2020</p> <p>The Minutes of the Emergency Board meeting held on 14 July 2020 were approved and would be signed (electronically) by the Chair as a true and accurate record of the meeting.</p> <p>Matters Arising</p> <p>AMC said that under Item 2 of the Emergency Board meeting on 14 July 2020 to consider the projects for the “Getting Building Funds” (GBF), it had been agreed that the Board would be informed of the outcome of the further due diligence undertaken on the Tackling Fuel Poverty through Zero Carbon Innovation project (Wrekin Housing Group). NA confirmed that the project had been submitted to government on the MLEP list on 16 July 2020, subject to due diligence. The LEP was in receipt of the procurement information and a meeting was scheduled with Shropshire Council procurement team on 22 July 2020, to ensure that the information was compliant with national procurement and contracting regulations. The LEP Board sub-group set up to support the LEP Team on the assessment of the GBF projects would consider the feedback from the procurement meeting and inform the Board of the outcome of the due diligence.</p>	EV EV NA

<p>4.</p>	<p>Governance</p> <p>a. Election of the Deputy Chair MT wished to formally record the gratitude of the MLEP Board to PH for his sterling work as Deputy Chair over many years. The former Chair, Graham Wynn had contacted MT and also wished to pay tribute to PH for all his support during his tenure. MT confirmed that nominations had been requested for the role of Deputy Chair and that one formal nomination had been received from Sonia Roberts. GH had emailed members to inform them. The Board confirmed the appointment of Sonia Roberts as MLEP Deputy Chair (unanimous).</p> <p>b. Report on progress in addressing the implications of incorporation and appointment of auditors MT introduced Chris Buss who had been working with the LEP and partners since the end of May 2020 on actions following incorporation. The Board noted the content of the update report. A task and finish group had been set up to take this work forward comprising of the following Board members: MT, PB, DH, JS and C Baxter. The Board noted that the LEP Chair had set up a LEP Board Incorporation Task and Finish Group. GH outlined the process undertaken in conjunction with the Incorporation Task and Finish group to appoint the accountants, Thorne Widgery. The Group had recommended that a separate company be appointed to complete the audit for Marches LEP Ltd. It was proposed that James, Holyoak and Parker be appointed as auditors. The Board agreed the appointment of James, Holyoak and Parker as the auditors for the 2019/20 Marches LEP Ltd accounts (unanimous). GH would issue the appointment letter.</p> <p>A discussion then took place about the proposed Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Shropshire Council (the MLEP accountable body). PB and SR said that at the recent Incorporation Task and Finish Group and Performance Risk & Monitoring Committee (PRMC) meetings, the issue of a perceived 'bottleneck' at a strategic level within the Council, had been discussed. AMC said that when looking at the future of services provided in an SLA with any organisation, we need to be looking at what lessons we've learnt from the past and also we need to be thinking about the pace of our reactions into the future. It is very clear that Government will expect LEPs to be fleet of foot in assessing, recommending and funding opportunities as an important part of the strategic project to re-set the economy. It is important the LEP has the right level of resources to be able to produce project funding agreements in a timely fashion going forward. AMC said what underlined it for him was when he saw DH's letter of 1 July 2020. AMC said he was re-declaring his interest as Chair of HEZ as he was very much looking forward to receiving funding for the EZ further work that was voted on by the Board in March 2020. However, DH's letter stated that as of 29 June 2020, Herefordshire Council had still not received the funding agreements for either the HEZ project or the Ross project, meaning we have already lost 3 months, 25% of the original delivery period and it is now unlikely therefore that Ross can be delivered. AMC reminded the Board that both projects had been approved by the LEP Board on 24 March 2020 and yet, 4 months later, the contracts had not been issued. This is in a context where the money has to be spent by 31 March 2021 and it is clear that the Government will permit no extension to that timetable, despite COVID. He said that as far as the HEZ project is concerned, the EZ team are moving heaven and earth to be ready to spend this money as soon as the funding</p>	<p>GH</p>
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	<p>agreement is in place. It was noted the sponsoring body for the HEZ project, Herefordshire Council, had taken the view that it is not prepared to spend money at risk before the agreement is signed. AMC said he had gone back through his own records and asked for confirmation of some facts about other delays in the paperwork being issued e.g. the Marches Investment Fund COVID 19 response (Board approval on 27 May 2020; contract signed 17 July 2020).</p> <p>PB said that since the original agreement with Shropshire Council, as things have developed over time the resource requirement has changed and increased. PB said that the LEP has an opportunity to top-slice the Growth Deal funding and change the direction of travel to ensure there is sufficient resource.</p> <p>MT said that we need an agreed way forward and a process where work is turned around more quickly. There also needs to be some understanding from local authority colleagues that when funding is allocated that some local authorities will spend 'at risk' and others won't spend until all the documentation has been received.</p> <p>GH said that she had met with JW and re-iterated the offer to fund additional resource in Shropshire Council by utilising the funds from top slicing circa. £300k from the Growth Deal funds (which had been approved by the Board in March 2020). As well as the Growth Deal contracting, the additional work by both the LEP Team and Shropshire Council to contract for the £14 million Getting Building Fund, and to defray monies by March 2021, was substantial. JW had made a commitment to look at additional resource.</p> <p>JW acknowledged that the comments made were constructive in terms of finding a way forward. There were some significant mitigating circumstances that have caused delays in certain issues but the underlying issue of a 'bottleneck' is a real issue in terms of the Authority having limited resources and that at times when there is significant work coming forward, those bottlenecks get exposed and that causes delays. JW said he is looking at additional resource in the right places. JW said he had heard everything that had been said and would take it as constructive criticism and should have an answer shortly in terms of additional resource in certain strategic points within the organisation, and within the SLA arrangement so that we don't find ourselves in this situation going forward. GH confirmed that the Accountability and Assurance Framework Guidance stipulated that the accountable body must be a local authority.</p> <p>DH had asked for a meeting with the LEP regarding the specific issues for Herefordshire Council.</p> <p>MT asked if the local authority s151 officers communicated with each other on the issues being discussed.</p> <p>MT would come back to the Board with next steps.</p> <p>The Board noted the appointment of Ilia Bowles as the new Director of Corporate Services for the LEP.</p> <p>The Board also noted the ongoing discussions at LEP Network Level about the additional costs of incorporation.</p> <p>c. 2019/20 Marches LEP Draft Accounts MT invited members to review the accounts which were for information at this stage. The Board noted the draft Marches LEP Ltd 2019/20 accounts</p>	<p>GH</p> <p>MT</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>LEP Response to the Chancellor's Statement on Economic Recovery MT said that the role of the LEP was to support economic development projects in the area to promote new jobs and opportunities for education and skills development. Local authority partners were asked to ensure that their officers who</p>	

