



THE MARCHES LEP
**ANNUAL
REPORT 2020**



WELCOME

Welcome to the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership's (LEP) annual report for 2020.

It has been a year like no other.

I am sure that, like me, you have found it truly heartbreaking to see the damage the coronavirus pandemic has inflicted on thriving, prosperous businesses and their owners and employees.

Mandy Thorn MBE DL

Chair,
The Marches Local Enterprise Partnership



In the space of a few months, many of the certainties of business life have been swept away as the nation has fought a huge battle to control the Covid-19 virus. Across the Marches there is no sector – and hardly an individual business – which has not felt the impact of the crisis in some way.

All this through absolutely no fault of their own.

The work of those in the front line – including our NHS, care workers, emergency services, councils and public sector organisations – has been remarkable. And the resilience that so many have shown in the face of the virus has been inspiring.

The Marches LEP is leading the region's recovery and rebuilding programme, working with our business community and public sector partners to target resources where they are most needed, lobby regional and national Government for the support that is required and ensuring that no sector of our community is left behind in the years ahead.

This annual report sets out some of the projects and work which are already under way to provide new opportunities across the Marches and lays out our priorities for the year ahead.

We will continue to invest in the modern infrastructure we need to compete, the dynamic skills required in an increasingly digital world, the sustainable technology which will help protect our planet for future generations and the innovation that will drive the prosperous future we all wish for.

This is a special place in which to work, live and do business. By working together, in partnership, we can ensure a flourishing future for many years to come.

30,775
BUSINESSES
IN THE MARCHES

MARCHES HOME TO
£14.3BN
ECONOMY

£104M
GROWTH DEAL
FUNDING SINCE 2015

57,700
NEW JOBS
PLANNED BY 2038

SIX PROJECTS TO CREATE
800 NEW JOBS AND
1,600 HOMES IN £14M
GETTING BUILDING FUND
INVESTMENT

£27M
INVESTED IN LATEST GROWTH DEAL TO
CREATE MORE THAN
1,700 JOBS

+£230,000
FUNDING RELEASED
 TO PROTECT IRONBRIDGE GORGE MUSEUMS
 DURING LOCKDOWN

1,000
NEW 'GREEN' JOBS
 PLANNED BY 2038

REGION'S BIGGEST
BUSINESS
SURVEY
 CONDUCTED BY MARCHES LEP
 DURING LOCKDOWN

MARCHES GROWTH HUB STAFF DEALT WITH
NEARLY 5,000
TELEPHONE CALLS AND
MORE THAN 9,500 EMAILS
 FROM BUSINESSES DURING LOCKDOWN

MOVE TO
50%
RENEWABLE
ELECTRICITY
 GENERATION BY 2030

MORE THAN
54 ACRES
OF LAND HAS BEEN SOLD
 OR IS COMMITTED TO DEVELOPMENT AT
 SKYLON PARK, HEREFORD ENTERPRISE ZONE

BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

To say the past year has been challenging would be a real understatement.

The Covid-19 crisis is unlike any we have known in peacetime and follows on from the devastating floods of February which did so much damage across the Marches.

Gill Hamer

Chief Executive,
The Marches Local Enterprise Partnership



In the midst of this crisis, it can sometimes be difficult to appreciate the work which is being done to mitigate its impact and build for the future we all want to see.

But the Marches LEP is doing just that – and the coming year will be one in which we continue to work alongside all our partners in both the private and public sectors to drive growth and prosperity.

You will see some of this work in the latest phase of Local Growth Fund projects we are helping fund.

More than £104million is currently being invested into the region's economy to create thousands of homes and jobs thanks to the Marches Growth Deal, with a total of £38.8million supporting 16 projects in 2020/21.

This is funding which produces demonstrable results, not just in the jobs being created on the ground today, but in the way these programmes pave the way for future growth and prosperity.

I would also like to pay tribute to the work of our Marches LEP team – and partners in all three local authorities, business boards and all sector representatives – to support business during the Covid-19 outbreak.

Our officers worked tirelessly to allocate £14million of Getting Building Funding to a number of shovel-ready projects in double-quick time and £1.58million of emergency funding to help those businesses hardest hit by the virus and February's floods.

