

Report on Delivery Plan Achievements in 2020/21

The 2020/21 Marches LEP Delivery Plan can be found at https://www.marcheslep.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Item-3-Appendix-1-MLEP-Delivery-Plan-2020-21_2.pdf

Section	Actions Agreed	Actions Completed and Progress
3.0	Strategic Activity	
Key Actions for 2020/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To guide strategic thinking in local recovery, we will seek resources to repurpose our Local Industrial Strategy as a Local Economic Recovery Plan. We await the English Devolution and Local Recovery White Paper and confirmation of how we can consolidate and enhance our role in driving local sustainable growth. We will continue to articulate the needs of the Marches through work with local, regional and national partners - this will include engagement with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the West Midlands LEP CEOs and West Midlands Chairs and with the CEOs and Chairs from the East Midlands LEPs - ME9. the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) as an observer on the WMCA Board. the wider membership of Midlands Engine, particularly to support our data and intelligence capabilities and Midlands Connect to promote investment in our transport infrastructure. Welsh partners through the Growing Mid Wales Partnership to deliver our joint transport and digital and energy priorities and with the Welsh Government and the Office of the Secretary of State for Wales in developing a proposed cross-border Marches Growth Deal. the LEP Network to share best practice and to amplify local messages into national government and across government departments. 	<p>Economic Recovery Plan drafted in March 2021 and passed for consideration by Local Authorities prior to submission to respective Business Boards.</p> <p>Government announced in October 2020 that publication of the White Paper would be postponed until 2021. In the meantime, in May, a final report published by the Covid Recovery Commission (a coalition of senior business leaders), <i>'Ambition 2030: A Partnership for Growth'</i>, had many references to the work of LEPs and called on government to build on their work. Localis have also published a report <i>'A Plan for Local Growth'</i> which referenced the work of LEPs and recognised the work they had done so far in driving local sustainable growth.</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>CEO invited to WMCA Board meetings on 20 April 2020, 20 May 2020, 5 June 2020, 17 June 2020, 23 July 2020, 20 August 2020, 18 September 2020, 13 November 2020, 19 November 2020, 15 January 2021, 12 February 2021 and 11 March 2021.</p> <p>Midlands Engine Quarterly Economic briefing attended on 20 January 2021 and Midlands Engine Intelligence Community meetings attended on 6 November 2020 and 4 March 2021. Director of Midlands Connect presented update on infrastructure priorities across the region to the LEP Board on 21 July 2020. https://www.marcheslep.org.uk/download/marches_lep_board_meetings/agendas/2020/07_july/21-July-2020/Midlands-Connect-Update-Marches-LEP-Board-July20.pdf</p> <p>Communication ongoing - ideas put forward around the proposed Marches Growth Deal ahead of the Comprehensive Spending Review in 2020 following meetings held with Wales Office and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), supported by our Area Lead and Growing Mid-Wales partners. Ongoing meetings to understand the implementation of the Mid Wales Growth Deal, the Union Connectivity Review and opportunities for joint working.</p> <p>Ongoing - Peer Review exercise undertaken with Dorset LEP on 8 March 2021 to share good practice. LEP Network Ministerial round tables supported by Executive and attended by Chair and nominated sector representatives. Support offered to LEP Review Working Groups.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will continue our business and community consultation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public engagement and thought leadership through a Business Week held in October 2020 to showcase the work of the LEP and launch the LEP 2020 Virtual Annual Report. 	<p>The Marches Business Recovery Week ran from 12 to 16 October 2020 and examined, in detail, how the business community could be supported to thrive in the new post-pandemic environment. LEP 2020 Annual Report https://www.marcheslep.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/The-Marches-LEP-Annual-Report-2020-FINAL.pdf produced</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the three business boards, FSB, Chambers of Commerce, NFU and other membership organisations to share business intelligence and drive economic recovery. • Liaison with the area’s MPs will continue. We will seek their support to highlight how the Marches LEP can add value to national initiatives, to raise awareness of specific local economic issues and opportunities and increase the profile of the Marches across government departments. • Marches LEP Board meetings will continue to be held virtually and a process will be developed to enable members of the public to observe proceedings by registering in advance of the meetings. • The membership and terms of reference of the three Business Boards will be reviewed and a procurement exercise held to identify appropriate secretariat and governance support (funded by the LEP until September 2021 in the first instance). • The LEP will attend Scrutiny sessions held by each of the three Local Authorities as requested in order to highlight the work of the LEP and demonstrate how it is adding value to local placemaking priorities. 	