

THE MARCHES LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP LIMITED					
BOARD MEETING					
Tuesday 27 September 2022			3.30 pm – 5.30 pm		
Plymouth Rooms, Ludlow Racecourse, Bromfield, SY8 2BT					
AGENDA					
Item	Time		Lead	Purpose	Paper
1.	3.30 pm	Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest	MT		
Part A – Public Session					
2.	3.35 pm	Governance - Board Member Re-elections - Marches LEP Board Member Recruitment	RL	Approval	X
3.	3.45 pm	Minutes of The Marches LEP Ltd Board meeting on 28 June 2022 - Matters Arising	MT		X
4.	3.50 pm	LEP Chair and CEO Report	MT/RL	Information & Discussion	X
5.	4.00 pm	Report from the Performance Risk & Monitoring Committee (PRMC)	SR	Information	X
6.	4.10 pm	Hereford City Centre Improvement (HCCI) project update – presentation by Sue White, Senior Project Manager, Herefordshire Council	Sue White, MT	Discussion & Approval	X
7.	4.30 pm	The Business Environment Network	RL	Information & Discussion	X
8.	4.45 pm	Department for International Trade (DIT) funded Key Account Management (KAM) programme	MT	Discussion & Approval	X
Part B – Private Session					
9.	5.00 pm	Energy Fund – <i>confidential item</i>	MT	Approval	X
10.	5.15 pm	Any Other Business			
Future Meetings					
Nov	29 November 2022 3.30pm – 5.30pm (Location TBC) Accountability and Assurance Framework annual review Mid-Year Review feedback Telford Land Deal Update Transport Officers Group				

Jan 23	24 January 2023 3.30pm – 5.30pm (Ludlow Racecourse) Business Support Steering Group
Mar 23	21 March 2023 3.30pm – 5.30pm (Ludlow Racecourse)

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Meeting date:	27 th September 2022					
Agenda Item:	2					
Item Subject:	Governance					
Author:	Rachel Laver					
For:	Discussion		Decision	x	Information	x

Purpose of the Paper:

To provide information to Board members regarding Board member changes and propose the confirmation of appointments of new directors of Marches LEP Ltd.

Summary of Recommendations:

- **To confirm the appointment of Clare Fenton and Alex Green as directors of Marches LEP Ltd and members of the Board.**
- **To note the re-election of Christine Snell and Catherine Baxter, by correspondence.**
- **To approve the re-election of Paul Kalinauckas for a further 2-year term.**
- **To note that Beth Heath has resigned as Chair of Shropshire Business Board and as a member of the Marches LEP Board.**

Main points

1. Board Member Appointments

A successful round of interviews to appoint new Board members was held on 18 August 2022. Thanks go to the Chair and Deputy Chair, Frank Myers MBE and Cllr Ed Potter for their contribution as members of the interview panel.

Clare Fenton from Herefordshire and Alex Green from Shropshire were the successful candidates and have accepted roles as members of the Marches LEP Board subject to board approval. They have consented to their appointment as directors.

Clare is a director of Fenton Partners - building envelope consultants; and a director and co-founder of Veritherm – a building performance company. She is also Chair of the Metal, Cladding and Roofing Manufacturers Association and represents them on the sustainability arm of the Construction Products Association.

Alex is a founder and director of Radfield Homecare and Radfield Homecare Franchising. He is also a voluntary director of Rerezent, a media and training company working in the education space operating a youth radio station and developing services to tackle the mental health crisis in schools.

In accordance with the Articles of Association section 20, members of the Board are asked to confirm the appointment of Clare Fenton and Alex Green as private sector directors of Marches LEP Ltd.

2. Recruitment of Marches LEP Chair

An update is provided in the LEP Chair and CEO Report at Item 4 on the agenda.

3a. Re-election of Christine Snell and Catherine Baxter

During the 'Any other Business' Item at the Marches LEP Board Meeting on 28 June 2022 the re-election to the Board of Catherine Baxter and Christine Snell was discussed (following completion of their initial 2-year tenure). Due to the meeting not being quorate at that time

following the departure of a member part-way through the meeting, the vote was approved via correspondence.

The Board is asked to note that the re-election of Catherine Baxter and Christine Snell to the Marches LEP Board for a further 2-year tenure to July 2024 was approved by correspondence.

3b. Re-election of Paul Kalinauckas

Paul Kalinauckas has recently completed his second 2-year term as a member of the Board. In accordance with the Board Terms of Reference, it is proposed that Paul is re-elected for a further term which would come to an end in May 2024.

Members of the Board are asked to approve the re-election of Paul Kalinauckas to the Marches LEP Board until May 2024.

4. Resignation of Beth Heath as of 12 September 2022

Beth Heath has recently resigned as the Chair of Shropshire Business Board and as a member of the Marches LEP Board.

Shropshire Council has been in discussions with the Shropshire Business Board over a proposal to merge the Business Board into the Shropshire Economic Taskforce. The Business Board has voted in favour of this. The Economic Taskforce is a public, private, voluntary sector partnership that takes responsibility for the Shropshire Economic Growth Strategy and other cross sector economy and skills issues within the county. The Marches LEP CEO is also a member of this taskforce.

The Shropshire Business Board will therefore cease and there will no longer be a representative on the Marches LEP Board. The Board will be updated as further information is received from the Business Board. Proposals on how we continue to engage with Shropshire businesses is covered separately in the Chair and CEO report.

The Board is asked to note that Beth Heath has resigned as Chair of the Shropshire Business Board and therefore as a member of the Marches LEP Board and a director of Marches LEP Ltd. The necessary documentation has been filed with Companies House.

Financial implications:

n/a

Legal implications:

The relevant director resignation and appointment documentation will be lodged with Companies House.

Risks, opportunities and impacts:

Confirmation of the new Board members will bring in additional knowledge and skills which will assist the LEP to help navigate through the next stage of its evolution.

Equality implications:

Confirming the appointment of the new Board members maintains the current national requirement to have 30% female board members. This requirement will increase to 50% female members in 2023. The current proportion of Board members is 44% female, 56% male.

We have three Board members whose terms are due to end in 2023. We will have to give careful consideration as to how we reappoint and recruit to any vacancies given the onerous

requirement. It is important that we appoint on merit but to achieve the levels specified we should consider a longer-term approach to Board member recruitment which could include mentoring and upskilling of prospective members before they apply to join the Board.

