

**Minutes of the Marches LEP Ltd Board Meeting
30 November 2021 at 3.30pm via Zoom
(Company Number: 11822614)**

Present:

Mandy Thorn MBE DL	MT	Chair, Marches LEP
Sonia Roberts	SR	Deputy Chair Marches LEP; Equality & Diversity Champion; CEO Landau Limited
Frank Myers MBE	FM	Herefordshire Business Board Chair
Will Westley	WW	Telford Business Board Chair
Andrew Manning Cox	AMC	Hereford Enterprise Zone Chair
Cllr David Hitchiner	DH	Leader, Herefordshire Council
Cllr Ed Potter	EP	Deputy Leader, Shropshire Council
Cllr David Wright	DW	Cabinet Member for Economy, Housing, Transport and Infrastructure, Telford & Wrekin Council
Graham Guest	GG	Skills Advisory Panel Chair; Chief Executive and Principal of Telford College
Paul Kalinauckas	PK	Access to Finance Champion
Christine Snell	CS	Business Partner, AJ & CI Snell
Gordon Coppock	GC	Energy and NET Zero Champion
Catherine Baxter	CB	Higher Education Champion; University Secretary, Harper Adams University

In Attendance:

James Walton	JW	Section 151 Officer, Shropshire Council
Neil Taylor	NT	Interim Director of Economy and Place, 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/Area Lead, West Midlands Team, Cities & Local Growth Unit, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
Rachel Laver	RL	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
Tim Yair	TY	Regional Senior Energy Projects Officer, Midlands Energy Hub
Ennis Vingoe	EV	Executive Assistant, Marches LEP
Wayne Redge	WR	Office Administrator, Marches LEP

Observers:

Amy Bould	AB	Be Bold Ltd
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ITEM		ACTION
1.	<p>Welcome</p> <p>1. Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest</p> <p>MT thanked everyone for attending the meeting and welcomed Graham Guest to his first meeting as Chair of the Skills Advisory Panel. Apologies were received from Beth Heath.</p> <p>MT apologised for the late change from an in-person meeting at the Shell Store, Skylon Park, Hereford to a fully online meeting due to concerns over the potentially increasing COVID risk. She noted that the meeting was being recorded to aid the production of the minutes.</p>	

	<p>- the construction of a new campus building for NMITE was underway. Collaboration with NMITE in terms of internships, training, projects and engineering was already taking place across the enterprise zone.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assets <p>- the Shell Store had been completed earlier this year. It had been possible to preserve elements of the original historic building. 35 incubation spaces were available within the building and 10 tenants should be in situ by the end of 2021. The building had recently won the Insider Property Award for the West Midlands for Commercial Development of the Year.</p> <p>- the Cyber Quarter building was now complete. There was space for 16 tenants with 4 already signed up.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Skylon Park progress since 2012</i> <p>58 new businesses had moved into the zone; 58 of 110 acres had been sold for development; 60,100sq m of workspace had been developed; there were 1065 current and new jobs on occupation and 1101 further jobs in company growth plans. Interest in the enterprise zone had remained strong during the COVID pandemic and it was a real success story.</p> <p>MT wished to formally record congratulations to the HEZ team for winning the Insider Property Award and thanked AMC for the informative presentation.</p>	
<p>5.</p>	<p>LEP Chair and CEO Report MT referred members to the report and <i>asked everyone to read the appendices to the report and email any queries to her or RL.</i></p>	<p>All</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Update from The Marches Energy Steering Group GC provided an update on the Marches LEP Energy Strategy Review and went through the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good relationships had been developed with Western Power Distribution and Scottish Power but developing a pilot project had been more problematic, looking at a number of different funding sources. • Active Network Management would come online in this region over the next 18 months to enable more generation in a smart way. • A target of Renewable Energy locally meeting 50% of demand had been set. This was currently around 17% due to grid restrictions slowing growth, and planning issues with wind turbines. Work was continuing on this with a number of projects in the Marches. • The aim for 1,000 new jobs in the low carbon and renewable energy sector was going well with increased growth continuing. • The fuel poverty target was to reduce it to below 10% in this area. The latest data showed that it had increased to 16.5%. Funding in the Marches to improve ‘fuel poverty homes’ did not cover sufficient numbers and was disjointed. Training of local builders was difficult due to lack of training provision and builders being so busy. • Anaerobic digestion –the use of slurry and food waste was encouraged but there were some issues with the digestate releasing greenhouse gases and must be carefully controlled. • Creation of a centre for UK agriculture innovation and low carbon transition – this was at Harper Adams University (HAU). • Emissions of CO2 in the Marches –the highest proportion of emissions was from buildings (approx. 44%), with transport next and then livestock. • Carbon emissions excluding agriculture had reduced in line with UK targets, a 57% reduction on 1990 levels. However, national targets were now changing. Overall, the total energy demand and subsequent carbon emissions need to be 	