<p>attended the MLEP Operations Group were made aware of the discussions that take place at the LEP Board meetings in order to inform current and future work and promote collaboration across the Marches area.</p>	<p>LA partners</p>
<p>a) Briefing on DWP unemployment and take-up of universal credit statistics in the Marches</p> <p>KJ went through information provided by the Department for Work and Pensions up to the end of May 2020. This showed that there had been significant increases in claimants with particular hot spots in Ross on Wye and Bridgnorth. There were substantial increases in the 18-24 age bracket across the area. Those on the furlough scheme were not included in the figures. The picture within sectors was mixed. The presentation slides are available here. Employment presentation</p> <p>JS said that the Strategic Economic Plan had been developed in a different context and some of those challenges remained, but the context of 'full employment' had changed significantly. The progression to higher education this year is unknown, and caps will limit the number of places. The current support available in the Marches was outlined including £31.6 billion nationally to scale-up employment support schemes for young people. JS asked that members promote these types of opportunities via their networks. He noted that capital funding announcements for FE colleges would only affect Telford College and Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College; and the 10 year re-building programme for schools would include Hereford 6th Form College and Shrewsbury Colleges Group.</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>c) Issues to raise with MPs and Government</p> <p>JS said that there is not an option in the Marches to be able to remove some of the restrictions on the Adult Education Budget (which comes from the Education and Skills Funding Agency). Combined Authorities do have this option. Adults who have existing qualifications do not qualify for further funding and are expected to take out loans or self-fund. Being able to apply funding flexibilities in order to re-train adults in our area in significant numbers would be helpful. The challenge in rural areas is getting 18-24 year olds into apprenticeships due to the low wage and travel difficulties. There are significant vacancies in key areas such as health and social care.</p> <p>DW suggested that co-design of educational services should be developed. It is estimated that 25-29% of the Telford workforce is currently on furlough and this was a real concern as many would be made redundant. DW said the 'Job Box' initiative funded by Telford & Wrekin Council, was being extended across the 16-65 age range now and it had over 100 enquiries since its launch last week. There was still some money available in the discretionary grant scheme, but the criteria were so specific that many businesses could not apply. It would be helpful if this could be 'unlocked' and used for discretionary funding, e.g. early years provision could potentially be included in the scheme if additional flexibility was granted by government. DW suggested that it may be helpful if the 3 local authorities could collaborate on this.</p>	<p>LA partners</p>
<p>PB said that a trend in Shropshire SMEs over past 6-8 weeks was that people in senior roles earning >£50k were departing from businesses. There were, however, some professional services businesses who have performed well over the period and could potentially recruit apprenticeships for re-training. PB and JS would discuss this outside the meeting.</p> <p>CS said that opportunities to raise the profile of the agricultural and horticultural sectors and food and drink production should be explored. The sector is recruiting including taking on a domestic workforce. There needs to be a better understanding of the opportunities available to the domestic workforce - training, apprenticeships etc. The sector has vacancies all year round and is still relying on workers from other countries. There are increasing opportunities in the £30-50k</p>	<p>PB/JS</p>