Report Author: Rachel Laver

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**Draft Minutes of the Marches LEP Ltd Board Meeting
28 June 2022 at 3.30pm at Ludlow Racecourse
(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 (part of meeting)
Frank Myers MBE	FM	Herefordshire Business Board Chair
Will Westley	WW	Telford Business Board Chair
Cllr Ellie Chowns	EC	Cabinet Member for Environment & Economy, Herefordshire Council
Cllr Dean Carroll	DC	Portfolio Holder for Physical Infrastructure, Shropshire Council
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 (via link)
Ross Cook	RC	Director for Economy and Environment, 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
Alex Collins	AC	Deputy Area Lead, Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire, Cities & Local Growth Unit, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
Rachel Laver	RL	Chief Executive, Marches LEP
Kathryn Jones	KJ	Head of Partnerships & Strategy, Marches LEP
Nick Alamanos	NA	Head of Programmes, Marches LEP
Ennis Vingoe	EV	Executive Assistant, Marches LEP
Jo Grivell	GJ	Office Administrator, Marches LEP

ITEM		ACTION
1.	<p>Welcome</p> <p>1. Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest</p> <p>MT thanked everyone for attending the meeting. Apologies were received from Cllr David Hitchiner; Cllr Lee Carter, Cllr Ed Potter, Beth Heath, Sara Williams, Paul Kalinauckas; Andrew Manning Cox; Christine Snell and Graham Guest. Cllr Ellie Chowns was attending the meeting in Cllr Hitchiner's stead and Cllr Dean Carroll was attending the meeting in Cllr Potter's stead.</p> <p>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 reminded members to complete the form that had been distributed for any specific Declarations of Interest for every meeting.</p> <p>The following declarations of interest were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MT declared an interest in Item 2 – Governance – Chair tenure. 	
2.	<p>Governance</p> <p>2.1. Tenure of the Chair</p> <p><i>MT left the meeting at 3.55pm.</i></p>	

	<p>SR informed the Board that there had not been a great deal of interest so far in the role of Chair which was currently out for advert. The deadline for applications is 1 July 2022. DC said it was vital to have a backup plan in place should there be no suitable applicants. MT will have served three years at the end of September 2022 and had previously indicated that she would like to step down no later than the end of March 2023. However, she has since kindly offered to stay for an additional period of time until a suitable candidate for chair was found.</p> <p>Following discussion, it was proposed that MT be appointed for another three-year period with the option (as ever) for MT to give notice to step down during this time. In the meantime, the LEP would continue the search process for a successor and would look to use a recruitment firm if the current recruitment was unsuccessful. Everyone was asked to use their networks to promote the opportunities.</p> <p><i>The Board approved MT's appointment as Chair for another three-year term (unanimous).</i></p> <p><i>MT re-joined the meeting at 3.41pm.</i></p> <p>2.2 Telford & Wrekin Council Directors Cllr Shaun Davies, Leader of Telford & Wrekin Council had given notice of his resignation as a director of Marches LEP, due to increased work commitments following his recent election as Senior Vice Chair of the Local Government Association. Cllr Davies had proposed that Cllr Lee Carter, the current Alternate Director for Telford & Wrekin Council was appointed as the lead Director and Cllr Richard Overton, the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing, Enforcement and Transport was appointed as the Alternate Director. Cllr Overton had consented to the appointment.</p> <p>The relevant appointment documentation, in accordance with the Articles of Association sections 20 and 23 had been signed by Cllr Carter and Cllr Overton.</p> <p><i>The Board confirmed the appointment of Cllr Carter as a public sector director of Marches LEP Ltd and the appointment of Cllr Overton as an alternate director of Marches LEP Ltd (unanimous).</i></p> <p><i>2.3 The Board noted that the Articles of Association would be updated to reflect required amendments.</i></p>	<p>All</p> <p>EV</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>Minutes of The Marches LEP Ltd Board meeting on 26 April 2022 The Minutes of the meeting held on 26 April 2022 were approved by those members present at the meeting and would be signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record of the meeting.</p> <p>Matters Arising The meeting was suspended at 5.13pm for a confidential discussion and except for RL and JW, all non-Board Members left the meeting at this point. The meeting re-convened at 5.20pm.</p>	
<p>4.</p>	<p>LEP Chair and CEO Report MT told the Board that she and RL had attended the LEP Network Chair and CEO's meeting yesterday which was also attended by a number of government ministers. It was made clear at the meeting that private sector led LEPs such as the Marches LEP, who lie outside mayoral authorities, must be working in collaboration with LAs</p>	

	<p>and had a major role in continuing to work with businesses, 'bringing them to the table' at the pan regional level.</p> <p>George Freeman MP – Minister for Science & Innovation extended his thanks particularly to LEP staff and private sector board members for all their work during the recent uncertain times.</p> <p>Cyber clusters and agri-tech were highlighted but discussion did not include the significant contribution of organisations in the Marches to these areas. MT had been asked to convene a meeting between rural LEPs across the country.</p> <p>Lobbying by the Marches MPs would be beneficial to improve awareness of the Marches contribution.</p> <p>Meetings would be organised with Marches MPs in due course.</p> <p>RL informed the Board that the LEP had been approached to look at hosting the local Business Environment Network, which is currently funded through a subscription model. This would need to be carefully researched to see whether the subscription model is something that would be extended. A paper will be brought to the September board meeting.</p> <p>RL drew members' attention to the section in the report on cash flow. The LEP had received informal confirmation yesterday that Treasury had approved core funding for LEPs with an offer letter expected in early July. The LEP required early notification of confirmation of funding for 2023/24 as it continued to run at a loss and could not 'bankroll' projects into the next financial year.</p> <p>SR noted that one of the major strengths of the LEP lay in productive working with LA partners. A wide-ranging discussion took place about the services the LEP could provide, and comments made at the LEP Network meeting about Shared Prosperity Fund allocations and bidding for Levelling Up Funds.</p>	<p>RL</p> <p>RL</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Board Member Recruitment</p> <p>RL reported that 8 expressions of interest had been received so far for the Board member vacancies, some with good commercial experience. The closing date is 1 July 2022.</p> <p>Board members were asked to let EV know their availability to form the shortlisting panel on 11 July 2022; and interview panel on 18 July or 21 July, or potentially both.</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Getting Building Fund and Local Growth Fund Update</p> <p>NA gave his final update to the Board prior to his departure from the Marches LEP. He said that section 1 of Appendix 1 of the Board paper confirmed that all projects funded by the Getting Building Fund had been able to achieve their updated GBF profiles with the exception of those projects which had received Board approval to reprofile expenditure into the 2022/23 FY through Freedoms & Flexibilities (£2.6 million).</p> <p>NA thanked all the LA representatives who had worked to enable the projects to meet their obligations.</p> <p>The Board noted the Quarter 4 2021/22 Financial Year position relating to the Getting Building Fund Programme, as set out in section 1 and Appendix 1 of the paper.</p> <p>NA updated members on the Local Growth Fund projects. He drew members' attention to the NMITE Phase 2 project at Skylon Park. Following Board approval</p>	