<p>and launched at virtual event on 12 October 2020, supported by video providing overview of highlights of LEP work https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VCJnvk3IZKM</p> <p>Ongoing – series of meetings held with the Covid 19 Economic Impact Group of stakeholders (including Chambers, FSB, NFU and private sector board members) to gather feedback from the business community and share through the LEP network and with Ministers.</p> <p>Economic Recovery Summit held on 15 October 2020 as part of the Marches Business Recovery Week. Weekly Business Intelligence Reports submitted to BEIS by Business Support Lead.</p> <p>CEO attended Ministerial Roundtable events on 22 May 2020 and 20 October 2020. CEO and LEP Chair met Rt Hon Jesse Norman MP (Hereford and South Herefordshire) on 9 October 2020 and Daniel Kawczynski MP (Shrewsbury & Atcham) also on this date. The LEP Chair also wrote letters to all Marches MPs highlighting the work of the LEP, following publication of the 2020 Annual Report in October 2020, and again in December 2020.</p> <p>Virtual meetings of the LEP Board took place on 26 May 2020, 14 July 2020, 21 July 2020, 11 August 2020, 29 September 2020, 24 November 2020, 26 January 2021, 24 February 2021 and 23 March 2021. With the exemption of confidential board meetings, all have been advertised allowing the attendance of members of the public.</p> <p>Ongoing. New Chair at Shropshire Business Board, Beth Heath, appointed as a director of Marches LEP Ltd on 24 February 2021. Secretariat support (funded by Marches LEP) for all three Business Boards contracted following open procurement exercise.</p> <p>Scrutiny session were attended with the 3 Local Authorities as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shropshire - Performance Management Scrutiny Committee - 16 September 2020 • Herefordshire - General Scrutiny Committee - 7 December 2020 • Telford & Wrekin - Business & Finance Scrutiny Committee - 9 December 2020
4.0	Governance		
	Key Actions for 2020/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointment of an Interim to support the work on the implications of becoming a Company Ltd by Guarantee. • Recruitment and appointment of Director of Corporate Services to lead on governance. • Induction of Director of Corporate services. • Review and update Articles of Association and LEP Board Terms of Reference. • Update Accountability and Assurance Framework. 	<p>Interim appointed for period May 2020 to 30 October 2020 to manage the process of compiling the LEP’s 2019/2020 Accounts through an external accountant for audit and also to begin the development of the new Service Level Agreement with Shropshire Council.</p> <p>Director of Corporate Services, Ilia Bowles, appointed in October 2020 following open recruitment exercise.</p> <p>Induction of Director of Corporate Services completed in December 2020.</p> <p>Articles of Association (https://www.marcheslep.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/The-Marches-LEP-Articles-of-Association-v7-Jan-2021.pdf) and LEP Board’s Terms of Reference (https://www.marcheslep.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/The-Marches-LEP-Board-Terms-of-Reference-March-2021.pdf) were reviewed and approved by the Board on 26 January 2021.</p> <p>The Accountability & Assurance Framework (https://www.marcheslep.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/MLEP-Accountability-and-Assurance-Framework-March-2021.pdf) was reviewed and reissued on 28 January 2021</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign off audited CLG accounts at Board AGM and submission of audited accounts to Companies House. • New Service Level Agreement with Shropshire Council agreed and signed by the two parties which will outline the role of the accountable body and the services the Council will provide for the LEP i.e. legal, HR, procurement, finance and IT support for the LEP Secretariat and the costs. • Annual Review of LEP Board Membership. • Training for Board Members on diversity and inclusion. 	<p>Accounts for financial year 2020/21 for Marches LEP Ltd, prepared by Thorne Widgery and audited by James, Holyoak & Parker, were presented and approved 1 by the Board at their AGM on 29 September 2020.</p> <p>The Service Level Agreement was agreed with Shropshire Council and came into effect on 1 April 2021 to confirm bought in services, costs and service standards.