

Consultation on the Marches LEP European Structural and Investment Funds Strategy 2014 – 2020: Five Strategic Priorities

Overview

The Marches LEP is developing a European Structural and Investment Fund (ESIF) Strategy setting out the business case for the use of £97.35 million notional funding allocated for the area.

The Marches ESIF Strategy will form part of the Marches Strategic Economic Plan and will be critical in realising the Marches Vision:

'A strong, diverse and enterprising Marches business base, operating in an exceptional and connected environment, where the transfer of technology and skills foster innovation, investment and economic growth'.

The Marches LEP submitted its Draft ESIF Strategy to Government on 4 October 2013. The Draft Strategy was developed with a wide range of groups, partners and stakeholders, and provides the framework through which the funding can be spent.

As part of the Draft Strategy five Strategic Activities were developed that align with priorities set out in the EU 2014 – 2020 Framework on the European Growth Programme and help to deliver the Marches Vision.

Marches LEP Five Strategic Activities

1. Enhancing Competitiveness, Research and Innovation and Enabling Technology
2. Supporting the Shift Towards a Low Carbon Economy
3. Supporting the Environment
4. Skills and Employment
5. Social Inclusion

Since 4 October, the Marches LEP has undertaken further work with groups, partners and stakeholders to develop these Strategic Activities. Each Strategic Activity provides the framework through which projects will be able to come forward.

The LEP is now consulting on these Strategic Activities and is inviting comments from all stakeholders on the consultation form that will be attached with this

document. **Responses are accepted up to 12 noon on the 22 January 2014.** The final strategy will be submitted to Government by the 31 January 2014. The LEP will hold a series of stakeholder workshops following the submission of the final strategy, to develop the strategic activities in more detail.

A number of actions within the Strategic Activities incorporate more than one of the EU thematic objectives; for instance energy efficiency measures and renewable energy use in SMEs will be supported through *Enhancing Competitiveness, Research and Innovation and Enabling Technology* rather than *Supporting the Shift Towards a Low Carbon Economy*. Therefore, please ensure that you read each of the Strategic Activities before making specific comments.

Each Strategic Activity is outlined below:

Strategic Activity 1: Enhancing Competitiveness, Research and Innovation and Enabling Technology

With the potential to create significant numbers of jobs and drive growth, the small and medium sized enterprises of the Marches are the backbone of the economy and our approach to business support reflects this. While paying particular attention to strengthening our priority sectors, ensuring that our businesses are equipped to respond to the challenges of a global, knowledge-based economy, we are also seeking new opportunities in high growth areas such as digital and creative industries, professional and financial services, energy and the environment.

Sub-priority 1.1: Improving Enterprise and SME competitiveness

The Marches will take a new and integrated approach to business support in order to address market failure around entrepreneurship, business growth and inward investment and innovation. Business support will take place within a delivery framework which will use the best of online and offline support to streamline and re-energise activity, making it more relevant to the needs of future entrepreneurs (of all ages), new and existing enterprises and importantly, more accessible.

A website hub will directly link aspiring entrepreneurs and businesses to inspiring resources and information that will incorporate national and global opportunities as well as regional and local. It will provide clear and simple access to grant and loan funding, without bureaucratic jargon, will promote events and champion local participation in national and global business activities, encouraging the sharing of ideas and business networks and the creation of new businesses.

Face to face business support will interact with the website hub in a seamless way. Delivered through a range of locations that resonate with business (such as accessible public buildings or mobile advisors), the service will be responsive, proactive, accessible and open to businesses of all ages, sizes and backgrounds

from start up to high growth. Business support officers will be the crucial gateways to a wealth of assistance and they will receive on-going training to ensure that they have the capacity to meeting the changing demands of their roles.