	<p>on 11 June 2020, £5.6 million had been transferred directly to Herefordshire Council, in their capacity as the Accountable Body for the NMITE project. An officer from Herefordshire Council had provided an update to the PRMC meeting on 16 June 2022, confirming that the build was scheduled to be completed at the end of July 2022, resulting in all remaining LGF grant being defrayed in the Quarter 2 2022/23 period.</p> <p>The Board noted the current position relating to the NMITE Phase 2 Local Growth Fund project, as set out in section 2.1 of the paper.</p> <p>NA said that the LEP had been successful in ensuring that all LEP contracted LGF expenditure profiled for the 2021/22 FY had been met. LGF was now closed for expenditure purposes, but the LEP would continue to monitor projects in relation to their contractual obligations around achieving outputs and match funding.</p> <p>The Board noted the Quarter 4 2021/22 Financial Year position relating to the Local Growth Fund Programme, as set out in section 2.2 and Appendix 2 of the paper.</p> <p>MT thanked NA on behalf of Board for all his hard work in ensuring that public money had been managed with absolute probity and transparency during his time at the Marches LEP. NA thanked everyone for the support he had received during his time in post.</p>	
<p>7.</p>	<p>Delivery Plan 2022/23</p> <p>RL said that work continued on the Marches LEP core activities but that some new opportunities were being explored including putting a bid forward for the Creative Growth Fund.</p> <p>MT said that the LEP needed to demonstrate that it was strengthening its business engagement and it would continue to work with the 3 business boards and business representative organisations on this. Developing a working relationship with the NHS as the biggest employer in the area was also a priority.</p> <p>RL said that businesses were a rich source of data and there should be a two-way flow of information.</p> <p>A paper would be prepared for the September Board meeting looking at business board structure.</p> <p>EC commented that it was good to see the range and number of activities in the Delivery Plan, but it was important to include the expected outputs in order to measure impact/success in 12 months' time. This was discussed and it was agreed that key metrics and prioritisation would be included in the Plan.</p> <p>The 2023/24 Delivery Plan would be developed for November 2022.</p> <p>The Board approved the Marches LEP Delivery Plan for 2022/23 subject to the amendments suggested above (unanimous).</p>	<p>RL</p> <p>RL</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>Report from the Performance Risk & Monitoring Committee (PRMC)</p> <p>SR thanked NA on behalf of the PRMC for his contribution and support to the committee during his time in post.</p>	

	<p>SR highlighted the risk in the Strategic Risk Register of not being able to recruit Board members and was pleased to hear that there were currently 8 expressions of interest. Regarding the programme risks there was some concern about the loss of knowledge and skills to the LEP with the departure of NA. PRMC had asked project promoters to come into the PRMC meetings to present at relevant milestone project dates.</p> <p>EC asked whether climate change was included in the risk registers and to what extent they would be updated in response to increases in fuel prices etc. NA said that the Strategic Register looked at the risks to the LEP as an organisation and the Programme Register at the specific programmes, based on the criteria provided by government to assess them against.</p> <p>RL said that it was important to get intelligence from businesses on climate change issues and their energy focus.</p> <p><i>It was agreed that the registers would be reviewed.</i></p> <p><i>The Board noted the outcomes of the last two PRMC meetings (9 May 2022 and 16 June 2022) and the main changes to the Corporate and Programme Risk Registers.</i></p> <p><i>SR left the meeting at 4.57pm</i></p>	<p>RL, TY</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>Low Carbon Fund Delegated Approval</p> <p>RL summarised the paper and said that it was important to have wide representation from the LEP Board on the sub-group. In addition to MT and GC a further 2 further members were required. WW and FM kindly volunteered to be part of the sub-group.</p> <p><i>The Board gave approval for a Low Carbon Subgroup to be formed to shortlist Expressions of Interest following the call process which would close on 8 July 2022 (unanimous).</i></p>	<p>TY</p>
<p>10.</p>	<p>Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)/Levelling Up Fund/Towns Fund updates Herefordshire</p> <p>EC updated members on the activities being undertaken by Herefordshire Council for the following funds:</p> <p><u>UKSPF</u> £7.5m over 3 years. Priorities were being identified around an energy efficiency agenda. The Stakeholder Board had met twice which included a number of LEP members. Stakeholder engagement particularly with businesses had been very successful across the county.</p> <p><u>Levelling Up Fund</u> 3 proposals for the county: <i>Transport Proposal</i> Focussed on Hereford City, including a transport hub and 2 active travel projects. <i>North Herefordshire Constituency</i> Proposal for public realm improvements in Ledbury and Leominster. The range of projects eligible for this funding was severely constrained by the criteria of the funding. <i>South Herefordshire Constituency</i> Proposal for the development of Ross Enterprise Park.</p>	

<p><u>Towns Fund</u> £22.4 million with 15 projects being put forward with a core focus on a 'Green and Fairer City'. Areas include electric buses, creative, digital, skills, sports facilities, plus a large museum transformation project and moving the library. Business cases had been submitted.</p> <p>Shropshire MB gave an update on Shropshire Council activities in relation to the funds: <u>UKSPF</u> £12.25 million awarded over 3 years. The council had brought in extra consultants to assist in the development of the bid. Engagement had taken place with the skills sector, colleges and third sector. Shropshire Council had also been refreshing its economic strategy and this feeds into the bids because much of the required evidence had already been sourced through stakeholder engagement. Different portfolios within this fund were being looked at within this fund and business support was likely to be the biggest area.</p> <p><u>Levelling Up Fund</u> The round one submissions had not been successful and these were being resubmitted, but some of the criteria had changed. There would be 4 bids: <i>Riverside Development and core of Shrewsbury;</i> <i>Oswestry Innovation Park;</i> <i>Craven Arms business park/employment space and freeing up brownfield land within the town. There would be housing development including a bridge across the A49 and the railway.</i> <i>Public transport – helping support the viability of rural bus services through the Shropshire Connect Strategy; shifting to an on-demand service.</i></p> <p>Telford & Wrekin KK presented an update on the activities being undertaken by Telford & Wrekin Council: <u>UKSPF Investment Plan</u> Allocation of £5.8million over 3 years with an anticipated focus on economy and employment complimenting the Council's existing 'Safer, Stronger Communities Programme'.</p> <p><u>Levelling Up Fund</u> <i>Telford Constituency Bid</i> Two inter-related projects: remodelling and expansion of The Place Theatre (Oakengates) to deliver a broader cultural programme and greater community and educational activity; and expansion of Telford's sixth form offer to create an 'academic campus' within Telford Station Quarter alongside the digital skills and enterprise hub being funded via Towns Funding. <i>Wrekin Constituency Bid</i> To re-model and regenerate Wellington Town Centre including the historic market. <i>Transport Bid – cross-constituency</i> Telford & Wrekin Sustainable Transport Package in 3 parts: Silkin Way Investment Plan; local cycling and walking routes; and bus improvements including electric buses.</p> <p><u>Towns Fund</u> £22.3 million had been awarded in June 2021 with 3 projects being put forward: Station Quarter; Oakengates Theatre Quarter; and Wellington</p>	
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	<p>Conservation Area. A decision by DLUHC was anticipated in August/September 2022 with all projects to be delivered by March 2025.</p> <p>MT thanked EC, MB, and KK for their updates.</p>	
11.	<p>Marches Careers Hub Update</p> <p>KJ introduced the information paper. Part 1 was an update against KPIs and it was noted that performance had improved significantly during the period. It was anticipated that new contract documentation for the next 12 months would be forthcoming in the next week or so. Business volunteers (Enterprise Advisers) to work with schools continued to be a key area of work and it was hoped that some of those expressing an interest in the LEP Board member roles may be interested in becoming advisers.</p> <p>Part 2 was an update on the review of the delivery model. Following a detailed options analysis being carried out the decision had been taken to retain the current model.</p> <p><i>The Board noted the update, the improvement in delivery and the next steps for the Marches Careers Hub.</i></p> <p><i>MT asked if information on the geographical areas where Enterprise Advisers were still required could be passed to Board members to aid with potential recruitment; and if the members could also be reminded of the performance benchmarks.</i></p> <p>RL congratulated KJ, Andriané Usherwood-Brown, David Taylor and staff in the LA teams on the massively improved figures over the past 6 months.</p>	KJ
12.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Re-election of Board members</p> <p>RL informed the Board that Catherine Baxter and Christine Snell had completed their initial 2-year tenure on the Board.</p> <p><i>Members present agreed that CB and CS would be re-elected as Private Sector Directors (unanimous).</i></p> <p><i>Post meeting note – all Board members would be contacted and asked to confirm their response by correspondence.</i></p> <p>The meeting closed at 5:44 pm</p>	EV
<p>Next Meeting: 27 September 2022 at Ludlow Racecourse from 3.30pm to 5.30pm</p>		