	<p>salary range for instance, including dealing with e-commerce. Of the 50 domestic workers taken on by CS's firm, 10% who are leaving were on furlough and are going back to their previous jobs.</p> <p>PN said that Shropshire Council had £91m available in grants and still has £8m available to distribute. Getting general support across the LEP area to use this money in discretionary ways would be helpful. A concern is that some nurseries are folding, and this is a real issue for those wanting to access childcare in order to go back to work.</p> <p>SR said there was a need to look at the enabling industries – childcare, carers and support to get people to get into work. The viability of tourism industries to be able to open up due to social distancing is an issue, so support for that is also required.</p> <p>MT thanked JS for the presentation and to everyone for their points. A letter to government would be drafted and sent to Board members, and there may be an opportunity to raise the points at ministerial round table meetings that MT was attending this week.</p>	<p>KJ, MT</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Risk Registers</p> <p>SR said that updates had been made to the risk registers following the Performance Risk and Monitoring Committee (PRMC) meeting on 17 July 2020. In the strategic risk register, a new risk had been included where additional resources are required in order to respond to tender opportunities; and in the project risk register the NMITE risk had been moved to amber status.</p> <p>The registers are reviewed in some depth at each PRMC meeting and their presentation has been simplified.</p> <p>The Board noted the current position relating to both risk registers.</p> <p>The Board noted the additional risks, and the changes and amendments set out in the paper that had been considered at the PRMC meeting on Friday 17th July 2020.</p> <p>PB said that he would welcome a session looking in more detail at the registers at a future Board meeting.</p> <p>MT asked members to consider volunteering to join the PRMC.</p> <p><i>Post meeting note: Sara Williams had kindly volunteered and would be joining the committee.</i></p>	<p>NA</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Growth Deal</p> <p>NA referred members to the paper which provided an update on Growth Deal spend/commitments in 2020/21 and drew members' attention to the Ross Enterprise Park project, and that the LEP would be having discussions about the potential impact on Growth Deal should that take us into a non-proceedable position and we have an underspend position. The capitalisation of Growth Deal funds to cover additional costs incurred had already been discussed.</p> <p>The Board noted the current position relating to Growth Deal Spend Allocation 2020/21.</p> <p>The Board noted the withdrawal of the Rural Enterprise Centre from the Marches LGF Programme.</p> <p>The Board noted the content of the letter from the Leader of Herefordshire Council and current position in respect to the £4,500,000 Ross Enterprise Park project.</p> <p>The Board noted the intention to hold an Emergency LEP Board Meeting to review the approved Project Reserve List, should the Ross Enterprise Park project be unable to deliver.</p>	

