

**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: center;">GH</p> <p style="text-align: center;">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>	

	Members were asked to contact MT if they wished to be involved in the review of the draft delivery plan prior to submission. The Board agreed the proposal.	All GH
3.	Close The meeting closed at 4.46pm.	
	Next Meeting of the Board of The Marches LEP Limited: Tuesday 29 September 2020	

Signed (electronically):

Mandy Thorn MBE DL, Chair Marches LEP

Date: 29 September 2020