Meanwhile our Growth Hub teams have fielded thousands of inquiries and helped distribute millions of pounds in grants through our local authorities during the crisis, all whilst continuing the excellent work they do to support business throughout our region.

It is no surprise then that the Marches LEP met all the targets set in its annual performance review – being rated good for governance and delivery.

It is a proud record we are determined to build on in the next 12 months.

OUR YEAR OF ACHIEVEMENT

Businesses across the Marches have endured the most difficult year many will ever have faced. The combination of February's devastating floods and the coronavirus lockdown has created the most challenging environment in modern times. But throughout the last 12 months the Marches LEP has been working tirelessly to help drive growth across Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin. And despite the challenges, there have been plenty of successes.

SEPTEMBER 2019

Communities in the Marches are urged to apply for grants worth more than £1million to help get more people into work. The European Social Fund's new Community Grants Programme will see funding of up to £20,000 given to organisations to help support unemployed people through packages of training and support.

The Education and Skills Funding Agency launched an invitation to tender for organisations to set up and run the grant schemes in the Marches.



European Union
European Social Fund
Investing in jobs and skills

OCTOBER 2019

A £4million development at Telford's premier industrial site, T54 Technology Park, will create up to 30 new jobs thanks to a unique Land Deal developed by Telford & Wrekin Council with Homes England and the Marches LEP.

Torus Measurement Systems Ltd – part of Torus Technology Group – is building an additional 10,000 sq ft new industrial unit at Plot 5B next to its existing units at the Naird Lane site.

The main building is currently at full capacity and a second unit is now 75 per cent fully utilised.



NOVEMBER 2019

A special programme to help small and medium sized businesses across the Marches to grow is on target to create more than 260 jobs, an independent report says.

The Marches Building Investment Grant (MBIG) scheme had created 110 jobs by the time it closed at the end of 2019 – with that figure growing to 268 jobs by 2025 as companies which have benefitted continue to expand.

The figures are revealed in a report into the scheme, which is promoted by the LEP and Marches Growth Hub, by independent consultants Amion which says MBIG will have added an extra £30million of value to the Marches economy by 2025.

DECEMBER 2019

The Telford Land Deal – a partnership between the Marches LEP, Telford & Wrekin Council and Homes England – has now delivered 21 commercial sites, 10 sites for residential development and created 1,114 jobs.

The figures – revealed in a report to Telford & Wrekin Council – include many jobs in engineering and manufacturing adding skilled job opportunities for the borough's communities.



JANUARY 2020

Work is now under way to create the infrastructure to support a world leading agri-tech research and innovation hub on the edge of Newport, ultimately supporting the creation of up to 950 jobs.

Ni.Park is a key element of the Newport Innovation and Enterprise Package (NIEP) which secured £6.36million funding from the Marches LEP under the Local Growth Fund, matched by investment from Telford & Wrekin Council.

Works at Ni.Park are being delivered by infrastructure group Balfour Beatty. The project will provide a significant economic boost to Newport and the local area.



FEBRUARY 2020

A major new strategy to develop tourism and the visitor economy across the region has been launched by the Marches LEP.

The Marches LEP Visitor Economy Strategy calls for a new partnership approach to promoting Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin to develop a thriving, sustainable and enhanced tourism sector which will lead to increased numbers of visitors and new jobs and opportunities.

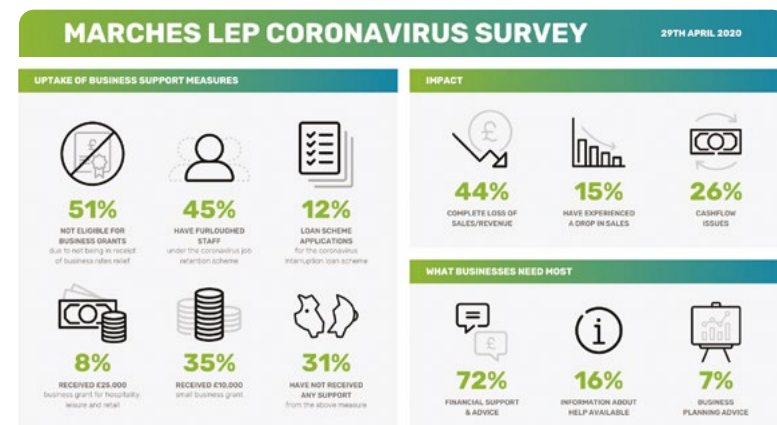
LEP chair Mandy Thorn said developing a flourishing tourism economy was crucial to the overall long-term economic health of the region.