	<p>The Board noted the current position in respect to the capitalisation of Growth Deal Costs.</p> <p>Item 5 - GH said that the letter regarding the South Wye Transport Package programme had been issued by Shropshire Council to the s151 officer at Herefordshire Council this morning (21 July 2020).</p> <p>The Board noted the current position relating to the South Wye Transport Package (SWTP) programme.</p> <p>DH raised that a councillor had said at the Herefordshire Council Meeting on 17 July that the SWTP letter was going to be issued by the LEP this week. DH wasn't aware of this and was concerned that the Council had not been informed prior to the information being available to others. JW said that the councillor had contacted him by email and that he had responded with a general reply.</p>	
8.	<p>LEP Chair/CEO report</p> <p>MT congratulated Shropshire Council on leading on the successful River Severn Partnership bid for £36 million funding for work across the whole of the Severn catchment. An update would be provided at the next Board meeting on the cross-border Marches Growth Deal.</p>	GH
9.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>FM said that the Herefordshire Community Foundation still had funding available for grants for voluntary and community organisations supporting people through the COVID crisis. Members were asked to share the information for Herefordshire and Shropshire with their networks: https://www.herefordshirecf.org/ https://staffsfoundation.org.uk/shropshire/</p>	
10.	<p>Close</p> <p>The meeting closed at 6.40pm.</p>	
	<p>Next Meeting of the Board of The Marches LEP Limited: Tuesday 29 September 2020</p>	

Item 2 (2)

**Minutes of the Marches LEP Ltd Emergency Board Meeting
11 August 2020 at 4.00pm
Meeting held via Zoom
(Company Number: 11822614)**

Present:		
Mandy Thorn MBE	MT	Chair, Marches LEP Board
Sonia Roberts	SR	Social Inclusion Champion; Deputy Chair, Marches LEP Board
Paul Hinkins	PH	Telford Business Board Chair
Frank Myers MBE	FM	Herefordshire Business Board Chair
Paul Bennett	PB	Shropshire Business Board Chair
Andrew Manning Cox	AMC	Hereford Enterprise Zone Chair
Cllr David Hitchiner	DH	Leader, Herefordshire Council
Cllr Peter Nutting	PN	Leader, Shropshire Council
Cllr David Wright	DW	Cabinet Member for Economy, Housing, Transport and Infrastructure, Telford & Wrekin Council
Paul Kalinauckas	PK	Access to Finance Champion
Ruth Shepherd	RS	Director, Results Communications
Sara Williams	SW	Marketing Manager - Northern Europe, Protolabs
Dr Catherine Baxter	CB	Higher Education Champion; University Secretary, Harper Adams University

In Attendance:		
James Walton	JW	Section 151 Officer, Shropshire Council
Richard Ball	RB	Director for Economy and Place, Herefordshire Council
Mark Barrow	MB	Executive Director for Place, Shropshire Council
Claire Critchell	CC	Telford Growth Hub Manager
Clare Hannah	CH	Deputy Area Lead, West Midlands & South West, Cities & Local Growth Unit, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
Michelle Egan	ME	Deputy Head, West Midlands and South West, Cities & Local Growth Unit, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
Gill Hamer	GH	Chief Executive, Marches LEP
Kathryn Jones	KJ	Partnership Manager, Marches LEP
Nick Alamanos	NA	Programme Manager, Marches LEP
Ennis Vingoe	EV	Marches LEP Team Support Officer
Wayne Redge	WR	Marches LEP Office Administrator
Amy Bould	AB	Be Bold Media

ITEM		ACTION
1.	<p>1. Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest</p> <p>MT welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending the additional Board meeting. Apologies were received from J Staniforth and C Snell. MT noted that the meeting was being recorded to assist the production of the minutes and that the opportunity for members of the public to attend the meeting had been published. One person had expressed an interest and had been provided with a copy of the agenda but had later advised that they no longer wished to attend.</p> <p>MT said that the purpose of today's Emergency LEP Board meeting was originally envisaged as seeking agreement from the Board as to how to reallocate Local Growth Funds (LGF) released by the withdrawal of two of the previously agreed projects; the Rural Enterprise Centre and the Ross Enterprise Park.</p>	