Through this framework, our model of business support activity will constantly evolve and it will reflect changing business needs, but as a starting point and in the first two years of the programme, the key elements of business support delivered through this framework will be:

- Access to support through national opt-in programmes operated by UKTI and Manufacturing Advisory Service, which will be tailored to meet the sectoral and business priorities of the Marches through for example sector specific international trade advisors and enhanced overseas sector missions (UKTI) and enhanced mentoring to support new product development and dedicated sectoral supply chain and energy efficiency specialists (MAS).
- Difficulty in accessing finance and the perception that processes are complicated and bureaucratic is stifling the ability of Marches businesses to grow. Single point of entry grant and financial engineering instrument schemes, with clear and concise branding and streamlined structures, will facilitate company growth, supply chain development, organisational/employee development and resource efficiency (carbon reduction), encourage employment and support SME innovation (develop new products, processes, markets), broadband optimisation and early-stage research and collaboration.

It is anticipated that grants will predominantly fall within the range of £1,000 to £50,000, however there will be an allowance for higher levels of intervention for a small number of larger SME's with high growth potential and also for those larger businesses that sit within the Marches Assisted Areas. Businesses will access grants through the web hub, but other routes will be through intermediary bodies including banks, local authorities, accountants and chambers of commerce and other business support initiatives such as UKTI and MAS.

In the medium to long term the Marches will operate a single point of entry loan fund through a Jeremie (discussion with potential deliverers is ongoing), however in the short term we propose to use our website hub to set up a Crowd Funding platform, a collective solution to loan funding in which the Marches wishes to be a pioneer. The Marches business profile and preponderance of micro-businesses means that the typical demand for loans will be for amounts between £20,000 and £100,000, however as with the Marches grant fund, it is being assumed that our larger SME's could require average investment levels of up to £250,000.

- We are aware that businesses looking to grow will require a range of expert advice which might be of a legal, research, patent or human resources nature and which might not be suitable for generic training or business advice. Through the support framework companies will be able to access advice that will support business growth through professionally accredited organisations or individuals.
- If the Marches is to address its comparatively low level of enterprise start-ups, inspiring a new generation of entrepreneurs will be essential. Complementary to the wider skills and employment agenda, the business support framework will create links to schools and colleges and deliver a progression of targeted activity from primary school right through to colleges. At primary level business speakers, coding clubs, enterprise competitions and STEM summer camps will engage younger children, while for older students and colleges the support framework will champion participation in national and global activities such as global Start-up Weekend and MADESheffield. We will champion the setting up of enterprises with start up advice, mentoring and graduate job clubs and facilitate start up weekends, hackathons and online competitions encouraging collaboration and innovation.
- The Marches offers a site and sector based inward investment proposition to rival the rest of the UK, but success in attracting foreign company relocations has not met with uniform success and this remains a significant opportunity for the Marches. We intend to develop an inward investment programme which is flexible to reflect local needs but includes a focus on particular sub-sectors where we already have clustering or other asset based advantages. We will develop propositions focussed on key locations with tailored business support offers and will work with UKTI (linking this to our export growth programme) alongside specific and dedicated consultancy support.
- Centres of Excellence have the potential to add significant value to the Marches business support offer, providing business with advice on product development and innovation, market research and bespoke business space in the form of incubation and grow on space. They have the potential to address the gap created by the lack of a strong university presence in the Marches and relatively low levels of innovation and can become the catalyst for attracting millions of pounds and thousands of jobs in partnership with the private sector. The Marches Strategic Economic Plan identifies existing and potential Centres of Excellence and funding will be sought to both develop existing and establish new Centres linked to our priority sectors, some of which will be developed in collaboration with other LEP areas.

Sub-priority 1.2: Smart Research and Development and Innovation

Over and above early-stage activities to support SME's to invest in innovation, the Marches proposes to take a two-stage approach to the delivery of more specialised sector support for growth sectors and businesses.

The Marches proposes in the first instance to commission research to identify the specialised support required to deliver greater value chain connections, develop innovative low carbon and renewable energy technologies and support the adoption of enabling technologies that transfer across sectors. We also wish to ensure that our activities increase collaboration between enterprises, research institutions, public institutions and across LEP's.