MARCH 2020

The Marches LEP awarded £5.43million Growth Deal funding to the Hereford Enterprise Zone at Skylon Park. The 110-acre development has already attracted significant private sector investment with 38 companies occupying new premises in the Zone.

The Growth Deal investment will support infrastructure works including landscaping, installation of utilities and road access to open up a further seven hectares of employment land on the North Magazine, creating 500 new full-time jobs. The work will be carried out alongside the design and implementation of a number of active travel measures and the purchase of an electric bus to encourage sustainable travel to and from the Zone.



APRIL 2020

To measure the full scale of the economic impact of coronavirus on the region, the Marches LEP carried out one of the biggest-ever surveys of businesses.

More than 500 businesses responded to the survey with 98 per cent saying they had been affected by the outbreak. The Marches LEP has used the evidence to lobby the Government for targeted support for the region.

MAY 2020

The Marches LEP injected nearly £1.6million into the regional economy to support the recovery of tourism and businesses affected by February's terrible floods and the Covid-19 outbreak which followed shortly afterwards. The three regional business boards worked with local authority partners to devise innovative schemes to help businesses specifically tailored to help those hardest hit in their areas.



JUNE 2020

The Marches LEP and Telford Land Deal Board agreed a special payment of £230,000 to support Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust after it appealed for external financial help. The funding recognised the Trust's unique role in promoting tourism in the region and the hugely damaging impact that lockdown had had on the museums.

JULY 2020

The Marches is to play a leading part in a new wave of Careers Hub expansion announced by the Department for Education and The Careers & Enterprise Company. The Marches Careers Hub will be made up of local schools and colleges working together with local employers, universities and training providers. It will be the one of only 11 hubs in the UK to include all schools in its LEP region.

AUGUST 2020

More than 800 new jobs and 1,600 homes could be created after the Marches LEP secured £14million for shovel-ready projects to help the recovery of the regional economy. Six projects in Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin will benefit from the investment from the Getting Building Fund announced by the Government.

OUR WORK CONTINUES

The next 12 months – possibly more than any other time in recent history – will be crucial for the future of both our national and regional economy.

Nobody can be certain how the Covid-19 outbreak will play out over the next year, but we can be sure that its impact will continue to be felt throughout the business community.

The Marches LEP will continue to talk to businesses and lobby national and regional partners to get the support our region will need. And we will continue to invest in projects which will make a significant contribution to the future prosperity of our region.

A range of Growth Deal 3 projects and new schemes will start to progress over the next 12 months bringing new jobs, vitality and economic life to the Marches.

More than £27million is being invested by the Marches LEP in a programme of high-profile schemes which will create more than 1,700 jobs and boost growth across the region.

The LEP awarded the Growth Deal funding to a number of schemes as part of its strategic plan to unlock employment opportunities, boost skills and create a growing, sustainable economy. The projects will create several hectares of land for employment, sites for nearly 500 homes and new training, health and retail facilities.



HIGHLIGHTS OF PLANNED WORK:

The Primary Care Centre at the Tannery in Shrewsbury is a mixed-use development in the centre of the town that supports a number of key objectives, as well as providing accommodation for students at the University Centre Shrewsbury.

The Marches LEP awarded £2.06million Growth Deal funding to support Phase 2 of the development for a new Primary Care Centre, the creation of 171 sq m of new office space and three retail units as well as additional student accommodation.

The medical practice will improve access to services for local people, with capacity for 10,000 patients benefitting from an integrated model of care. It will also provide facilities and training for medical students in conjunction with the Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital Trust and Keele University, helping to address shortfalls in health care professionals, as well as safeguarding and creating new jobs in the practice.

