

THE MARCHES LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP

The Marches Area

With a business base as rich and diverse as its landscape, the Marches is a region where enterprise and innovation have long provided economic vitality and growth. At its heart is the global birthplace of industry, part of a heritage which has sparked a dynamic business region where innovative enterprises operate alongside land-based industries and entrepreneurs flourish alongside the global players which have chosen to base their operations here.

The Marches includes the unitary council areas of **Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin**, home to more than 710,000 people, some 32,000 businesses and contributing £111.50bn to the national economy. Located in central England, it is bordered by the industrial heartland of the West Midlands to the east and Wales to the west, providing a strategic logistical gateway for European and UK businesses through to Welsh and Irish business markets. The historic city of Hereford, the Shropshire county town of Shrewsbury and the town of Telford are the key centres of population and employment. With more than 25 market towns and many villages across its landscape, the Marches offers a unified trading area, based on common interests and a shared pride in business success.

The Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)

The Marches LEP is a partnership of business, education and the local authorities of Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin, which is investing in innovation, higher level skills, housing and business sites. The LEP's vision for the Marches is of a place which is:

- Open for business, up for business and pro-growth.
- At the forefront of changes in how people live and work using new technology and improved physical and digital connectivity to enable businesses and people to develop and succeed.
- A growing place, attracting more people to come, stay and build their careers and businesses.
- A destination not a boundary - gateway to markets in the Midlands, Wales, South West, North and Europe. A visitor destination with significant natural and cultural resources that is well known and attracts people looking for a high-quality experience.
- A pioneer in the provision and testing of digitally driven health and social care for dispersed populations supporting healthy ageing and economic participation in later life.
- A global centre of excellence in advanced manufacturing specifically automotive, cyber security, and the next phase of technology development in agriculture, environment and food production.
- An inclusive place that enables residents from all communities to thrive and develop with quality jobs offering good wages, training and progression.
- A collaborative and proactive place with businesses, further education institutions (FEIs), higher education institutions (HEIs) and public organisations working together to agree what needs to happen and getting things done. Known as a good place to start and grow a business.

The LEP is looking to continue driving economic development across the Marches and support local authorities in maximising funding opportunities and responding to business and community needs, so that the region is an attractive place to visit, live and invest.

The Marches LEP Board

The Partnership is currently led by a 15 strong LEP Board, chaired by Mandy Thorn MBE, a leading business figure. The Board works closely with the three Business Boards for Herefordshire,

Shropshire and Telford, the Chairs of which sit on the LEP Board. It seeks to maximise the range of local networks and support organisations that exist to ensure fully representative engagement with local business, whilst keeping the executive function small to aid timely and effective decision making.

Current Board membership is as follows:

Sector	Name	Job Title and Organisation
Private Sector Chair	Mandy Thorn MBE DL	Chair of Marches LEP Board
3 Area Business Board Chairs	Frank Myers MBE	Business Owner
	Jeannie McGillivray	Business Owner
	Will Westley	Business Owner
Hereford Enterprise Zone	Andrew Manning Cox	Chair of Hereford Enterprise Zone
Food and Drink/Agri Tech	Christine Snell	Business Owner
Community & Voluntary Sector	Sonia Roberts	CEO, Landau & Deputy Chair Marches LEP Board
Financial and Professional Services	Paul Kalinauckas	Midlands Engine Investment Fund Strategic Oversight Board
Post-16 Skills Champion	Graham Guest	Principal and CEO Telford College
Higher Education Champion	Dr Catherine Baxter	University Secretary, Harper Adams University
Manufacturing	Sara Williams	Marketing Manager, Protolabs Europe Ltd
Co-Opted Member	Gordon Coppock	Energy and Net Zero Champion
3 Local Authority Leaders & Alternates	Cllr David Hitchiner	Leader of Herefordshire Council
	Cllr Ellie Chowns	Alternate Herefordshire Council
	Cllr Lezley Picton	Leader of Shropshire Council
	Cllr Ed Potter	Alternate Shropshire Council
	Cllr Shaun Davies	Leader of Telford and Wrekin Council
	Cllr Lee Carter	Alternate Telford and Wrekin Council