Informed by this research the Marches will take informed decisions about the development of its Smart Specialisation priorities and then develop a programme of calls for applications. This programme is likely to include graduate start-up and placement schemes, innovation vouchers and networks and has close links to both the SME support and Centres for Excellence programmes outlined above. The decision making process will involve continued cooperation with the five other LEP's in the West Midlands.

Sub-priority 1.3: Marches Digital Inclusion and Service Programme

This programme will draw together a range of initiatives designed to tackle the key areas of market failure around digital exclusion and to encourage the use of ICT and digital technologies across all communities within the Marches.

Digital inclusion presents a huge opportunity to enable the economically marginalised to access the job market and become more efficient consumers. Activity will therefore focus on improving IT and internet literacy for individuals, utilising initiatives developed by the Local Authorities and partner organisations within the LEP area such as Shropshire online, digital advocates/champions and the community engagement activities conducted by the Fastershire project.

With the first element of the project bringing the digitally excluded population to a point where they can proactively engage with the internet and basic IT applications, the public sector bodies can fully exploit the opportunity to radically reform the way they interface with service recipients. This reform will mirror the wider changes in societal consumption patterns by migrating much of the first line of interaction to on-line mediums.

This element of the project will begin to support this process across the Marches by informing how, in doing so, marginalisation can be prevented. It will use existing customer contact data together with specially commissioned qualitative data to facilitate customer profiling across different user groupings, including groups

specifically considered to be excluded from access to public and voluntary sector services and support provided through digital channels.

This final element of the Marches Digital Inclusion and Service Programme will ensure the land based sector is ready and able to engage with the digital by default agenda and to the changes in the way the sector will be required to interact with government through the Government Gateway.

It looks to both bring later digital adopters up to speed with digital communication and to assist those without access to the Universal Service Commitment due to the overlap between the adoption of Government Gateway as the single access point to government services and payments and the completion of the Fastershire and Connecting Shropshire broadband programmes. It will achieve the former through targeted training and the latter by providing physical connection hubs in the form of pop-up facilities at livestock markets across the Marches.

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Strategic Activity 2: Supporting the Shift towards a Low Carbon Economy

Decarbonising the economy plays a key part in achieving sustainable and balanced growth, with a focus on maximising the opportunities and minimising the costs of the green economy transition.

In order to understand the role the low carbon economy can play in the Marches research was commissioned in 2012. The research identified potential opportunities for future investment, including resource efficiency support for SMEs, anaerobic digestion, supply chain development, renewables (including wood fuel), retrofitting and low carbon demonstrators.

This Strategic Activity encourages an integrated approach to develop and implement proposals to increase the use of renewable energy, decrease energy use, and promote smart energy systems.

To develop this integrated approach, key investigative work is proposed to identify

- priority sites and areas such as employment sites, growth sites etc. This is currently under development as part of the LEP's Strategic Economic Plan
- areas of defined work such as smart grids, public lighting systems, renewable energy schemes, resilient energy infrastructure, sustainable transport (e.g. electric/ultra-low carbon vehicle infrastructure) sustainable housing, demonstrators, retrofits, off-grid renewable energy scheme etc., to be developed by working groups

- investment opportunities to develop and deploy cost effective low carbon and renewable energy technologies and related supply chains / infrastructure with technologies including district heating & cooling networks, deep geothermal heat, renewable heat, CHP, micro-generation, biomass
- technologies mentioned in the Strategic Energy Technology Plan and the Energy Roadmap 2050, along with second and third generation bio fuels
- investment opportunities in the wider use of Energy Performance Contracting in public buildings and housing sectors
- opportunities for the development of energy efficiency and renewable heating and cooling in public buildings and the adoption of domestic energy efficiency and low carbon construction techniques. This could include ultra-low carbon exemplar demonstrator buildings, building retrofit and energy efficiency (especially whole building solutions exemplifying next phase technologies which are near to market, such as renewable heating and cooling in public buildings).
- opportunities to develop 'whole place' low carbon solutions, green and blue infrastructure to reduce whole place energy requirements, integrated low carbon strategies, sustainable energy action plans including the development of mitigation related adaptation technologies, such as cooling, and low carbon water management

Identified areas of work informed by the commissioned work will be developed into a programme of calls for initial feasibility studies and for applications to develop flagship and demonstrator projects which have the potential to be rolled out across the LEP or within other LEP area.