The **Oswestry Innovation Park** will unlock an important growth corridor through the delivery of infrastructure to support housing and employment growth and enable businesses to grow, delivering economic and social benefits to Oswestry and its wider hinterland.

An investment of £5million Growth Deal funding will support enabling infrastructure works to bring forward 1.87 hectares of serviced employment land at the Mile End site with 830m of new road to connect the site with the strategic road network. The funding will support the future development of over 1,000 new homes and the creation of over 500 jobs over the lifetime of the project and beyond.



In **Telford**, an investment of £7million Growth Deal funds by the Marches LEP is supporting projects in Donnington, Granville, the Station Quarter within the Town Centre Growth Programme area as well as the 'opportunity' market town of Wellington. The investment will deliver 495 new housing units, create 60 new jobs and unlock three acres of employment land as part of our **Stronger Communities Regeneration Sites initiative**.

We are also working to ensure the region has the best health and social care training possible. **The Marches Centre of Excellence in Healthcare, Allied Health & Social Care** project at the University of Wolverhampton's Telford campus will create a technologically advanced learning facility that will gain national recognition.

The project has been awarded a £3.5million Growth Deal investment to support the creation of 1,151 sq m of new training floorspace with over 1,000 students enrolled in the first four years. It will incorporate technologies such as immersive reality, revolutionising the way in which learning content is delivered and developing new courses and content to meet market and sector demands.

A £200,000 Growth Deal award to support the expansion of **Advanced Manufacturing, Engineering and Automotive** training facilities at Shrewsbury Colleges Group's London Road campus is now bearing fruit.

The investment is supporting the construction of a new bespoke automotive engineering training centre, the modification and specialisation of the existing workshops and specialist training equipment.

The facilities will provide students and businesses with the training they need to get ahead in emerging areas and technologies and see more than 600 sq m of training space created in the new centre and a further improvement to 400 sq m of existing facilities.

Alongside this work, there are six new projects currently being contracted with £14million awarded to the Marches LEP from the new Getting Building Fund announced in August 2020.



A £6million scheme to make improvements to **Hereford City Centre** has been awarded £3million.

The project will bring benefits to the public realm in the historic core of the city centre, including the High Town area and the adjoining Cathedral and River Wye Quarter with improvements to paving, street furniture, landscaping and street trees and public art. The project will create 90 new jobs and an additional 100 construction jobs.

A further £1million has been awarded to the **Integrated Construction Wetlands project** in Herefordshire to help lift a moratorium on housing development in the entirety of the Lugg catchment caused by phosphate build up.

The project will see the construction of up to eight integrated wetlands to provide natural filtration downstream of existing waste water treatment

works to significantly improve the water quality as well as bringing major environmental improvements.

The project will create 500 new jobs and enable the development of 1,385 houses currently on hold once the moratorium is lifted.

A £16million-plus project to remodel Shrewsbury's **Pride Hill Shopping Centre** has been awarded £5million as part of Shropshire Council's long-term investment strategy to support the economic growth and regeneration of the town centre.

The Getting Building investment will fund enabling works to repurpose the centre for leisure use with complementary cultural and civic uses to secure a sustainable future and contribute positively to Shrewsbury as a quality destination for residents and visitors. The project will create 100 new jobs and a further 150 construction jobs.



In Hereford, the **Skylon Park Campus Development** is a pivotal component of **NMITE**, comprising three cutting edge, world-class buildings and teaching facilities: the Centre for Advanced Timber Technology (CATT), the Centre for Automated Manufacturing (CAM) and the Centre for Future Skills (CFS).

NMITE had already received £5.66million from the LEP's Growth Programme in June 2020, and has now secured a further £1.6million from the Getting Building fund to accelerate completion of the build programme for the CAM. NMITE phase 1 had also previously received another £2.74million for its Blackfriars Campus in the city centre.

The project will create an additional 26 new jobs, 100 additional construction jobs, 2,500 sq m of new learning space and assist 200 new learners with short courses, under and post-graduate courses and degree apprenticeships. The CAM will boost manufacturing output and digital connectivity through its work with partners and businesses, enhancing automation capability through skills, training and applied research.