	<p>However, because of the response to the Notice of Termination and Grant Clawback (issued by Shropshire Council as the accountable body) by Herefordshire Council, the Board is not in a position to consider allocating any further funding to projects, as the Marches LEP finds itself over committed on its available LGF allocation.</p> <p>The letter issued by Shropshire Council and the reply letter from Herefordshire Council were circulated to members this afternoon by email. MT apologised for the departure from the normal governance processes; the letters had originally been due to be circulated with the Board paper but had been withheld at the request of the Accountable Body, whilst permission had been sought from legal services at the two local authorities to release them.</p> <p>MT then tabled a written proposal (shared on the screen for the meeting attendees) that this Emergency Board Meeting be adjourned until September, when a more informed decision could be made about whether it would be possible to reallocate any further funds that may be available to the reserve list projects, as long as they are able to deliver the required outputs by 31 March 2021. This postponement would give an opportunity for positive and constructive dialogue between the accountable body for the LEP, Shropshire Council, and Herefordshire Council on the repayment of the £3.8m.</p> <p>Board members discussed the need for the Accountable Body and Herefordshire Council to come to an understanding of the viewpoints set out in their letters. It was proposed that mediation between the parties be offered in order to try to move the situation forward.</p> <p>DH said that as Herefordshire Council is accountable to the electorate, it will need a legal basis to resolve the disagreement between the two parties. Therefore, it would need to be the legal departments of both bodies that enter negotiations.</p> <p>MT then asked for the Board to vote on the adjournment of this Emergency Board meeting until September to allow time for dialogue towards resolution on the matter of the repayment of the £3.8m, so that a more informed decision could be made on the potential allocation of any further funds that may be available to the reserve list of projects; and that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an update on actions being taken would be provided to the Board by the end of August 2020; • the Accountable Body and Herefordshire Council were asked to enter into a positive and meaningful dialogue using a mediator, concerning the Notice of Termination and Grant Clawback of £3.8m. <p>The Board agreed (For 12; Abstain 1).</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">GH</p> <p style="text-align: right;">DH, PN</p>
<p>2.</p>	<p>Any Other Business MLEP Delivery Plan 2020/21</p> <p>The LEP had been advised on 28 July 2020 that the annual delivery plan would need to be submitted by 21 August 2020. It was suggested that the draft delivery plan would be reviewed by the Chair and Deputy Chair prior to submission. The draft plan would be circulated to Board Members under written procedure, for comment by early September 2020.</p> <p>CH said that the process for submission as outlined was, in principle, fine but she was waiting for confirmation from colleagues in London.</p> <p>Members were asked to contact MT if they wished to be involved in the review of the draft delivery plan prior to submission.</p> <p>The Board agreed the proposal.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">All GH</p>

3.	Close The meeting closed at 4.46pm.	
	Next Meeting of the Board of The Marches LEP Limited: Tuesday 29 September 2020	

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Meeting date:	29 September 2020			
Agenda Item:	3			
Item Subject:	2020/21 LEP Annual Delivery Plan report and Feedback from LEP Mid-Year Performance Review by MHCLG			
For:	Discussion		Decision	X
			Information	x
Purpose:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To seek Board approval of the draft 2020/21 LEP Team Delivery Plan • To outline the purpose of the Mid-Year Performance Review by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) of the Marches LEP which is taking place on 28 September 2020. A verbal report will be provided at the Board meeting on the outcomes from the Review meeting. 				
Recommendations:				
1. To approve the 2020/21 Marches LEP Delivery Plan at Appendix 1				
Summary:				
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An outcome of the government's review of LEPs in 2019 was that all LEPs were required to produce an annual delivery plan. The LEP Board agreed the inaugural delivery plan for 2019/20 in May 2019 and the Board reviewed the year-end progress report at the May 2020 Board meeting. 2. In April 2020 MHCLG advised that LEPs should not spend time producing a 2020/21 Delivery Plan and focus the LEP resources on handling queries and new initiatives from government departments and stakeholders in response to the COVID pandemic and the economic downturn. However, we were advised on 28 July 2020 that we were required to produce a 2020/21 Delivery Plan. 3. Attached at Appendix 1 is the 2020/21 draft Delivery Plan which again identifies the priorities for action and delivery under the themes of strategy, governance and delivery. To note the LEP Team will also be producing an annual report which will include case studies and photos of LEP funded projects. This annual report will be launched on 12 October 2020 at the start of the LEP Business Recovery week. 4. Another outcome of the LEP review in 2019 was that MHCLG would undertake mid-year reviews on LEPs' performance. The 2020/21 mid-year review with MHCLG officers is scheduled for Monday 28 September 2020. The LEP Chair and CEO will provide a verbal update at the Board meeting of the outcomes from this meeting at the LEP Board meeting. 				
Financial implications: None other than staff time				
Legal implications: None				
Risks, opportunities and impacts: The LEP Team benefit from having a delivery plan in place as it enables them to monitor progress against key priorities throughout the year.				
Appendices:				
Appendix 1 – 2020/21 Marches LEP draft Delivery Plan				