	<p>reduced. Carbon literacy training and training for builders to retrofit buildings was desperately required.</p> <p>GC said that it was a significant challenge working to meet all these targets simultaneously.</p> <p>CB said that HAU had been in discussion with GC regarding the initiatives currently being undertaken there, and with partners. There was some debate about the efficacy of the carbon literacy training being offered and HAU was working with partners on this. The availability of local training providers and the availability of builders to attend the training were also issues.</p> <p>FM noted that the Community Foundations were running schemes where those in receipt of the Winter Fuel Allowance who didn't need it could donate it someone in need to help meet their energy bills. Members were invited to help promote this initiative.</p> <p>Members discussed a number of areas covered in the presentation. GC said that Active Network Management was intended to maximise the use of generated power to increase the power to the grid. Ultimately more wind generation would be required, and this was where community energy was so important as it engaged with communities to increase the knowledge of where their power comes from and consequently, reduce the opposition to these projects.</p> <p>GG suggested that the LEP should look strategically at meeting the skills need in the Marches in order to increase low carbon jobs. It was agreed that he and GC would meet separately to discuss this.</p> <p>MT commented that there had been a great deal of interest in this topic from members and that GC would provide a further update in March 2022. Members were invited to email GC separately with any further queries, copying in the LEP Team.</p> <p>MT thanked GC for his informative presentation and members for the valuable discussion.</p>	<p>All</p> <p>GG, GC</p> <p>GC All</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Programme update</p> <p>MT reiterated that items 7 and 8 were for information only and NA gave a brief overview of the paper.</p> <p>Local Growth Fund (LGF)</p> <p>It was reported that all projects awarded LGF funds at the September 2021 Emergency LEP Board meeting had been contracted. Members noted the Quarter 1 & 2 performance position relating to the LGF Programme. Notable achievements included 130 jobs created/safeguarded, 82 homes completed, 505 apprentices and £14.8m of Match Funding.</p> <p>Getting Building Funds (GBF)</p> <p>Members noted the Quarter 2 performance position relating to the GBF Programme.</p>	
<p>8.</p>	<p>Hereford City Centre Improvements (HCCI) and Integrated Construction Wetlands (ICW)</p> <p>HCCI</p> <p>NA confirmed that Herefordshire Council had received the Final Varied HCCI Funding Agreement for signature and seal. It was anticipated the sign-off process would be completed over the coming days.</p> <p>ICW</p> <p>NA confirmed that the LEP had received outstanding information from the project on Friday 26 November and Monday 29 November 2021, enabling a Draft Agreement to be released within the next few days.</p>	

	RL wished to thank NA, the LEP programme team and Herefordshire Council colleagues for their hard work on getting these funding agreements completed.	
9.	<p>Telford and Wrekin Council Marches Investment Fund (MIF) funding extension request</p> <p>RL referred members to the paper which explained that in July 2020, Telford & Wrekin Council had been awarded a revenue grant of £168,216 to support strategic tourism and business initiatives. An initial extension to the expenditure period was granted by the LEP Board from 30 October 2020 to 31 March 2021. At the January 2021 LEP Board meeting, a further extension was granted to 31 July 2021 due to the restrictions caused by the pandemic. As of August 2021, of the original grant, £65,216 remained uncommitted. Telford & Wrekin had requested that this amount be re-profiled to finance a number of on-going costs relating to Telford's MIF projects, which would be put at risk if the remaining funding allocation had to be returned.</p> <p>The Board approved Telford & Wrekin Council's request to re-profile £65,234 of MIF funding, which must be spent by 31 March 2022 at the latest (unanimous).</p>	
10.	<p>Tourism and Place marketing</p> <p>RL said that the LEP did not currently actively promote place marketing or tourism, although the LAs do. She asked members and officers if the LEP should provide support for this work.</p> <p>A wide-ranging discussion took place, and a number of points were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The local authorities provide significant promotion and marketing for tourism but there was also a need to promote the Marches as a good place to live and work. • Many visitors come to the area for day trips rather than overnight or longer stays. Visitors staying longer would provide a boost to the local food industries and wellbeing sector. • A collaborative approach was required with LAs, large employers eg NHS, and SMEs to encourage workers to settle in the area to help fill the huge numbers of vacancies. • Destination – inward investors were interested in the land available and the financial deals in the area but also the quality of life for families and the additional benefits. Telford for instance had existing initiatives in collaboration with large employers who were struggling to recruit, to promote the area for investors and assisting with transporting employees etc. There could be a role for the LEP in an overarching approach and in engagement with investors. • How to support skills development was important. • The narrative around 'why the Marches' was important; and what is 'the Marches'. The LEP needs to be very clear about this place narrative. • Growing the social enterprise economy, social investment and how to attract professionals to the area was key. A wider connected discussion about how place feels in the wider Marches area was needed. • Place marketing needs to bring all the strands of work together that we do to a wider place-shaping piece. It may not necessarily be about promoting the Marches as a place as not many people know what it is. We may need to look at what we can do with the resources we've got, and this would include skills and how to promote vacancies. How we could work with colleagues in the NHS for example, to help fill vacancies and to promote assets could be explored. RL to follow up with relevant stakeholders. 	RL

11.	<p>Report from the Performance Risk & Monitoring Committee (PRMC) meeting on 28 October 2021</p> <p>SR wished to draw members' attention to the fact that due to the uncertainty in the outcome of the LEP Review, that some PRMC work areas would be re-scheduled eg the inclusive economy and diversity policy review. At the last PRMC meeting LEP funding and the uncertainty for the LEP officers was noted as a significant concern. This uncertainty was the biggest risk the LEP was facing. There were some changes being made to how the risk registers would be presented to make them clearer. The 5 main risks would be brought to the top of each Risk Register. MT reiterated that the uncertainty was having a huge impact on the work the LEP was doing.</p>	
12.	<p>Update on Marches LEP Delivery Plan 2021-22</p> <p>IB went through the report updating on progress with delivery plan actions. Some actions had been stalled due to the uncertainties of the LEP Review. These were highlighted in red, but some progress had been made on these.</p>	
13.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>MT said that it was hoped that the outcome of LEP Review will have been published by the next meeting of the LEP Board in January 2022.</p>	
<p>Next Meeting: 25 January 2022 at Telford College</p>		

Signed (electronically):

Mandy Thorn MBE DL, Chair Marches LEP

Date: 25 January 2022