</p> <p>In line with the Board's Terms of Reference, the Chair set up a Board Member Appointments Panel which met in February 2021 to review and take account of any wishes indicated by Board Members to stand down in the year, manage succession planning and Board Members' rotation. The Panel also reviewed gender representation and composition of the Board to ensure it is representative of the Marches geography and also reflects the diversity in skills, experience and background of the population in the region.</p> <p>The LEP Board approved a new Inclusive Economy and Diversity Policy & Implementation Plan (https://www.marcheslep.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/MLEP-Inclusive-Economy-and-Diversity-Policy-March-2021.pdf) on 23 March 2021 with a commitment to review equality and diversity training needs every 6 months and to identify any gaps in knowledge that need to be addressed.</p> <p>The new Marches LEP website https://www.marcheslep.org.uk/ was launched on 29 March 2021. The site had been restructured to ease navigation and showcase the LEP's achievements by focussing on project work. Accessibility of the site had been improved to mostly conform to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1, AA rating.</p>
5.0	Delivery		
5.1	Local Growth Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2020/21 is the final year of the current Local Growth Fund (LGF) programme and efforts will focus on maximising economic impact through the achievement of outputs and the spend profile. By the end of the year, the programme will have seen investments of over £105m, with more than £37m invested in 2020/21. 	<p>Owing to the Tannery project not proceeding with the St Austin Street car park, an underspend position of £194,568 was established within the LGF Programme. As agreed at the 24 March 2020 LEP Board Meeting, any available LGF funds would be awarded to projects within the approved LGF Project Reserve List. The Bishop's Castle project, ranked first on the reserve list, was awarded funds on 18 March 2021 through Delegated Authority approval.</p> <p>FINAL OUTTURN INFORMATION TO FOLLOW</p>
5.2	Getting Building Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition to the LGF, the Marches LEP will work with partners to bring forward 'shovel ready' capital projects to support economic stimulus through the Government's Getting Building Fund. 	FINAL OUTTURN INFORMATION TO FOLLOW
5.3	Infrastructure & Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of the Marches LEP Transport Officers Group (TOG) Annual Work Plan. • Implementation of the Marches LEP Energy Strategy Action Plan and consideration of future funding opportunities. 	<p>LEP Board provided with an overview of progress made by Transport Officers Group on 29 September 2020. https://www.marcheslep.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Transport-Officers-Group-Update.pdf</p> <p>Board members discussed issues raised following publication of Energy White Paper at their meeting on 26 January 2021. It was proposed that a member of the Marches LEP Board become the LEP Energy Champion and that the Energy Strategy Steering Group was keen to have more direct interaction with the Board. Recognising that specialist skills and knowledge were required for the role Energy Champion, it was suggested that the co-opting of a member of the Energy Strategy Steering Group to the LEP Board may be a way forward This will be discussed at the LEP Board meeting in May 2021.</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of Digital Connectivity (5G/Broadband) projects including participation in the West Mercia Rural 5G project. Marches Investment Fund <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring of existing contracts including Dicentra, Harper Adams University, Shell Store Incubation Centre and the Strategic Tourism and Business initiatives. Work with partners to bring forward new projects funded under MIF. Commission a review of remaining funds and how they can best be used. Hereford Enterprise Zone <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of Hereford Enterprise Zone work plan. Selling or developing a further 10 acres, triggering 15,000 sqm of workspace development, with 10 more businesses moving onto the Zone. Completion of the Shell Store Incubation Centre and the Cyber Quarter. Planning and implementation of infrastructure to open up the remaining large parcel of land at the North Magazine for investors will also be a major feature for 2020/21. Telford Land Deal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery of Telford Land Deal work programme including the flagship NI Park development Stronger Towns Fund <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and strategically influence the Towns Fund programmes for Telford and Hereford through partnership working. 	<p>LEP Board briefed by Broadband Manager, Shropshire Council, on 26 January 2021 on key aspects of the delivery of the Digital Strategy, broadband connectivity and opportunities associated with the roll out of 5G/new government provision,</p> <p>Monitoring continues at Dicentra and Harper Adams University. £2.49m of funding allocated to Shell Store Incubation Centre. A total of £1.58m was allocated across the 3 local authorities in support of strategic tourism and business support initiatives; funding was allocated according to population, with Herefordshire receiving £444,220, Shropshire £737,722 and Telford & Wrekin £404,557.