

**Minutes of the Marches LEP Ltd Board Meeting
26 January 2021 at 4.00pm
Meeting held via Zoom
(Company Number: 11822614)**

Present:

Mandy Thorn MBE DL	MT	Chair, Marches LEP Board
Sonia Roberts	SR	Deputy Chair Marches LEP Board; Social Inclusion Champion; CEO Landau Limited
Frank Myers MBE	FM	Herefordshire Business Board Chair
Paul Hinkins	PH	Telford 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 (part of meeting)
Cllr David Wright	DW	Cabinet Member for Economy, Housing, Transport and Infrastructure, Telford & Wrekin Council
Paul Kalinauckas	PK	Access to Finance Champion
James Staniforth	JS	Skills Advisory Panel Chair; Principal and CEO of the Shrewsbury Colleges Group (part of meeting)
Sara Williams	SW	Marketing Manager - Northern Europe, Protolabs
Dr Catherine Baxter	CB	Higher Education Champion; University Secretary, Harper Adams University (part of meeting)
Christine Snell	CS	Business Partner, AJ & CI Snell (part of meeting)

In Attendance:

James Walton	JW	Section 151 Officer, Shropshire Council
Roger Allonby	RA	Head of Economic Development, Herefordshire Council
Mark Barrow	MB	Executive Director for Place, Shropshire Council
Katherine Kynaston	KK	Director Housing Economy & Infrastructure, Telford & Wrekin Council
Ollie Hindle	OH	Assistant Director, West Midlands & South West, Cities & Local Growth Unit, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
Chris Taylor	CT	Broadband Manager, Shropshire Council
Tim Yair	TY	Regional Senior Energy Projects Officer, Midlands Energy Hub
Gill Hamer	GH	Chief Executive, Marches LEP
Ilia Bowles	IB	Director of Corporate Services, Marches LEP
Kathryn Jones	KJ	Partnership Manager, Marches LEP
Nick Alamanos	NA	Programme Manager, Marches LEP
Ennis Vingoe	EV	Marches LEP Executive Assistant
Wayne Redge	WR	Marches LEP Office Administrator

ITEM		ACTION
1.	<p>1. Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest MT welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending the meeting. MT also welcomed Chris Taylor and Tim Yair who would be providing briefings later in the meeting and Andy Begley, Chief Executive of Shropshire Council; Tracy Darke, Assistant Director for Economy and Place at Shropshire Council; Will Westley, member of the Telford & Wrekin Business Board and Amy Bould from Be Bold Media as observers. Apologies were received from Ruth Shepherd. MT noted that the meeting was being recorded to aid the production of the minutes.</p>	

	<p>2. Declarations of Interest</p> <p>The Chair said that the guidance produced by Sharpe Pritchard regarding members' conflicts of interests had been re-circulated and reminded members to complete the form that had been distributed for any specific Declarations of Interest for this meeting.</p> <p>JS – declared an interest in Item 6 (1) Risk 1 as Principal of Shrewsbury Colleges Group.</p> <p>PH - declared an interest in Item 6 (1) Risk 1 as Chair of Telford College Board of Governors.</p>	
<p>2.</p>	<p>Minutes of the Marches LEP Ltd Board meeting held on 24 November 2020</p> <p>The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 24 November 2020 were approved and would be signed (electronically) by the Chair as a true and accurate record of the meeting.</p> <p>Matters Arising</p> <p>KK gave a brief update on the Telford Towns Fund. The proposal had been submitted and feedback was expected in early March 2021.</p> <p>RA said that the Hereford Investment Plan would be submitted on 28 January 2021, with feedback likely in April/May.</p> <p>MT thanked FM for his work as the Marches LEP Board representative on the Hereford Town Fund Board.</p>	<p>EV</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>Governance</p> <p>a. Notice advising the resignation of P Bennett.</p> <p>MT advised the Board that Paul Bennett had stood down as the Chair of the Shropshire Business Board on 31 December 2020, and in accordance with the Articles of Association section 21.3.1, as a director of Marches LEP Ltd. A successor had been elected but unfortunately, they were now unable to take up the role. The process to elect a new Chair should be completed soon.</p> <p>MT would write to PB to thank him for his contribution during his tenure as a member of the Marches LEP Board.</p> <p>b. Annual Review of the Marches LEP Board Terms of Reference (TORs), Articles of Association and Accountability and Assurance Framework</p> <p>IB updated members on the work that had been undertaken to update the TORs and Articles of Association and ensure that they were consistent with each other and the Accountability and Assurance Framework. The documents had been widely circulated and no significant comments had been received.</p> <p>The Board approved the revised Marches LEP Board's TORs and Articles of Association (unanimous).</p> <p>The revised Articles of Association would be sent to Companies House.</p> <p>A similar process of review had been undertaken for the Accountability and Assurance Framework in order to remove any repetitions/discrepancies and ensure consistency with the TORs and Articles, and the National Local Growth Assurance Framework for LEPs. The Accountability and Assurance Framework had also been reviewed by the Assurance Team in the Government's Local Growth Team.</p> <p>The Board approved the revised Marches LEP Accountability and Assurance Framework (unanimous)</p> <p>IB said that the approach to managing the rotation of Board membership had also been considered. In line with the Board TORs, the Chair would set up a Board Member Appointments Panel to include 3 Board members. The meeting would</p>	<p>MT</p> <p>IB, EV</p> <p>IB</p>