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Meeting date:	27 th September 2022					
Agenda Item:	4					
Item Subject:	Marches LEP Chair and Chief Executive Officer's Report					
For:	Discussion	X	Decision	x	Information	X

Purpose of the Paper: To provide Board Members with a brief overview of LEP's activities not reported elsewhere.

Summary of Recommendations:

- **That Board Members note the content of the Report.**
- **That the Board approves widening the scope of the Business Support Steering group to draw together Marches wide business information and be the main communication channel for feeding information back to businesses in conjunction with the remaining business boards.**
- **That the Board increases the CEO approval on the Council's finance system to £100k; for salaries only.**

1. Executive Summary

With the changes within government there remains a lack of clarity about the future of LEPs moving forward. The changes mean that we've now been told to not expect clarity on funding for next year until at least November, but that messaging about LEPs no longer being able to cash flow activity until funding is paid is understood. This is a position that is not unique to the Marches LEP.

The last few months have seen devolution deals completed in North Yorkshire, worth £540m over 30 years and an East Midlands deal of £1.14m. It is important that we continue to work with the Marches Local Authorities and neighbours to explore opportunities to work together to maximise the funding that comes into the sub-region. To this end we have had meetings with local authorities and will continue to follow up and facilitate these early discussions.

Elsewhere in the business, the Careers Hub has made good progress in improving its performance and has seen the benchmark figures improve. Funding has been confirmed for another 12 months. The Growth Hub has had its grant offer paperwork through, and DIT has confirmed another six months of funding for the Key Account Management Service. Shropshire Chamber were successful in their bid to become an Employer Representative body for the Marches. We will continue to collaborate with them to help shape the Learning Skills and Investment Plan, using the work we've completed to date, the skills we have in house and building on the work of the Skills Advisory Panel.

As the cost of Energy is a key area of concern for businesses, we will look to strengthen the support we can offer in this area, hopefully helped by some of the projects recommended for approval of grant funding from the Energy Fund. We have also agreed to sponsor a Business Energy event which will be open to businesses across the Marches and are working on the advice and guidance that we can give on the Growth Hub website.

2. Business Boards

Shropshire Business Board has now "merged" with Shropshire Economic Task Force and will be represented by two business people at the Task Force moving forward.

It is vitally important that the LEP retains the voice of businesses and is able to have a meaningful two-way flow of information with businesses. With this in mind as Telford and Herefordshire Business Boards intend to continue to operate, it is suggested that the remit of Business Support Steering Group is widened to act as a Marches wide business board

with intelligence from the two remaining business boards feeding into it as well as the Shropshire Economic Taskforce.

We should also review how we collect business intelligence and how we provide information and support to as many businesses as possible. We'll continue to develop and improve this through the Growth Hub.

To confirm the current role of the steering group is:

- *Championing small and medium sized businesses across the Marches and shaping business support policy to meet local needs.*
- *Working collectively to design, develop and deliver business support projects to meet recognised strategic priorities where new funding opportunities become available.*
- *Working strategically to influence and inform the Government's proposed business support reform programme.*
- *Providing oversight of Marches Growth Hub (MGH) performance.*

The membership of the Business Support Steering group is detailed in the Terms of Reference appended at Appendix 1. It is recommended that these are updated to replace the Shropshire Business Board representative with a Shropshire Economic Task Force representative.

Recommendation: Approve widening the scope of the Business Support Steering group to draw together Marches wide business information and be the main communication channel for feeding information back to businesses in conjunction with the remaining business boards.

3. Staffing

Following a PR campaign, we received a good number of quality board member applications and following interviews were able to offer positions to two individuals subject to board approval. (Covered separately).

We originally had two applications for the chair role, but one individual withdrew their application over concern about the amount of time the role would take up. We have been out to advert again and had a limited response. We have two prospective candidates to interview, including one existing board member. The interviews will take place in October. We have been able to successfully appoint a new project manager, Glenn Barrowman who previously worked for University of Wolverhampton on an ERDF funded programme. Glenn will join us at the end of the month.

We have advertised for a Head of Business Development and Delivery and had strong interest in the post. We will be interviewing in early October, with a view to having someone in place as soon as possible but no later than January.

Other staff changes are in train to help the company operate more efficiently and to maximise the use of the reduced funding we have.

4. Finance

4.1. Delegation

At the moment the CEO can approve expenditure up to £45k. The Board is asked to increase this delegation for the salaries only, so that the CEO can approve the purchase order for the salaries each month without having to separate the costs into smaller purchase orders. The finance workflow system has a limit at £30k and the next is £100k,

so the CEO delegation for salaries only would need to increase to £100k. To confirm the monthly salary total is currently approximately £49k per month. The delegation for all other expenditure will remain at £45k.

Recommendation: Increase the CEO approval of the Council's finance system to £100k for salaries only.

4.2. Corporation Tax

The tax bill for the year is estimated to be £84k and will be paid at the end of the year. It mainly relates to the income from the Telford Land Deal.