Indicative activities will include the development of an integrated whole place approach through the support for the development of 'whole place' low carbon solutions. Activities will also consider support to the non-domestic sector to deploy low carbon technologies and focus on energy efficiency. There is an opportunity to support the development of local demonstrators that showcase the Marches as a hub for low carbon technology and allow the adoption of such technology beyond optimum cost levels. Activities will also encourage SMEs to adopt energy efficient technology and measures and support to SMEs to showcase, investigate and increase take-up of low carbon technologies, renewable technologies, waste management and energy efficiencies.

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Strategic Activity 3: Supporting the Environment

The supporting the environment Strategic Activity seeks to recognise the importance of the natural and built environment to the local economy within the Marches. The investment seeks to balance the need for physical development, by tackling some of the environmental issues that hamper growth, and protecting the natural and historical assets by supporting sustainable tourism and greening activities.

Sub Priority 3.1: Investing in the natural environment to support sustainable economic growth

This Sub Priority is focused on supporting investments to turn environmental challenges into growth opportunities and make efficient use of natural resources. This will be delivered as part of integrated actions for sustainable development to support better places for people to live, work and do business and the removal of barriers to economic growth.

To develop an integrated approach, key investigative work through commissioned work is proposed to:

- Map key sites such as modified sites and habitats, contaminated sites, potential sites for development requiring additional environmental considerations, etc.

This will include the rehabilitation of land and regeneration of brownfield sites, including historically significant sites and innovative approaches to deliver preventive / restorative management as well as habitat and place-making outcomes.

- Build up a knowledge base, data observation capacities and mechanisms for the exchange of information including community volunteering and employment opportunities, training tools, up-skilling and behavioural change.
- Identify areas of defined work such as River Basin Management Plans, biodiversity and ecosystem plans, complementary activities to the Water Framework and Habitat Directives, Nutrient Management Plans etc., through working groups. This activity will include:
 - The exchange of new and existing solutions for water quality and quantity issues between users and other areas sharing these problems.
 - Increasing awareness of waste as a resource, novel and innovative uses including the opportunity of recycling to enable cost savings.
 - Sponsor knowledge transfer hubs across areas with key environmental challenges such as water quality issues to develop innovative solutions that maximise sustainable outcomes to local environmental challenges.

- Identify opportunities to overcome constraints to growth and development which do not impact negatively on the environment.
- Investment to support area assessment, networking and local water resource and materials use planning for SMEs in areas of resource stress, e.g. water where supply exceeds demand. This could generate export, match-making, exchange and re-use of materials and licenses and uptake of innovative approaches.

Sub Priority 3.2: Enhancing cultural heritage and tourism infrastructure in the Marches

The Marches cultural, heritage, landscape and tourism infrastructures are key assets of the visitor economy sector and provide a strong offer in the Marches. Investments in both rural and urban context can deliver significant SME productivity outputs, improving the visitor experience and increasing propensity to visit and visitor spend.

The Destination Management activities listed below will be funded through the EAFRD allocation and the ICT activities are relevant to the development of rural tourism.

- Developing, expanding, upgrading and protecting of strategic tourism facilities, sites and corridors such as recreational routes) including cultural heritage, green and blue visitor infrastructure and significant access improvements
- Supporting destination management, experience, product development and marketing including the promotion of strategically important tourist projects
- Increasing business competitiveness and enhancing visitor experience and information delivery through ICT

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Strategic Activity 4 – Employment and Skills

The Skills and Employment Strategic Activity for the Marches is aimed at supporting local business to maximise their potential for growth by getting people into work and out of poverty, by tackling skills shortages, low labour mobility and overcoming the barriers to getting and keeping a job. This Strategic Activity will continue to improve opportunities for employment, education and training and help combat social exclusion and poverty.