Gill Hamer 22.09.2020

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Meeting Date:	29 September 2020				
Agenda Item:	4				
Item Subject:	Marches LEP Strategic and Programme Risk Registers				
For:	Discussion	X	Decision		Information X
Purpose:					
1) To update Board Members on the Strategic and Programme Risk Registers.					
Recommendations:					
1) To note the feedback from the Accountable Body Risk Management team on the format and management of the Risk Registers, as set out in section 1.					
2) For the Board to discuss proposed changes and approach to the Risk Registers in line with feedback from the Accountable Body, as set out in section 2.					
3) To note the addition of new risks and a change of risk rating agreed by PRMC on 17 th July 2020, as set out in section 3.					
4) To note a change in LEP secretariat lead support for PRMC and management of the Risk Registers, as set out in section 4.					
1. Review of Risk Registers by the Accountable Body					
<p>Following a review of the Risk Registers undertaken earlier in the year by the LEP secretariat, additional guidance was sought from the Accountable Body and their Risk Management team on how the format of the Risk Registers could be improved. In July 2020 the LEP secretariat received feedback from the Accountable Body with a number of suggestions for improving the robustness of the Risk Registers and risk management processes. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The addition of a 'Current Controls' column prior to the scoring of the risk to identify controls already in place. This would enable the risk to be scored appropriately and to identify the current risk exposure based on these controls being in place. The 'Prevailing Risk Rating' would then be named "Residual Risk Rating" or 'Current Risk Rating'. • The 'Risk Responses' column should report additional controls which are being or will be put in place to reduce the risk and should include timescales to help understand when a rating reduction is likely to occur. • The addition of a new 'Rationale for Risk Changes' column so that when a risk rating is changed or a risk is closed the risk owner can articulate why the change has occurred, providing background information and challenge where necessary. • Suggested renaming the final 'Change' column to 'Direction of Travel'. • To ensure scoring definitions are evident on the Risk Register to enable risks to be scored accurately. • An annual review to set 'Target Risk Ratings' for the following year and to review whether the previous Target rating has been achieved by year end or not and the impact of any slippage on risk exposure. <p>An update on this review will be undertaken at the next PRMC meeting - Thursday 22nd October 2020.</p>					
2. Proposed format amendments to the Risk Registers					
<p>Following feedback from the Accountable Body, the LEP secretariat have undertaken further work reformatting the Strategic and Programme Risk Registers, incorporating the suggested changes as outlined above.</p> <p>The reformatted registers are attached as Appendix 1 - Strategic Risk Register and Appendix 2 – Programme Risk Register, both setting out the proposed revisions for the Board to consider. These include:</p>					

- The inclusion of a new 'Current Controls' column (highlighted grey) to enable the risk level to be assessed after controls already in place. The 'Current Controls' column in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 have been populated with the relevant controls moved from 'Risk Responses'.
- Consistent with the approach above, the 'Prevailing Risk Ratings' have been renamed 'Residual Risk Ratings'.
- The addition of a new 'Rationale for Risk Changes' column as described in Section 1.
- The final column has been re-named 'Direction of Travel'.
- The inclusion of an Annual Review Date to show the next review – scheduled for the start of the financial year.

The Board are also asked to note Section 4 of this report relating to the future management of the Risk Registers and that the new Corporate Director may have additional ideas to bring forward in relation to risk management.