	<p>take place in February and the Panel would present their recommendations to the Board meeting in March 2021. The Board noted the intended approach to manage MLEP Board membership rotation.</p> <p>c. LEP Annual Performance Review APR) meeting – Tuesday 9 February 2021 The outcomes of the review would be reported to the Board following the meeting. The Board noted the arrangements for the 2020/21 APR and Annex A, APR Preparation.</p>	<p>MT</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Presentation - Energy White Paper and support for meeting net zero targets (CS and JS joined the meeting) Tim Yair gave a presentation to the Board. The main points covered were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rapidly changing energy landscape including the opportunities available in the Marches e.g. investment in infrastructure surrounding the electricity network. • The Energy White paper – delivered in December 2020. Transformational changes needed in the electricity system and there will be a fundamental shift in domestic heating from gas to electricity. • Marches Energy Strategy – largest change since its launch in 2019 was that the 3 local authorities were developing local action plans to work towards their aims of ‘net zero’. • Key issues for the Marches – engage and influence in the interests of the Marches and work to resolve the differences between national and local targets. <p>Board members discussed issues raised in the presentation. It was proposed that a member of the Marches LEP Board become the LEP Energy Champion. TY said the Energy Strategy Steering Group was keen to have more direct interaction with the Board. It was suggested that the co-opting of a member of the Steering Group to the LEP Board may be a way forward as specialist skills and knowledge was required. TY would develop a response to the White Paper and take forward the Energy Strategy action plan.</p> <p>The presentation would be circulated to Board members. MT thanked TY for his presentation.</p>	<p>GH, TY TY EV</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Presentation - Digital Strategy Delivery and roll out of broadband update Chris Taylor gave a presentation to the Board. The main points covered were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The connectivity in the Marches compared to the national broadband target of 95% in the UK – over 92% in Herefordshire; 94% in Shropshire and 98% in Telford & Wrekin for superfast broadband. Less positive figures for Gigabit provision. • Growth Deal funding – from this 80,000 homes and 5000 businesses had been connected in the Marches • Current deployments – Government aimed to get 80% of UK ‘Gigabit capable broadband’ from commercial provision. The funding had been secured for this but there were some concerns regarding this aspiration and what the procurement would look like across the Marches geography. • Digital Strategy – the work plan will be brought back to the Board • 5G and Mobile – roll out remained a concern in many areas of the Marches and that it was unlikely to address all the current connectivity issues. The Shared Rural Network project (4G mobile broadband) should however address this. 	<p>CT</p>