A project to help regenerate **Wellington** has been awarded £2.38million as part of the **Stronger Regeneration Sites Growth Deal** project. The investment will unlock stalled sites at New College and Glebe Street which are located within or next to one of the most deprived wards in the borough and are gateways into Wellington. The project will unlock three acres of brownfield development land, deliver 110 new residential units incorporating sustainability in design, and improve walking and cycling routes into Wellington.



Additional place shaping outputs will also be delivered in the form of footpaths and a mini football playing pitch.

And we are playing our part to help the environment by awarding £1million Getting Building funds to a £1.4 million project to address fuel poverty by creating zero carbon homes in **Telford & Wrekin** through the installation of innovative energy technologies such as PV solar and battery energy storage units.

The project will also establish a new national training programme backed by the Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) to upskill the existing workforce and train apprentices in battery storage installation, with Telford College becoming the first college in the country to pilot and roll out the training.

The project will retrofit 68 existing Wrekin Housing Group homes and complete 11 new houses with

zero carbon technology, create 200 sq m of new or improved training space and train 130 learners by 2024/25.

We have also been playing a leading role in the work to bring **Shrewsbury Flaxmill Maltings** back into use. The site – home to the world's first iron-framed structure and which contains eight listed industrial heritage buildings – has benefitted from £1.92million of Growth Deal funding to remediate two hectares of brownfield land next to the complex.

This project will help provide the infrastructure to unlock the provision of 120 new residential units and businesses which in turn will help regenerate one of the most deprived areas in the country.

The Growth Deal funding will also help improve access to the site by upgrading a roundabout, construct an access road into the site which will also help provide access for the future housing development and has enabled the construction of a bat house to protect the various species found on the site.



RISING TO A YEAR OF CHALLENGE



If ever there was a 12 months which demonstrated the key role that the Marches Growth Hub plays in supporting business, this was it. From ensuring that business was comprehensively briefed on the UK's EU exit to handling thousands of inquiries at the height of the coronavirus crisis, the Growth Hub has been at the heart of keeping the region's economy moving.



The Growth Hub – an online virtual advice centre supported by three physical bases in Hereford, Shrewsbury and Telford – plays a central part in the Marches LEP's ambition to drive growth and prosperity, by supporting new business start-ups and helping established companies to grow.

This year the Growth Hub acted as a gateway to 19 EU funded business support projects with a total financial value of over £17.5million. A further £4million of investment in business support schemes is in the pipeline.

The four largest European Regional Development Fund schemes awarded a combined £1,641,922 to Marches businesses between April 1 2019 and March 31 2020, an investment which will lead to the anticipated creation of 100 jobs. In addition, the Rural Development Programme for England Growth Programme awarded £3million to Marches

businesses during the same period in a move likely to create a further 200 jobs.

The Growth Hub's own £10million Growth Challenge campaign – signposting businesses to the wide range of support on offer – played a key role in this success.

A look at the figures for the numbers of businesses helped during lockdown gives a further indication of the strength of the Growth Hub's contribution to the business community.

Figures covering April to July 2020 show that Growth Hub staff dealt with nearly 5,000 telephone calls asking for advice, more than 9,500 emails from businesses, supported nearly 90 virtual events attended by over 1,600 people to help business recover from the crisis and also received more than 450 calls to the National Business Support Helpline.



The Growth Hub has also strengthened its position with the appointment of new advisers – including a partnership with the Department for International Trade to help encourage more companies to do business overseas – and has worked closely with regional partners at other Growth Hubs to deliver the latest and most comprehensive advice service around Covid-19 and the EU exit.

Indeed, such was the success of the online Brexit toolkit developed by the Growth Hub that it was frequently able to share the latest official updates before even the Government, leading to record figures for traffic to the site.

Alongside the Growth Hub, the Marches LEP also plays a major role in developing training and skills across our region – something which will become ever more important as we chart our recovery from the coronavirus lockdown.

To that end, we have developed a new microsite this year to help people quickly and easily find the

training and skills support which is right for them, so that we can help everybody to make the most of their talents in the new world of work.