3. Update on changes to the Risk Registers following PRMC on 17th July 2020

The changes below have been made to the reformatted Risk Registers. Three new risks have been added, highlighted in red in Appendix 1 and 2, and one change to a risk rating. Ratings for the new risks will be assigned by PRMC.

Strategic Risk Register

- **New Risk 4.7** – *Use of unlicensed images on the LEP websites and owned media channels* (Stakeholder, Reputational, Communications & Marketing)

Programme Risk Register

- **New Risk 1.12** – *Government sets call deadlines which may not allow time for the LEP to follow processes set out in the Assurance and Accountability Framework.* (Governance).
- **New Risk 2.12** - *Insufficient capacity in LEP team due to increased workload associated with the additional £14m Getting Building Fund* (Resources).
- **Risk 4.5 – change of risk rating.** PRMC agreed that risks remained extant but that the management of NMiTE Phase 2 by Herefordshire Council could provide an additional level of assurance and in light of this the risk level could be reduced from red to amber.
- **Risk 5.1 – update to the risk response** - The £27m Growth Deal projects have now been contracted and the template funding agreement is being utilised to contract the Getting Building Fund projects.

4. Staffing changes to support PRMC and Risk Registers

The new Corporate Director, Ilia Bowles, is due to start in post with the LEP at the start of October 2020. In line with the remit of the post for governance and risk management the Corporate Director will become the LEP lead for PRMC, including management of the Risk Registers. The Programme Team will support the Corporate Director during the handover and continue to provide support where appropriate.

Financial implications:

- The LEP needs to accurately monitor risks to the programme ensuring these do not impact negatively on performance.

Legal Implications:

- None

Risks, opportunities and impacts:

Risk:

- All key strategic/programme risks may have not been identified. The register is reviewed and updated at each PRMC and work is ongoing to streamline the registers and archive older information.

Opportunity:

- This robust review of the risk registers should lead to better project/programme delivery and management and improved outcomes for the LEP.
- There is further opportunity to improve and refine the risk registers when the new Corporate Director starts in post in October.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – [Strategic Risk Register – proposed new format](#)

Appendix 2 – [Programme Risk Register – proposed new format](#)

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Item 5 - Briefing on the River Severn Partnership action plan

Item 6 – Business Board Chair Updates - verbal

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Item 7 - Growth Deal Programme update and Getting Building Fund update - to follow

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Marches LEP Chair and Chief Executive's Report

Marches LEP Ltd Board meeting on 29 September 2020

This report provides updates on issues that do not require a Board decision. The LEP Chair and CEO will take questions on any of the below items at the Board meeting.

1. Sonia Roberts – LEP Board Diversity Champion

The LEP Board is required by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to appoint a Board Member as a Diversity Champion and the LEP Chair recently asked Sonia Roberts if she would take on the role. She has very kindly agreed to take on the role from September 2020 which is great news. Sonia will be reviewing the LEP's existing Equality and Diversity Policy and Statement that were produced in Spring 2019 and considering options for embedding diversity in the policies and procedures of the LEP. Please follow the links below to the two documents which are located on the LEP website.

https://www.marcheslep.org.uk/download/transparency/policies_and_procedures/The-Marches-LEP-Equality-Statement-.pdf

https://www.marcheslep.org.uk/download/transparency/policies_and_procedures/The-Marches-LEP-Equality-and-Diversity-Policy.pdf

2. Growth Hub activity report

The Marches Growth Hub, the LEP's business support service, provides advice and guidance to businesses across the Marches and signposts to follow up services, including grant funding accessed through a portfolio of EU funded projects and other public/private sector initiatives. Its website www.marchesgrowthhub.co.uk contains information on national and local support and continues to be updated regularly to provide accurate information on Covid-19 related support, including government advice and guidance <https://www.marchesgrowthhub.co.uk/advice-and-support/coronavirus-information-for-businesses/>. Business engagement activity continues on-line and a varied 'virtual' event programme with inputs from a range of partners may be found at <https://www.marchesgrowthhub.co.uk/calendar/>.

The Marches Growth Hub Steering Group met on 3 September 2020 and the Operations Group on 17 September 2020. Key items to note include:

A new private-sector Steering Group Chair is to be recruited through open advertisement. This (non-remunerated) role will increase capacity to champion entrepreneurship, new ways of doing business and new approaches to business support in line with additional funding received from BEIS. This role will also potentially provide a progression pathway to the LEP Board in order to increase diversity within Board membership.