	<p>Board members discussed the points highlighted in the presentation. MT asked CT to specify the support required from the Board to move things forward. MT thanked CT for his presentation which would be circulated to members.</p>	<p>CT EV</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Performance Risk & Monitoring Committee (PRMC) – report from the meeting on 17 December 2020 MT noted the declarations of interest for this item from JS and PH. SR thanked the members of PRMC for all their support and updated Board members on the Committee’s activities.</p> <p>Marches LEP Business Continuity Plan (BCP) SR said that the BCP was a new document describing the protocols to be adopted which would enable the Marches LEP to return to ‘business as usual’ following a disaster. The Board approved the newly developed Marches LEP Business Continuity Plan (10 for; 2 abstentions)</p> <p>Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Shropshire Council AMC asked if further work was still to be undertaken on the document. IB confirmed that the document was still at a draft stage and indicated the areas that were still in discussion. SR asked members to forward any further comments on the SLA to IB as soon as possible. MT proposed that the current draft of the SLA be noted rather than approved. The Board agreed to note the latest draft Service Level Agreement (SLA) for future service with Shropshire Council.</p> <p>(CB joined the meeting)</p> <p>Risk Registers <i>(Post-meeting note: The Programme Risk Register had been incorrectly referred to as the Project Risk Register in the paper. It is referred to as the Programme Risk Register in these minutes).</i></p> <p>SR drew members’ attention to the changes to the Strategic Risk Register detailed in the paper. The Board noted the changes made to the Strategic Risk Register.</p> <p>SR said that two new risks would be added to the Programme Risk Register. It was anticipated that a number of projects would struggle to meet their skills outputs which may lead to contract variations being required. The Marches Centre for Manufacturing and Technology (MCMT) was one of these. SR said that she wanted to reassure the Board that a full due diligence process had been undertaken on the proposal to vary the MCMT contract. JS raised concerns as a Board member and representative of the College Principals in Shropshire regarding the variation to the contract with MCMT and the potential effect this may have on outputs from existing providers in the area. A wide-ranging discussion took place regarding the proposed move of the MCMT training provision from Bridgnorth to Telford and Shrewsbury and whether the LEP contract with MCMT prohibits this. MT proposed that a paper providing more detail on the contract variation and the implications of the change in location of the training provision be produced and that a further confidential discussion regarding the proposed contract variation take place at an emergency Board meeting in mid-February 2021.</p>	<p>All</p> <p>GH</p>

	<p>The Board agreed to further discuss the issue at an emergency Board meeting (unanimous).</p> <p>The Board noted the other risk to be added to the MLEP Programme Risk Register.</p>	
7.	<p>Progress report on project spend of Local Growth Fund (LGF) & Getting Building Fund (GBF) NA updated the Board on delivering both the Local Growth Fund and Getting Building Fund projects.</p> <p>The Board noted the current position relating to the Getting Building Fund Programme, as set out in section 1 of the paper.</p> <p>The Board noted the current position relating to Local Growth Fund Programme including an updated spend position relating to NMITE Phase 2, the Primary Care project at the Tannery and the Capitalisation (Programme Management) projects, as set out in sections 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 of the paper.</p> <p>The Board noted the potential underspend position relating to the Local Growth Fund Programme, as set out in section 2.4 of the paper.</p> <p>NA said that the LEP faced challenges in ensuring that projects within the programmes met their contractual spend requirements. The LEP Team continued to work closely with project promoters in respect to mitigating risk, seeking assurances from projects through open dialogue, including formal monitoring visits. However, should any projects determine that they were unable to spend in the required timeframe, it would be necessary for the Board to discuss the next steps.</p> <p>The Board agreed to the scheduling of an Emergency LEP Board Meeting in the week commencing 15 February 2021, at the earliest (12 for, 1 abstention).</p> <p>The Board noted the update on the clawback of the £3.8m for the South Wye Project, as set out in section 4 of the paper.</p>	
8.	<p>LEP Chair/CEO report MT directed members to the information in the report.</p>	
9.	<p>Any Other Business FM – wished it to be noted that it had been agreed that the MIF projects spend period had been extended to July 2021 and thanked the LEP. MT thanked LA colleagues for their continued work on the assessment of and distribution of COVID grants.</p>	
10.	<p>Close The meeting closed at 6.23pm.</p>	
	<p>Next Meeting of the Board of The Marches LEP Limited: Tuesday 23 March 2021</p>	

Signed (electronically): Mandy Thorn MBE DL, Chair Marches LEP

Date: 23 March 2021