We continue to work with our partners in education and training to ensure that all support meets the needs of the business community and work closely with The Careers & Enterprise Company to link schools and colleges to employers and to help them deliver world-class careers support for all young people.

This year we were delighted that the Marches was chosen to be part of a new wave of Careers Hub expansion announced by the Department for Education and The Careers & Enterprise Company, extending coverage in local communities across England.

The Marches Careers Hub will be made up of local schools and colleges working together with local employers, universities and training providers. It will be the one of only 11 hubs in the UK to include all schools in its LEP region.



FLAGSHIP PROJECTS NEAR COMPLETION

Developments on Skylon Park made great strides in 2019/20 as two of Hereford Enterprise Zone's biggest investments to date came to fruition.

Putting a stake in the ground for economic recovery in a year which has seen some projects delayed due to the coronavirus pandemic, both the £7.3million transformation of the historic Shell Store and the building of the £9million Cyber Quarter – Midlands Centre for Cyber Security are nearing completion.

The trail-blazing Cyber Centre is a joint venture between the University of Wolverhampton and Herefordshire Council, part-funded by the Marches LEP and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

It is a key investment in creating more knowledge-based jobs in the region and will support businesses and organisations facing the growing threat of cyber attacks. It will be the catalyst for further growth in the defence and security sector cluster of businesses both on the Zone and in the wider Herefordshire area.

The last year has also seen the ambitious transformation of a former munitions store on Skylon Park into a 2,500 sq m flagship business incubation centre for Hereford. The former derelict Shell Store is now a modern, open plan space

offering office and conference facilities built within the existing steel frame of the original building. Funding for the scheme has come from the ERDF and Herefordshire Council as well as a loan from the Marches LEP's Marches Investment Fund and anticipated business occupants will have created more than 450 jobs by 2031.

The 110-acre zone at Rotherwas, designated eight years ago as the enterprise zone for the Marches LEP region, is home to 43 businesses employing 819 people with another 1,281 jobs expected to be generated by those companies as they grow.

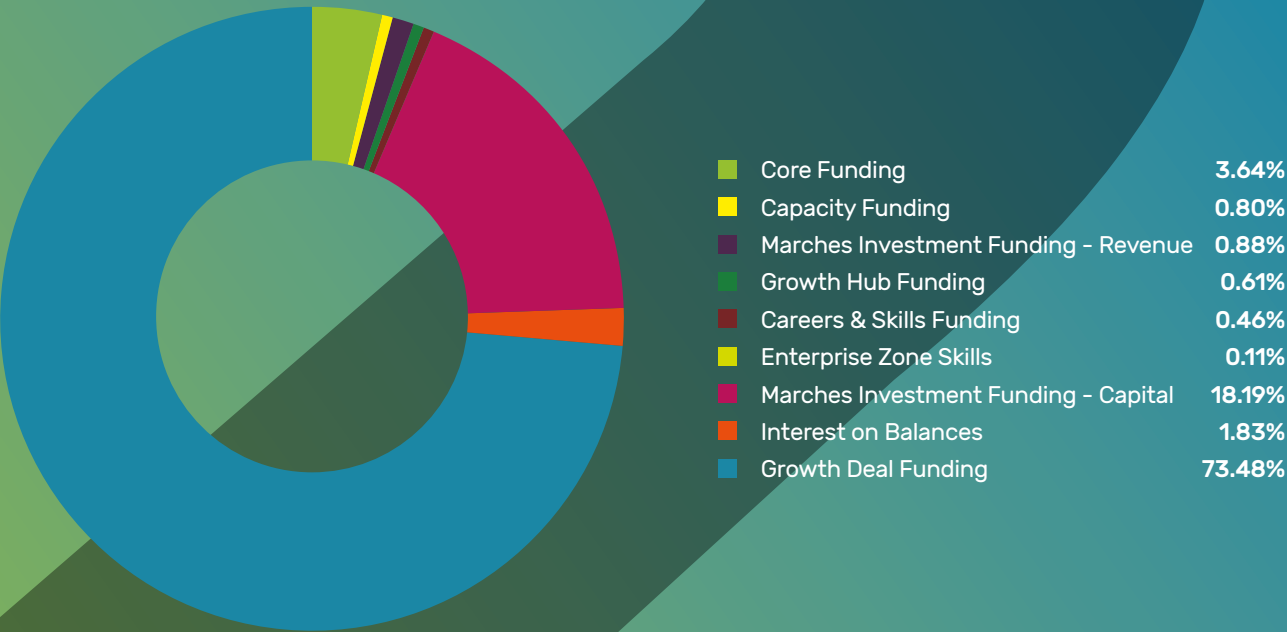
More than 54 acres of land has been sold or is committed to development, with 61,000 sq m of workplace already constructed or in the pipeline as the result of a total investment to date in land and buildings of over £44million.