BEIS has approved plans submitted for the use of core and additional funding for this financial year and has now formally signed off reports submitted to close off 2019/20 (these may be found here) <https://www.marchesgrowthhub.co.uk/about-us/marches-growth-hub-reports/marches-growth-hub-reports-2019-2020/201920>.

There will be a new grant funding programme launched in October 2020 which will outline how Marches businesses can access the grants that were announced here <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-announces-10-million-for-small-businesses-to-kickstart-tourism>. Telford & Wrekin Council are kindly leading the delivery of this project but support, subject to specific eligibility criteria, will be available across the Marches.

Additional funding to support businesses in responding to EU Exit is being sought as the end of the transition period nears.

3. Devolution and Local Recovery White Paper

The LEP CEO has been advised by MHCLG officials that the White Paper on “devolution and local recovery” will now be published later in the Autumn, either before or after the proposed Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR). To note the LEP Network will be submitting to Treasury a proposal seeking an increased level of funding for LEPs and that the funding be agreed for 3 years, in order to give all LEPs some clarity on funding. The LEP CEO has also been advised that the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has also submitted a request for the CSR for increased funding and a three year funding settlement for Growth Hubs.

4. LEP and Hereford Enterprise Zone (HEZ) websites – updating

The website development company Kensa from Telford has been appointed following an open procurement exercise to work with the LEP and HEZ Teams to produce the new websites for both organisations. Development work is underway. The timetable is for the new HEZ website to be tested and operating by 30 October 2020 and the new LEP website tested and operating by early December 2020.

5. Marches Skills Advisory Panel – update

The Marches LEP is currently recruiting for two additional posts following its successful application to become a Careers Hub under the Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) project. These will enable the LEP to increase work with schools and colleges in delivering high-quality careers guidance and to deepen and extend business engagement activities.

To pull together information on support available to businesses and individuals affected by redundancy and barriers to employment, the LEP will be developing a micro-site on its website. This will help users to navigate through different programmes which they may be eligible for (national and local projects, including those supported by the European Social Fund). This is to be funded under a remaining Education and Skills Funding Agency budget for local engagement.

A Skills Advisory Panel meeting is scheduled for 2 October 2020. This will include an update on local economic and employment conditions and a discussion on how the SAP has influenced local education and skills provision in line with evidenced need. Detailed information on the Marches skills evidence base may be found here <https://www.marcheslep.org.uk/about/data-research>.

6. Marches LEP Business Recovery Week: 12 - 16 October 2020

A quick reminder that the Marches Business Recovery Week will be run virtually from October 12 -16 and it will examine how the business community can be supported to thrive in the new post-COVID world. The programme of virtual events over the course of the week can be found [here](#).

As previously advised the LEP is required by Government to hold at least one public meeting a year for stakeholders to receive updates on the work of the LEP and provide an opportunity for members of the public and stakeholders to ask the LEP Chair, Board Members and the CEO questions. The opportunity to do this will be at the “**LEP in action**” event **between 8am-9am on Monday 12 October 2020**. This will be a virtual event which will both launch the LEP 2020 Annual Report and also constitute the LEP’s annual public meeting. It will start with a ten-minute presentation by the LEP Chair to launch the report, focussing on the contents of the Annual Report, a review of the last year’s activity and a look ahead to the Business Recovery Week.

We are asking members of the public to raise questions with the LEP about work of the LEP. It would be appreciated if all Board Members were able to attend this event. A Zoom meeting invite will be sent to you shortly. We will also be approaching a number of Board Members to say a few words about the work they do on behalf of the LEP.

7. Marches Investment Fund – Allocation of £1.58m revenue to the three local authorities to support businesses effected by the flooding and COVID

In August the three local authorities provided the LEP CEO and Business Board Chairs with their first update reports on progress in allocating the funds to support SMEs with small grants and support tourism initiatives to encourage people to come and visit the area over the next six to twelve months. The LEP team will provide a full impact report on how the funds have benefitted businesses and the tourism sector at the November 2020 Board meeting.

Mandy Thorn MBE DL, Chair
Gill Hamer, Chief Executive

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