The Sub Priorities have been identified and published in the Marches Skills Plan. The development of the Skills Plan was underpinned by the principles of

collaboration and engagement with partners across the Marches LEP along with a comprehensive evidence base.

These are challenging times and the Sub Priorities must be set against a backdrop of the deepest recession the country has faced for eighty years. Meeting particular Marches challenges as identified in the Marches LEP Skills Plan around a low-skilled workforce, skills gaps in emerging sectors, and low aspirations, work readiness and opportunities for young people. Poor access in respect of transport and ICT in some areas is a barrier.

Employers and partners face real financial pressures and with the economy facing the challenge of recovering from prolonged recession and returning to renewed economic growth, it is ever more important that the Marches LEP leads the way in championing the skills agenda to enable and support local businesses and local people to maximise their potential.

Sub Priority 4.1: Developing the skills required for business growth

Increasing the level of skills in the workforce is fundamental to economic recovery and long term growth. The major growth in demand locally will be for higher level skills including graduates, while demand for workers with skills below Level 2 will fall significantly and the opportunities for those without qualifications diminish.

The objectives of Priority 4.1 are to:

1. Attract more people into employment, especially people who are at a disadvantage, or have become inactive, in the labour market;
2. Improve the skills of potential and current workers who do not have the basic skills and qualifications that are needed for individual progression and business growth;
3. Develop a skilled workforce which is capable of adapting to changes in the business environment so that the Marches can win in a competitive and quickly shifting national and global market.

Indicative activities for 4.1

- Training will be supported where there is a market failure and particularly where there are skills shortages and in new/growth sectors such as in health and social care, construction, advanced manufacturing and engineering, low carbon green technologies, food and drink and defence and security.
- Skills support for the unemployed will ensure that capacity is in place to provide skills support to unemployed individuals who are looking for work but face a skills barrier to entering the labour market.
- Promoting social innovation through skills for ICT and the digital divide, skills for climate change and sustainable development and social enterprise.

- Improving sharing of labour market information: increasing understanding of labour market with a particular focus on effective dissemination of Labour Market Intelligence to careers professionals, colleges, schools, and training providers.
- Training leading to level 2, level 3 and level 4 qualifications (especially for people without current or relevant level 2, level 3 and level 4 qualifications) in sectors where there are skills shortages at that level.
- Increase the numbers of apprenticeship opportunities and the number of employers recruiting apprentices.
- Increase the number of Advanced and higher apprenticeships: promoting the uptake of advanced and higher apprenticeships by building on and sharing best practice.
- Training in functional skills including literacy, numeracy, ESOL and ICT.
- Keeping employers informed about local education and training provision.
- Management and leadership training development: stimulate demand for management and leadership training through development of case studies of benefits and promotion of local courses.
- Embed employability skills: schools, training providers, FE and HE providers to review how employability skills such as communication and team working can be further embedded in provision.
- Supporting older workers to re-train, re-enter and stay in the labour market.
- Training for those at risk of redundancy or who have been made redundant to gain alternative skill.
- Support additional information, advice and guidance face-to-face sessions with individuals in priority groups (to be determined e.g. adults facing redundancy, low skilled adults without a level 2 qualification), adding value to the National careers service contract.

Sub Priority 4.2: Supporting enterprise and access to employment

The objective of this Sub Priority 4.2 is to support existing and growth industries to make a significant contribution in growing businesses where future jobs are to be created. This could happen by helping people get new skills and qualifications, meet employers' skills needs and support entrepreneurship and new business creation. This will support the Marches LEP priority sectors.