FINANCIALS

The total funding and income available in 2019/20 was £43,114,275

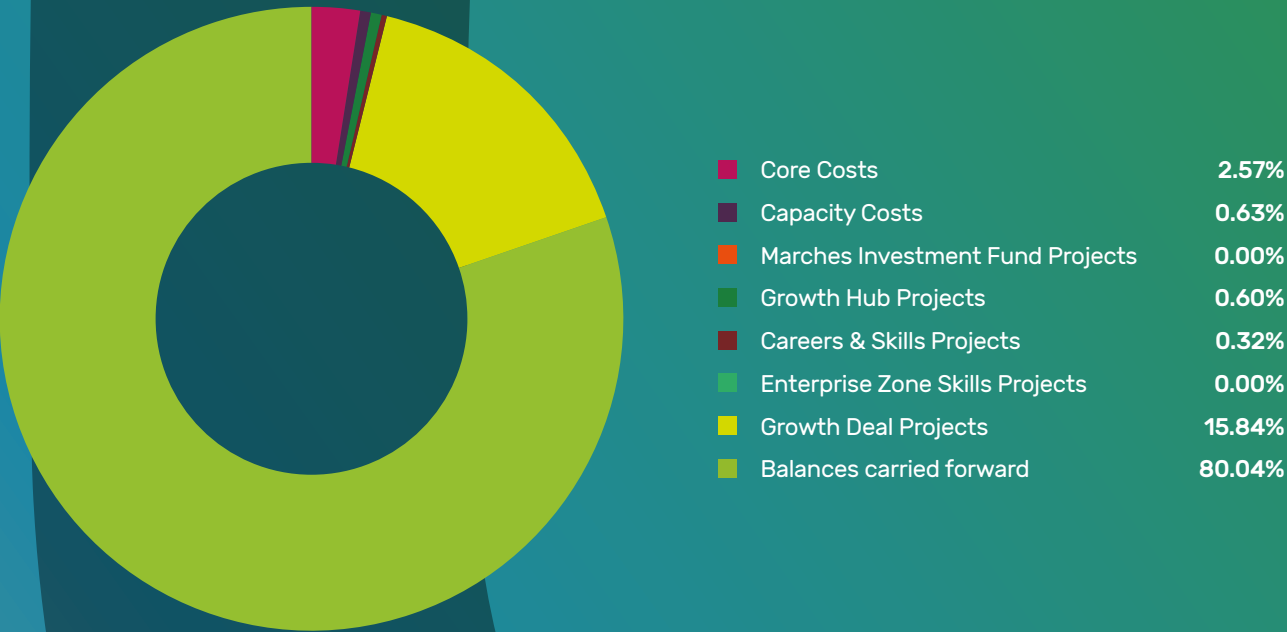
The funding received from the various sources is detailed in the chart below.



For the full copy of the accounts:
https://www.marcheslep.org.uk/download/marches_lep_agm/2020/Item-3-Appendix-1-Marches-LEP-accounts-v4.pdf

Total expenditure in 2019/20 across the various programmes was £8,606,156

A balance of £34,508,118.86 has been carried forward to 2020/21 within grant accounts and revenue reserves. A breakdown of expenditure against the programme of activities carried out within the LEP is detailed in the chart below.



For a full list of staff who work for the LEP visit
www.marcheslep.org.uk/about/management-team/
 and to see the board members go to
www.marcheslep.org.uk/about/lep-board/



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