4.3. Value Added Tax (VAT)

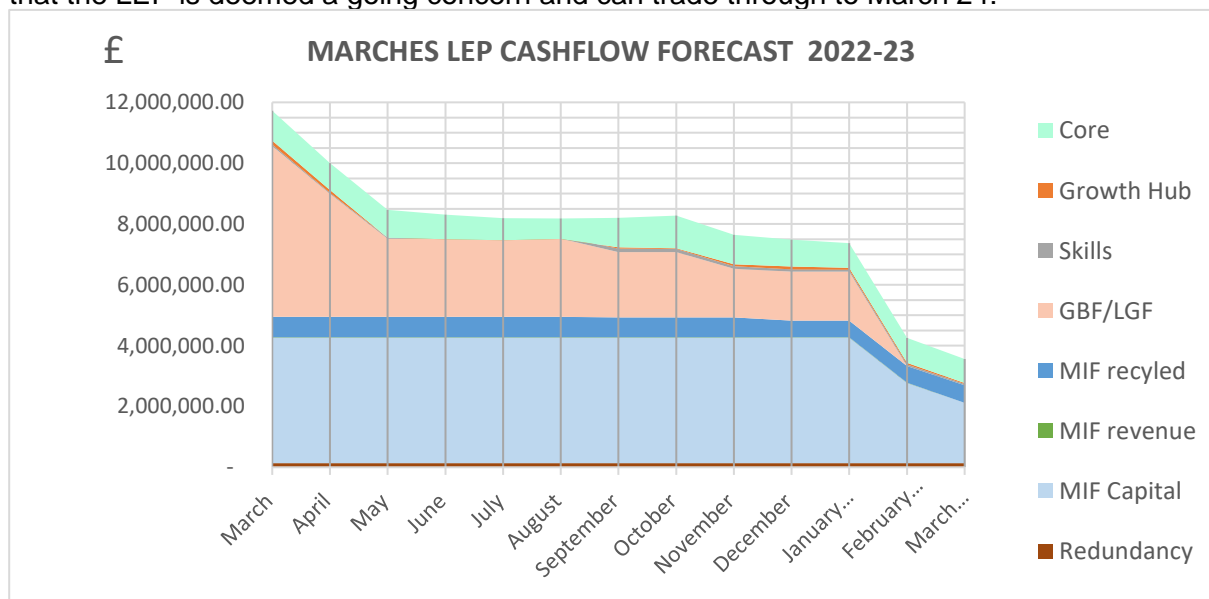
We have sought further VAT advice to see if the LEP can reduce its liability but as the LEP doesn't currently get paid for delivering privately funded services it's unable to claim VAT back. To clarify, because the LEP's main income is grant funding, grant funding has a different tax status.

As we move into a potentially more commercial position, the LEP can continue to review this position and start to claim VAT back if the opportunity arises.

In the meantime, we are exploring a couple of other ideas to reduce the VAT liability. If these prove to be unsuccessful too, then subject to clarification about the LEP role and funding moving forward we should consider whether it would be an appropriate time to look at employing all the staff directly and procuring support services such as HR. While we get enormous support from Shropshire Council for finance, legal, HR and IT support, it does come at a significant cost. The total costs in 21/22 was £127k and it may be worth considering different options for delivering some of this work including outsourcing and directly employing a finance officer. We would however have to continue to pay for S151 support.

4.4. Cashflow

The cashflow has been updated and is included at Appendix 2. The following is broadly in line with what was presented at the last Board meeting. The most important thing to note is that the LEP is deemed a going concern and can trade through to March 24:



4.5. PR & Marketing Activity Report for the Marches LEP and Marches Growth Hub (MGH)

The PR and Marketing update is included in Appendix 3. There has been an 87% increase in traffic to the LEP website, mainly as a result of the Energy Fund Campaign, which was the most visited page, but it was also clear businesses were looking to the LEP for support with energy costs. In total we had over 16,000 website visits between June and August, up 30% from the previous quarter, but digital reach was down due to no paid campaigns this quarter.

5. Local Growth Programme and Getting Building Fund

There are only two projects that have grant funding outstanding. These are the Wetlands and Herefordshire City Centre Improvement projects. The latter is subject to a separate paper.

The Wetlands project has made great progress and is on track to spend the remaining grant funding by the end of October and is on target to be fully delivered by the end of March 23. The focus on both programmes is now delivering the outputs and outcomes associated with the project. We will continue to monitor all the projects with project leads asked to give detailed updates to the Performance Monitoring and Risk Committee (PMRC) at appropriate intervals.

6. Business Support

6.1. Marches Growth Hub

The grant offer paperwork has been received and sent back and the first quarter claim is now submitted but not yet paid.

There is a new Monitoring and Evaluation Framework which includes new data collection requirements in addition to last financial year's requirements. This also includes protected characteristics data. We're going to work on simplifying the collation and reporting of data so that efforts can be concentrated on providing business support.

New Growth Hub Branding and Communications Guidelines have also been issued. The guidelines are designed to make sure the Growth Hub network is using appropriate Government branding uniformly. Whilst maintaining consistency across the network, BEIS are taking a lighter touch approach to communications to reflect reduced levels of growth hub funding.

The Growth Hub Programme Manager is working with LA partners and Be Bold to ensure data collection and branding and communication guidelines are aligned to the new requirements.

6.2. Department for International Trade's (DIT) Key Account Management (KAM)

This is covered in a separate report, please see agenda item 8.

6.3. Skills

Employer Representative Body for the Local Skills Improvement Plan/Skills Advisory Panel

Shropshire Chamber of Commerce has now been formally appointed by DfE as the Employer Representative Body (ERB) for The Marches and will lead on the development and delivery of a Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) for the area. This is part of the Government's plans, set out in the Skills & Post-16 Education Bill, to put employers more firmly at the heart of the skills system. This will ensure that they can shape how their

current and future workforces access the right training to thrive in the modern, more digital and greener workplace and have the skills they need to thrive and progress.

As well as engaging and consulting with relevant stakeholders to develop the LSIP, the ERB will build upon existing intelligence from the work of the Skills Advisory Panel (SAP), including the Local Skills Report and other wider information available, to ensure immediate, medium and longer skills needs are met. The SAP will also continue to play a key role in informing the work of the ERB and will provide data and local insight to support compilation of the LSIP and its subsequent delivery.

The SAP meeting on 17 October 2022 will provide more information on the composition of the LSIP Board and the ERB's approach to developing the LSIP. A discussion on the future role of the SAP will also be held.

The HE Group, a subgroup of the SAP, is scheduled to meet on 6 October 2022 to discuss opportunities and issues within the sector.

6.4. Marches Careers Hub

The Marches LEP has now signed its grant offer letter with The Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC) for delivery of the Marches Careers Hub project to 31 August 2023. This project drives the effectiveness and impact of careers education through work with local schools and colleges through the Careers Hub's dispersed team of Enterprise Co-ordinators (match funded by the local authorities and the Marches LEP).