Indicative activities for 4.2

- Skills support to the Marches 'Enterprise Areas' in order to attract new inward investment and foster growth.
- Skills support to creating employment by supporting new and growing businesses and sectors such as advanced manufacturing and engineering, defence and security, food and drink, sustainable technology, health and social care.
- Create an entrepreneurial spirit and a culture of enterprise by embedding and promoting enterprise in education and training within all groups outside the labour market, including young people.
- Advice, support and training for self-employment, entrepreneurship, business creation and social enterprise, with appropriate links to Strategic Activity 1.

Sub Priority 4.3: Realising the potential of young people

The objective of Sub Priority 4.3 is to continue to sustain the commitment to reduce the number of young people aged 15-24 not in education, employment or training (NEET) and to support those young people at risk of becoming so. It is likely be those who face multiple barriers and need a different type of offer. The main focus will be the continued provision of individually tailored packages of education, training and support, which will enable the engagement of such young people that will lead to sustainable education, training and employment.

Youth unemployment in the Marches is disproportionately high. It is above the national average and running at more than twice the rate seen in the wider population. Youth long-term unemployment has also almost doubled in the past two years.

There are synergies between this Sub Priority and the Social Inclusion Strategic Activity with a need to ensure co-ordination and avoid any duplication.

Indicative activities for 4.3

- Innovative engagement and re-engagement activities to overcome barriers to participation for those young people who are NEET and those that are at risk of becoming NEET.
- Activities to engage young people and develop their employability and vocational skills. To improve the employability, personal and functional skills of young people that will lead to sustainable engagement in education and training and employment.
- Personal programmes which may include work related components, enhanced information advice and guidance, personal and social development, functional skills, etc. and include mentoring and personal coaching.

- Flexible programmes that enable young people to progress into further learning.
- Preparation for employment to understand employers' requirements around attendance, attitude, motivation, language and behaviour management.
- Short programmes of activity for young people who have left learning programmes.
- Improved appreciation by businesses of the importance of continuous training and development.
- Provision for young people who need specialist support and training in alternative learning environments.
- Structured taster programmes in a working or learning environment.
- Vocational training and qualifications linked to key employment sectors and local employment opportunities.
- Brokering opportunities for young people and support for local employers to take on young people.
- Advice and support on self-employment and business creation.
- Activities to support ex-offenders and offenders in both a custodial and community environment.
- Activities to support economic activity amongst people with a disability, including people with mental health problems.

Activities that enable disengaged, unemployed and underemployed graduates particularly those from disadvantaged groups to find employment and gain the skills required to sustain their employment.

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Strategic Activity 5 – Social Inclusion

For this Strategic Activity, socially excluded/marginalised groups (referred to as under-represented groups) include but are not limited to: young people not in education, employment and training (NEET/Pre-NEET); offenders and ex-offenders; gypsy and travellers; lone parents; over 50s; the working poor; families with multiple and complex needs; homeless; disabled (physical and those with mental health issues); carers; black and minority ethnic; lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT); and the families of these groups.

Supporting those furthest from the job market into employment will transform the lives of individuals and families from these under-represented groups, providing a sustainable route away from poverty. Securing employment provides the single most important means through which people are able to turn their lives around. This will be achieved through early intervention, tailored mentoring support and positive activities so barriers into learning, education, training and employment can be overcome and sustained. It has been shown that 1 in 5 volunteers found paid work after volunteering.

It will require a joined up approach from all organisations working at a local level to ensure long term change, adding value to existing programmes, learning from approaches which have worked, finding solutions where gaps have been identified and ensuring innovative ideas and new organisations are identified and encouraged.

It recognises the hierarchy of individual need (as referenced by Maslow) and that the most under-represented groups will require interventions and support which address the most fundamental needs before they can move onto a pathway towards employment.

Although social inclusion is a strategic activity in its own right it is also cross cutting and fits within the other strategic priorities. In relation to supporting young people (NEET/Pre-NEET) into employment a number of indicative activities are also reflected in the Employment and Skills Strategic Activity and digital inclusion in Strategic Activity 1.