</p> <p>Carried forward owing to new Getting Building Fund.</p> <p>Carried forward owing to new Getting Building Fund and in light of LEP Review.</p> <p>FINAL OUTTURN INFORMATION TO FOLLOW New website launched https://skylonpark.co.uk/ to promote offer to external investors</p> <p>Development of Shell Store Incubation Centre and Cyber Quarter: The Midlands Centre for Cyber Security continue with official openings planned for Summer 2021. NMITE Phase 2, representing £5.7m of a total investment of £8.4m, delivered to support the North Magazine Development, comprising the Centre for Advanced Timber Technology (CATT), the Centre for Automated Manufacture (CAM) and the Centre for Future Skills (CFS).</p> <p>This new model of public land disposal has accelerated the sale of residential and commercial sites and is set to see up to £44.5m of land receipts reinvested in the local area over 10 years. Work progressing on development of a new Enterprise and Science Park in Newport, a £9.2m project which includes £6.3m from Local Growth Fund.</p> <p>Director of Housing Economy & Infrastructure, Telford & Wrekin Council provided briefing to LEP Board at their meeting on 26 January 2021 confirming proposal submitted and awaiting feedback. Representatives of Herefordshire Council presented an overview of the Hereford Investment Plan to LEP Board 24 November 2020. LEP representation continues on both Telford and Hereford Stronger Towns Fund Boards.</p>
5.4	Business Support	<p>Marches Growth Hub</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective implementation of the core contract (funded by £205k from BEIS plus local authority contributions). 	<p>Regular inputs provided to LEP Board through CEO's Report. 2020/21 Bi-Annual reports have yet to be formally signed off by BEIS and the 2020/21 final report will be submitted in June 2021. New chair of Growth Hub Steering Group and LEP Small Business Champion, Dave Courteen, appointed following open recruitment exercise New chair appointed at Marches Growth Hub. Terms of Reference of the Steering Group broadened to incorporate a more strategic view of business support in anticipation of BEIS' Business Support Reform programme and changes to funding. Steering Group renamed as Business Support Steering Group.</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful application for additional BEIS funding to support economic recovery through enhanced adviser support and account management services. • Delivery of additional support services associated with the West Midlands Cluster, including any potential EU Exit support. • Delivery of £681k ERDF grant funding to support small businesses and businesses in both the visitor and wider economy sector in line with government announcements. • Delivery of the proposed Peer Networks programme announced by BEIS. • Redesign of the Marches Growth Hub website www.marchesgrowthhub.co.uk to enhance client experience and improve the updating of information on the site. <p>Department for International Trade (DIT) Projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with local authority partners to deliver the Key Account Management programme to support the consolidation and expansion of locally based foreign-owned companies and attracting new inward investment. • Promoting and encouraging the take up for export and international trade services through enhanced locally based teams and national support. • Supporting the development of the new Investment and Export Strategies expected in Autumn 2020. 	<p>Supplementary funding of £257k enabled 43 advisers to be engaged to deliver 1:1 advice sessions with businesses.</p> <p>Allocated £136,050 to the West Midlands Growth Hub Cluster to continue to support businesses in adapting to new requirements through a central EU Transition Project. Activity dovetailed with support delivered by local/regional Department for International Trade (DIT) teams and incorporated a West Midlands EU Support website has been launched giving details of the support available at www.wmgrowthhubs-eusupport.co.uk</p> <p>Delivered through Telford & Wrekin Council across the Marches region. Project due to complete by end of May 2021 and as at end of March 2021 the scheme was 85% committed (98% Wider Economy/62% Visitor Economy).</p> <p>Inaugural Peer Networks programme successfully delivered to a total of 39 participants from Marches SMEs. Further funding for delivery of programme for 2021/2022 announced by BEIS.</p> <p>Due to be launched by May 2021.</p> <p>KAM delivered across the three local authorities in line with the Marches Growth Hub model to enable signposting and access to other local authority services, e.g. planning, regulatory services and transport planning, which can support potential business expansion plans. In 2020/21, KAM managed 14 companies, added 7 projects to the 2021/22 pipeline which have the potential to drive capital investment, create 26 new jobs and secure a further 12.</p> <p>Promotion of DIT services on Marches Growth Hub Steering Group and signposting to export and international trade services delivered locally and regionally. Supported recruitment of a Marches LEP Cluster Adviser enabling dedicated support the Food & Drink sector and delivery of a variety of sector-specific workshops and a Food & Drink Meet the Buyer event in March 2021.</p> <p>LEP team continue to support process through attendance at DIT meetings</p>