The vacancy in Telford & Wrekin, which was being covered by Andriané Usherwood-Brown in addition to her Hub Lead role, has now been filled through a secondment with Rachel Holmes joining the team in September 2022.

A strategic plan for the new contract period is being developed for sign-off by the Careers Hub Steering Group which is chaired by Hollie Whittles (FSB National Policy Champion for Skills and Marches Business Support Steering Group member). To shape the strategic plan, a stakeholder planning conference was held on 10 August 2022 which was attended by school and college careers leaders, Enterprise Advisers (business volunteers), Enterprise Co-ordinators, Cornerstone Employers and a representative from the national CEC team.

The Marches Careers Hub website www.marchescareershub.co.uk went live on 13 September 2022. This is a central plank of the Hub's communication plan which promotes a 'one-team' approach and incorporates the development of communities of practice, underpinned by specialist resources, events and guidance, to deepen the impact of careers education.

Financial implications: None

Legal implications: None

Risks, opportunities and impacts: None

Equality implications: None

Additional information/ attachments:

Appendix 1 - [Business Support Steering Group TORs](#)

Appendix 2 - [Cashflow Forecast](#)
Appendix 3 - [PR Report](#)

Background papers/documents: None

Report Authors:
Mandy Thorn MBE DL, Marches LEP Chair
Rachel Laver, Marches LEP CEO

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Meeting date:	27 September 2022					
Agenda Item:	5					
Item Subject:	Report from the Performance Risk & Monitoring Committee meetings on 25 August 2022					
For:	Discussion	X	Decision	X	Information	X

Purpose of the Paper: To report on the PRMC meeting on 25 August 2022 and highlight the main changes to the Corporate and Programme Risk Registers.

Summary of Recommendations:

Board members are asked to:

- **Note the outcomes of the last PRMC meeting and consider the recommendation set out in Section 3 of the paper.**

1. Summary of PRMC meeting held on the 25th August 2022

The minutes of the meeting are available on the Marches LEP website [here](#) . Specific matters that we'd like to draw the Board's attention to are:

1.1 Hereford City Centre Improvements (HCCI)

The Committee received a presentation from Herefordshire Council on proposed changes to the HCCI project. The proposals which were mainly as a result of cost increases meant that the Council felt some elements of the approved project were no longer deliverable. Given the extent of the proposed changes to the project, the Committee felt that proposals needed to be escalated to the LEP Board. It was agreed that Rachel Laver would work with Herefordshire Council on a proposal that would be more acceptable to the LEP.

1.2 Risk Registers

The risk registers were reviewed. The highest risk continued to be future funding for the LEP. This has been fed through to the LEP Network. The risk outlines the impact of not receiving the funding in a timely fashion. There was some discussion about the need to be doing more to demonstrate the value the LEP can bring. Please see Appendix 1 – Corporate Risk Register and Appendix 2 – Programme Risk Register.

1.3 Pride Hill

Shropshire Council representatives gave a progress update on the Pride Hill Scheme following a gateway review and how it fitted with the wider regeneration of the town centre. The presentation was purely an update and wasn't asking for any approvals. There is a project review and any changes to the contracted outputs and milestones will be presented to the November PRMC meeting for consideration. It was agreed that it would be appropriate for a presentation to be given to the Board in November highlighting how the project had changed from that originally approved.

1.4 Integrated Construction Wetlands

Rachael Joy from Herefordshire Council gave an update on progress with the project. A request had been made to vary costs between different headings which were approved by the Committee as they didn't have a material impact on the project. The Chair noted the progress on the project and congratulated Rachael and her team.

2. LEP Inclusive and Diversity Policy

Following an external challenge to our approach to equality and diversity and that of the wider LEP Network, Sonia Roberts, PMRC Chair met with the concerned individual to reassure them

that the LEP had a policy and that the actions were followed through and reviewed and updated every 6 months. Examples were given at the meeting of how the LEP complies.

3. Governance

It was felt that the PRMC is still low on members despite asking for volunteers and therefore the suggestion is that new Marches LEP Board members also sit on PRMC which gives them the opportunity to see the detailed activity of the LEP as well as the strategic discussions they will be involved with at the LEP Board.

- **Recommendation – that new Marches LEP Board members serve on the PRMC.**

4. PRMC Project Forward Plan

The following forward plan was approved, inviting projects to PRMC to discuss progress on delivering their projects:

PRMC Meeting	Project(s) to be invited
Mon 7 November	Oxon Link Road (LGF)
Thu 15 December	Hereford City Centre Transport (LGF) Hereford City Centre Improvements (GBF)

At the next meeting we will set the programme of projects to review for next year.

Financial implications: None

Legal implications: None

Risks, opportunities and impacts: The uncertainty surrounding the future of LEPs and funding continue to pose a significant risk for the Marches LEP staff, Board and its business partners.

Equality implications: None

Additional information/ attachments:

Appendix 1 - [Corporate Risk Register](#)

Appendix 2 - [Programme Risk Register](#)

Background papers/documents: None

Report Author: Rachel Laver, Marches LEP CEO

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Meeting date:	27.09.22				
Agenda Item:	6				
Item Subject:	Hereford City Centre Improvements (HCCI)				
For:	Discussion	x	Decision	x	Information

Purpose of the Paper:

To inform a discussion and seek approval for proposed changes to the HCCI contract as put forward by Herefordshire Council (HC).

Summary of Recommendations

The Board is asked to:

- **Review and accept the revised proposals and spend profile.**

Main points:

Hereford City Centre Improvements (HCCI) project is one of the six Getting Building Fund projects. A grant of £3m toward £6m project costs was awarded to Herefordshire Council to deliver the scheme which was originally expected to spend all the grant funding by the end of March 22. In December the LEP agreed a revised funding profile which would see freedoms and flexibilities utilised to enable grant funding to be carried forward to this year.

Unfortunately, the project has suffered from further costs escalations due to the rapidly rising price of materials. HC have reviewed the project and looked where savings could be made. They asked these proposals to be considered by the Performance, Monitoring and Risk Committee (PRMC). The committee reviewed the proposals in August in conjunction with a LEP report that recommended only some of the proposals were approved. The Committee agreed that the proposals were too much of a change from the latest approved version of the project so recommended that HC work on a revised proposal with LEP staff for consideration by the LEP Board.

HC had proposed removing the Business Grant for facades improvements, reduced the scope of the Hostile Vehicle Mitigation element and a saving on the City Greening scheme, as well as some reduction in project management costs, to bring the project back within the original budget of £6m. We felt that this reduction in the scope of the project meant that the value of money for the scheme was not as high as when the project was approved and if the project had been delivered to the original timescales, wouldn't have suffered from costs escalations to the degree it now does.