Sub Priority 5.1 - Provide the means through which under-represented groups BECOME WORK READY, and are able to access learning, training and job opportunities

The objective of Sub Priority 5.1 is to engage those who are furthest away from employment and through early intervention, mentoring, positive activity and volunteering opportunities help them onto the path to employment.

Indicative activities for 5.1

- Develop a volunteer support and brokerage model to support people to be volunteer ready and move into volunteering roles.
- Skill building, learning and training (eg literacy, numeracy and IT) to ensure a smooth transition onto a path towards employment.
- Establish innovative activities to identify, engage and support the 'hidden' groups of unemployed.
- Develop approaches which enable a more personal and holistic assessment of individual needs, barriers and solutions which help people towards work and out of poverty.

- Establish links to self-employment opportunities with appropriate (and longer lasting) levels of support.
- Deliver interventions focused on families with multiple and complex needs so aspirations can be raised, family's lives turned around and the cycle of inter-generational unemployment changed.
- Establish support mechanisms and positive activities to ensure retention in employment amongst vulnerable people who have made the transition to work.

Sub Priority 5.2 - Engaging and supporting under-represented groups to enable them to OVERCOME BARRIERS to employment

There are a number of barriers which we know prevent people accessing employment and for some groups these can be complex and challenging. The objective of this Sub Priority is to understand these barriers and to work with local support agencies and service providers to identify and implement different approaches and ways in which these barriers can be overcome.

Indicative activities for 5.2

- Understand the transport needs and devise a range of options, learning from previous successes such as the 'wheels to work' programme.
- Understand carer's responsibilities and duties associated with all age groups and all abilities and develop approaches so these can be overcome.
- Develop tailored support to people with mental health issues to help them towards independence and onto a pathway to work.
- Improve work-readiness and social skills in young people and in those new to work, including a menu of work experience options. Support to develop confidence, self-esteem and overcome associated secondary barriers.
- Work in partnership with local service providers to identify ways to support under-represented groups to take up employment, for example finding accommodation near the work place, overcoming transport issues etc.
- Develop a mentoring programme to increase numbers of mentors to support people into work (e.g. for a number of months after the mentee finds employment).

Sub Priority 5.3: Develop capacity at a local level which SUPPORTS AND EMPOWERS under-represented groups

Recognising that the most effective solutions will be designed and delivered at a local level, the objective of this Sub Priority is to provide support to organisations, predominantly voluntary sector and social enterprises, to help support and empower

under-represented groups to become more actively engaged in developing and delivering local solutions.

Indicative activities for 5.3

- Identify local activists; develop community hubs, community shops, volunteer led centre's focused on encouraging community engagement and which supports people to make the transition into employment.
- Support the voluntary and community sector to increase their capacity to work with under-represented groups to develop and shape local services.
- Develop mechanisms through which the voluntary, public, private sectors and social enterprises can work more effectively around people's needs, make efficiencies and deliver relevant and cost effective solutions.
- A range of interventions delivered locally to support individuals and families from under-represented groups to manage their finances more effectively so they can move into employment and out of poverty.

Sub Priority 5.4 - Target geographical areas with high levels of unemployment, low education attainment levels and low income through a Community Led Local Development approach

The Marches has a strong track record of successfully delivering the LEADER approach within its rural areas and recognises the lasting benefits to the lives of local people and businesses that can be achieved. Partners can see the benefit in applying this approach within the deprived urban areas and have identified the LSOA's which fall within the top 20% nationally which they would seek to target (see Appendix 7 in the draft strategy).

Deprivation in these areas is significant with issues such as generational worklessness, low aspiration, low self-confidence, high levels of anti-social behaviour, low skills, and poor health all clearly evident. There is a need to adopt a new bottom up approach in these areas and to engage local people to help understand the barriers and develop/deliver long term sustainable solutions.

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