5.5	Skills & Employment	<p>Skills Advisory Panel The Skills Advisory Panel (SAP) (supported by its sub-groups) will continue to drive the skills and employment agenda across the Marches:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It will continue to influence skills development programmes and curriculum design in line with identified and evidenced local needs. • SAP funding will be sought to undertake data and intelligence work to prioritise and drive actions to support our economic recovery. • The Marches LEP Skills Plan will be updated by March 2021 to meet Department for Education (DFE) requirements. • SAP Chair term and membership to be reviewed and reconfirmed in line with the SAP terms of reference. 	<p>Secured £75k from Department for Education in 2020/21 to finalise its evidence base and data set for use by partners. Funding used to update analysis of skills needs and demand, potential growth areas, labour market challenges and sector specific opportunities and to evidence the impact of the SAP. Black Country Consortium appointed to provide data analysis support, investment in EMSI tool for LEP, local authorities, colleges and MSPN to enable better understanding of skills issues and investment in Power BI to increase data management capacity.</p> <p>Local Skills Report produced following consultation with SAP members and wider stakeholders. Published in March 2021 and presented to the LEP Board for approval to publish and submission to DfE.</p> <p>The Marches LEP Board approved a one-year Board membership extension for James Staniforth until October 2021 at the LEP Board meeting on 24 November 2020 and this was ratified by the SAP Board on 27 November 2020.</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It will oversee the promotion of national skills initiatives, including those in response to economic and employment challenges, through effective liaison with DFE, including the Education and Skills Funding Agency, Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport and Department of Work & Pensions. <p>Careers & Enterprise Company</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery of the Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) contract in line with contract extension. Additional funding will be sought from the CEC to enable the development of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a Careers Hub with additional resources to increase schools and business engagement activities. a Cornerstone Employer network to strengthen the private sector leadership of the CEC project and to act as a sub-group to the SAP. 	<p>Development and launch of the Marches Work and Training Tool https://mwtt.marcheslep.org.uk/ to support promotion of national and local initiatives, including those within the Government's Plan for Jobs. Promotion of National Apprenticeship Week and investment in local skills provision.</p> <p>Established regular strategic meetings with JCP/DWP to understand opportunities associated with the Kickstart scheme and how best to promote these.</p> <p>Confirmation received of CEC funding until August 2021 to enable continued delivery through local authority partners.</p> <p>Successful application to become a Careers Hub and Hub Lead, Eden Ihle-Vance, appointed in November 2020 and additional Enterprise Co-ordinator post created to increase capacity.</p> <p>A Steering Group and network of Cornerstone companies have been formed to act as advocates for careers education and business engagement, all of whom who are committed to supporting young people to access the career opportunities they need.</p> <p>Implementation Plan in operation to work with schools and Enterprise Advisers to drive improvement in performance against Gatsby Benchmarks and to increase impact of project.</p>
5.6	European Structural & Investment Funds (ESIF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify opportunities to shape the use of remaining funds to meet local objectives. Maximise the take up of current ERDF and ESF projects and support project promoters in the achievement of outputs and local economic impact. Understand the role and focus of successor funds and position the Marches to benefit from these. 	<p>ESIF report presented to the Board on 26 May 2020 to outline strategy for use of remaining funds and implementation of current funded projects. https://www.marcheslep.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Chair-CEO-Report-Section-7-ESIF-Report.pdf</p> <p>ESF and ERDF live projects promoted through LEP and Marches Growth Hub partners to encourage take up.</p> <p>CEO presented LEP Board with update on successor funds to the European Structural and Investment Funds at meeting on 23 March 2021 following budget announcements.</p>