HC has now revisited the proposals and reinstated the Business Grants scheme and secured £525k of Local Transport Plan funding to meet some of the increased costs of mainly the St Owen Street cycle contraflow and Widemarsh Street Kerb improvements schemes.

They have reduced the scope of the Hostile Vehicle movement element of the project, stating not all the work is now required saving £288k and have also made a £186k saving on the City Link Road Trees and planters.

The proposed revised changes and rationale put forward by the council are:

1) An increase in the budget of £474k for St Owen St to reflect:

- a) The increase in construction and material costs
- b) The amendments to the scheme to ensure LTN1/20 compliance

- c) Include the renewed traffic lights in support of B) and
- d) Resurfacing of the street to prevent the need for future disruption to business

2) An increase in the budget of £595k for Widemarsh St enhancement due to:

- a) An increase in construction and material costs
- b) A larger scheme than initially envisaged to ensure that the scheme will be fully DDA compliant

3) An increase in budget of £30k for Green roof cycle shelters due to:

- a) An increase in construction and material costs
- b) The initial estimated cost did not account for construction costs, only purchase of the product.
- c) Lighting has been included to ensure that cycle shelters were safe and secure.

The above three increases in budgets will be enabled by a decrease in the budget to:

- 1) **City Greening of £65k** – this element can be scaled back quite simply accordingly
- 2) **City Link Road trees and Planters of £186k**- saving as this element came in under budget
- 3) **Hostile Vehicle Mitigation of £288k** – advice from Counter Terrorism is that due to the low risk within Hereford and the permitted vehicular access through the centre for certain hours of the day, that hard stop measures are not necessary and speed reduction measures are desirable utilising existing street furniture i.e., a reduction in budget can be accommodated.
- 4) **Project Management Costs of £30k** – a saving is being made on project management costs by reducing the number of agency staff working on the programme and utilising in-house staff.
- 5) Provision of an additional £525k from the Local Transport Plan.

The following shows the Match/GBF split and total original budget plus the proposed Match/GBF split and total overall budget

Element	Match	GBF	Total Original budget	budget alteration GBF	New Match Budget	New GBF Budget	Total Revised Budget
High Town existing enhancements	£17,500	£554,907	£572,407		£19,390	£554,907	£574,297
High Town minor works	£143,597	£68,045	£211,642		£143,597	£68,045	£211,642
Market and event infrastructure	£0	£30,500	£30,500	£-2,849	£0	£27,651	£27,651
CCTV enhancements	£500	£60,000	£60,500		£500	£60,000	£60,500
Business grants	£500,000	£0	£500,000		£500,000	£0	£500,000
Cathedral and River Wye Quarter design	£340,000	£0	£340,000		£340,000	£0	£340,000
St Owen Street cycle contraflow	£0	£700,000	£700,000	£186,399	£287,536	£886,399	£1,173,935
Widemarsh Street kerb improvements	£565,000	£150,000	£715,000	£6,917	£1,152,670	£156,917	£1,309,587
Cathedral and River Wye Quarter planters	£0	£262,500	£262,500	£-6,917	£0	£255,583	£255,583
City Link Road trees and planters	£0	£570,191	£570,191	£-186,399	£0	£383,792	£383,792
City Greening	£290,000	£72,000	£362,000		£225,440	£72,000	£297,440
"City Trees"	£35,740	£284,260	£320,000	£2,849	£35,740	£287,109	£322,849
City green cycle shelters	£0	£30,000	£30,000		£30,000	£30,000	£60,000
Public Art Installations	£243,000	£0	£243,000		£243,000	£0	£243,000

Hostile Vehicle Mitigation	£500,000	£0	£500,000		£212,464	£0	£212,464
Project Management	£364,663	£217,597	£582,260		£334,663	£217,597	£552,260
TOTAL	£3,000,000	£3,000,000	£6,000,000		£0	£3,525,000	£6,525,000

HC have stated that the outputs will remain the same. The LEP should now be able to claim the additional Match of £525k and should also be able to claim business level Match on the Business Grants façade improvement scheme.

HC has also confirmed that they will be able to spend the remaining GBF by the end of the year. Any funding not spent by the end of the financial year will be lost.

Financial implications:

There will be a financial cost to the LEP of changing the legal agreement, therefore we either deal with changes in house by way of a letter of variation or we charge any legal costs back to HC.

Legal implications:

Any variation to the contract agreed will need to be reflected in the project contract.

Risks, opportunities and impacts:

The project has already received some negative press questioning the value for money. The reduced budget for City Trees will potentially help lessen the chance of further criticism.

There is a risk that there is limited appetite for the façade improvements, but it is recommended that the Council considers varying the intervention rate to make the fund more attractive.

Equality implications:

n/a

Additional information:

For information only - video of the city trees that have been installed as part of the HCCI project.
<https://youtu.be/u2GwNsk5bU0>

Report Author:

Rachel Laver

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Meeting date:	27 th September 2022				
Agenda Item:	7				
Item Subject:	The Business Environment Network				
For:	Discussion	x	Decision	x	Information

Purpose of the Paper:

To discuss the opportunity to transfer The Business Environment Network from Shropshire Wildlife Trust to the LEP.

Summary of Recommendations:

The Board is asked to consider the transfer of The Business Environment Network (TBEN) from Shropshire Wildlife Trust to the LEP.

Background

Shropshire Wildlife Trust runs The Business Environment Network which currently has a membership of 43. It is chaired by Gareth Lay from Atchams. Members have access to five networking events per year and it provides the opportunity to develop knowledge of environmental and sustainability topics.

Current memberships costs are:

- Charity/social enterprise membership from £50+ p.a.
- Small business (1-5 staff) membership from £150+ p.a.
- Medium business (6-50 staff) membership from £250+ p.a.
- Large business (50+ staff) membership from £400+ p.a.

There are currently 43 paying members which are a mix of different sized organisations from different sectors (membership details are including at Appendix 1). The forecast income for this year is £12,000.

One third of the income generated is given to Shropshire Wildlife Trust for Environmental projects which members get a say in selecting.

Shropshire Wildlife Trust (SWT) has approached the LEP to see if we would like to manage the network going forward as they feel they no longer have the resources to do so and that it doesn't fit with their core business. Currently they allocate 0.15 of a full-time role to administering the network.

Consideration:

The LEP could take on the Network and it fits well with the business support offer and how we're trying to strengthen the Net Zero offer.

Taking on a membership model may lead to criticism though and it's important that we provide resources to all businesses and not have two tiers of information available to businesses; those that are members, and those that are not. It also causes competition issues as there are a number of other bodies which don't receive public funding and run similar services. However, if this approach is preferred then we could make sure that the Network receives no subsidy from the LEP and run it through a separate cost centre.

A pragmatic solution may be to take on the Network but look for sponsorship to run the events.

The LEP would have the capacity to manage the Network, through sharing the work across a number of roles which are already involved with similar activity. The time spent on the Network could be charged to the Network and costs recovered from the membership income.

Options:

1. Continue the Network as is, but look to expand the membership, ensuring the network is sustainable; and then look at using surplus funds to support environmental projects as per the current arrangement.
2. Bring the network in-house but make it free and look to expand the membership significantly and improve the information available to businesses; helping to improve our Net Zero/Environmental business support offer.

Financial implications:

It will require staff time which the LEP would have to meet the cost of out of core funding. If income drops, then then the LEP may end up with a financial liability but this is limited to the costs of administering the Network.

If we continued with a charging model, we'd have to look at how the fees were collected. If done through Shropshire Council, it would incur extra charges. Further detail will be provided when the preferred option is agreed.

Legal implications:

We would need to take legal advice based on the approach the LEP decide to pursue.

Risks, opportunities and impacts:

There is a risk of challenge from private sector organisations if the LEP decided to retain the membership model.

It requires extra time from commitment, from what is already a small team.

Opportunities: The Network is very complementary to the Growth Hub business support activity and could help the LEP develop Net Zero/Environmental support for businesses.

Equality implications:

n/a

Additional information:

[Appendix 1 - Current membership](#)

[Appendix 2 - TBEN Terms of Reference](#)

Report Author:

Rachel Laver, CEO

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Meeting date:	27 September 2022				
Agenda Item:	8				
Item Subject:	Department for International Trade – Key Account Management Programme 2022/23				
For:	Discussion		Decision	X	Information

Purpose of the Paper:

To provide the Marches LEP Board with an update on the revised model for delivery of the Department for International Trade (DIT) Key Account Management (KAM) programme for the period April to September 2022 and seek endorsement of the recommendation to continue delivery in this manner throughout the remainder of the programme, to 31 March 2023, following an extension of associated grant funding from DIT.

Summary of Recommendations:

That the Board notes the overall effectiveness of the revised KAM delivery model, introduced for the period 1 April 2022 to 30 September 2022, and approves the recommendation to continue this approach during the extension from 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023.

Main points (recommendations to be highlighted in bold at the end of each section as required):

Background

Each of the three local authorities (LAs) has dedicated teams ([Invest Herefordshire](#), [Invest in Shropshire](#) and [Enterprise Telford](#)) which have responsibility for the delivery of inward investment and account management services. These teams promote local investment and development opportunities, encourage businesses to relocate and support existing enterprises with their growth, investment and innovation plans through regular account management. Effective account management ensures that the LA has a clear understanding of local economic growth potential, identifies and unblocks constraints to investment and enables signposting to appropriate local, regional and national support services.

DIT funding and purpose

To complement this work, the Marches LEP has successfully secured an extension to grant funding from DIT to deliver the KAM programme in FY2022/23 to the value of £48k, continuing the programme from FY2021/22. This programme seeks to identify and engage hard-to-reach foreign owned businesses across the Marches, understand their plans for local investment and determine how these can best be supported by local partners and by global DIT teams. The programme also requires the collation and reporting of key business data to DIT so that DIT can demonstrate the scale and scope of potential foreign investment, in line with its policy objective of promoting the UK as an investment location.

A new delivery model was introduced in April 2022 to enable a more consistent approach to data collection and reporting to DIT. Following an open procurement exercise by the Marches LEP, Mountain Perspective Ltd was awarded the contract to deliver the service across the Marches from 1 April 2022 to 30 September 2022. Work completed to date is on schedule to meet the targets and KPIs set out in the current grant agreement.

Scale of opportunity

There are 35 foreign-owned businesses across the Marches which have been identified as currently falling within the scope of the KAM programme and which are being managed by the LA teams and Mountain Perspective Ltd. These businesses have identified 15 investment projects which, if brought to fruition, are collectively worth approximately £78.5m and have the

potential to create over 300 new jobs and safeguard around 400. This demonstrates the value of these businesses to the local economy and the importance of effective account management by LA teams and the global DIT network. The KAM programme provides additional resource to unearth such investment projects, ensure that these are supported by all partners and included in DIT business intelligence and statistics on foreign investment.

Assessment of new delivery model

Having reviewed the effectiveness of the revised delivery model to date, the following strengths are noted:

- More accurate, timely and compliant data collection and reporting, including improvements in the quality of information held on DIT's DataHub system in line with contractual requirements. This both limits the risk to the Marches LEP and raises the profile of Marches-based foreign owned businesses within the DIT global network.
- A better understanding of the KAM programme's purpose and offer and how this engagement supplements the in-depth support provided by the LA teams.
- More direct access for the Marches LEP to business intelligence on local economic conditions.
- The contracted Account Manager, Mountain Perspective Ltd, is also delivering the programme in the Stoke and Staffordshire LEP area encouraging the sharing of best practice across LEP geographies.

The next phase will allow the following development area to be taken forward:

- The new model is not yet fully integrated in all 3 LA areas. Herefordshire and Telford & Wrekin were prioritised in the first 6 months to enable a phased approach that best addressed local resource challenges. Discussions with Shropshire have outlined that support with lead generation and engagement with hard-to-reach foreign owned business would be the best use of the KAM additional resource within the LA.

The DIT Head of Partnerships (Midlands) stated on 25 August 2022 '*at the beginning of the new reporting year The Marches transitioned their delivery model from a split local authority resource to a single contractor to deliver across all 3 LAs. Early signs are that this is proving to be a real success bringing efficiency and consistency to programme delivery which is beginning to show in breadth of coverage and early results. Pipeline building is also strengthening and should strong delivery continue then indicators are that KAM targets will be met, if not exceeded, by year end. A worthwhile change of tack.*'

Recommendation - that the Board notes the overall effectiveness of the revised KAM programme delivery model introduced in April 2022 and endorses its continuation throughout the extended period of the programme to 31 March 2023.

Financial implications:

The LEP receives a bi-annual grant, totalling £48k, from DIT for Marches-wide KAM programme delivery for the period 1 April 2022-30 September 2022 and 1 October 2022-31 March 2023.

Legal implications:

The DIT grant funding agreement from confirms the budget and the scope of activity to be undertaken. The extension for 1 October 2022-31 March 2023 has been received.

Risks, opportunities and impacts:

- This funding provides modest additional capacity to supplement and introduce the role of LA teams.

- The new delivery model ensures that DIT reporting requirements are fully met in a consistent fashion, limiting risks to the Marches LEP related to non-compliance.

Equality implications:

Report Author:

Kathryn Jones, Head of Partnerships & Strategy, kathryn.jones@marcheslep.org.uk

Background papers/documents:

Information on the KAM programme may be found at <https://www.marchesgrowthhub.co.uk/support/key-account-management-department-for-international-trade/>

End