

<b>THE MARCHES LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP LIMITED</b>					
<b>BOARD MEETING</b>					
Tuesday 24 January 2023			3.30 pm – 5.30 pm		
Jubilee Room, <b>Ludlow Racecourse</b> , Bromfield, Ludlow SY8 2BT					
<b>AGENDA</b>					
<b>Item</b>	<b>Time</b>		<b>Lead</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Paper</b>
1.	3.30 pm	Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest	SR		
2.	3.30pm	Minutes of The Marches LEP Ltd Board meeting on 29 November 2022 Matters Arising	SR		X
3.	3.35pm	LEP Chair and CEO Report	SR/RL	Information & Discussion	X
4.	3.45pm	Report from the Performance Risk & Monitoring Committee (PRMC)	SR	Information	X
5.	3.50pm	23/24 Budget	RL	Discussion & Approval	X
6.	4.00pm	Board Member Fiduciary Responsibilities	RL	Information & Discussion	X
7.	4.10pm	Oxon Link Road Update - presentation	Matt Johnson	Information & Discussion	
8.	4.25pm	Board discussion about future priorities of the LEP	All	Discussion	
9.	4.50pm	Marches Growth Deal update	RL	Information & Discussion	
10.	5.00pm	Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) update	KJ	Information & Discussion	X
11.	5.10pm	Transport Officers Group update	MS	Information	X
12.	5.20pm	Any Other Business - Next Board meeting location – in Hereford to view Shell Store and new NMITE building	SR		
<b>Future Meetings</b>					
Mar 23	<b>21 March 2023 3.30pm – 5.30pm (Shell Store, Canary Drive, Skylon Park, Hereford HR2 6SR)</b> Accountability and Assurance Framework Growth Hub delivery options				
May 23	<b>23 May 2023 3.30pm – 5.30pm (Ludlow Assembly Rooms)</b>				

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**Draft Minutes of the Marches LEP Ltd Board Meeting  
29 November 2022 at 3.30pm at Ludlow Assembly Rooms  
(Company Number: 11822614)**

**Present:**

<b>Mandy Thorn MBE DL</b>	MT	Chair, Marches LEP
<b>Sonia Roberts</b>	SR	Deputy Chair Marches LEP; Equality & Diversity Champion; CEO Landau Limited
<b>Frank Myers MBE</b>	FM	Herefordshire Business Board Chair
<b>Will Westley</b>	WW	Telford Business Board Chair
<b>Cllr David Hitchiner</b>	DH	Leader, Herefordshire Council
<b>Cllr Lezley Picton</b>	LP	Leader, Shropshire Council
<b>Cllr Lee Carter</b>	LC	Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services, Regeneration and the High Street, Telford & Wrekin Council (online)
<b>Gordon Coppock</b>	GC	Energy and Net Zero Champion
<b>Graham Guest</b>	GG	Skills Advisory Panel Chair; Skills Champion; Chief Executive and Principal of Telford College
<b>Paul Kalinauckas</b>	PK	Access to Finance Champion
<b>Sara Williams</b>	SW	Marketing Manager - Northern Europe, Protolabs (online)
<b>Catherine Baxter</b>	CB	Higher Education Champion; University Secretary, Harper Adams University
<b>Alex Green</b>	AG	Director Radfield Homecare
<b>Clare Fenton</b>	CF	Director Fenton Partners & Veritherm (joined the meeting at 3.40pm)

**In Attendance:**

<b>Ross Cook</b>	RC	Director for Economy and Environment, Herefordshire Council
<b>Matt Potts</b>	MP	Business Growth & Investment Services Manager, Shropshire Council (part of meeting)
<b>James Dunn</b>	JD	Director Prosperity & Investment, Telford & Wrekin Council
<b>Katherine Kynaston</b>	KK	Director Housing Economy & Infrastructure, Telford & Wrekin Council
<b>Alex Collins</b>	AC	Deputy Area Lead, Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire, Cities & Local Growth Unit (online)
<b>Rachel Laver</b>	RL	Chief Executive, Marches LEP
<b>Kathryn Jones</b>	KJ	Head of Partnerships & Strategy, Marches LEP
<b>Ennis Vingoe</b>	EV	Executive Assistant, Marches LEP
<b>Jo Grivell</b>	GJ	Office Administrator, Marches LEP

<b>ITEM</b>		<b>ACTION</b>
<b>1.</b>	<p><b>Welcome</b></p> <p><b>1. Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest</b> MT thanked everyone for attending the meeting. Apologies were received from Andrew Manning Cox, Christine Snell and James Walton. MT welcomed James Dunn to the meeting from Telford &amp; Wrekin Council. MT noted that the meeting was being recorded to aid the production of the minutes.</p> <p><b>2. Declarations of Interest</b> The Chair reminded members to complete the form that had been distributed for any specific Declarations of Interest for every meeting. The following declarations of interest were made:</p> <p>FM – made a general declaration for inclusion in his Register of Interests as a member of Herefordshire Strategic Growth Board.</p>	

	<p>CB – Item 7a as Harper Adams University potentially involved in elements of the Telford projects to be discussed. GG – Item 7a as Telford College involved in elements of the Telford projects to be discussed. LC – Item 7a declared interest as a member of Telford &amp; Wrekin Council.</p> <p><b>Members were reminded that they should regularly review their general Registers of Interest and inform the LEP of any changes.</b></p>	<p>All</p>
<p>2.</p>	<p><b>Governance</b> SR left the meeting at 3:35pm</p> <p><b>1. Appointment of New Chair</b> The interview for the role of Marches LEP Chair was held on 8 November 2022. Sonia Roberts was the successful candidate and had accepted the role as Chair, subject to Board approval.</p> <p><b><i>The Board confirmed the appointment of Sonia Roberts as Chair of The Marches LEP Ltd from the end of business at this meeting (unanimous).</i></b> SR re-joined the meeting at 3.38pm</p> <p><b>2. Nomination for Deputy Chair</b> Due to the role of Deputy Chair now being vacant, in accordance with the Terms of Reference the new Chair would nominate a Board Member to be the new Deputy Chair at the next Board meeting. <b>SR asked that anyone who was interested in the role to contact her.</b></p> <p><b><i>The Board noted the process for the appointment of a new Deputy Chair.</i></b></p> <p><b>3. Shropshire Council Alternate Director</b> Cllr Picton had given notice of the appointment of Cllr Dean Carroll, Portfolio Holder for Growth and Regeneration as the Alternate Director for Shropshire Council. Cllr Carroll had consented to the appointment.</p> <p><b><i>The Board confirmed the appointment of Cllr Dean Carroll as an alternate director of The Marches LEP Ltd (unanimous).</i></b></p> <p><b>4. Small Business Champion</b> RL explained that following a suggestion that a Small Business Champion should be nominated, the LEP had confirmed that the Chair of the Marches Business Support Steering Group (MBSSG) covered that role for the Marches LEP.</p> <p><b><i>The Board agreed that Dave Courteen, Chair of MBSSG would act as the Small Business Champion for the Marches LEP (unanimous).</i></b></p> <p><b>5. Board Member Appointment</b> RL reminded the Board that previously the Chair of the Shropshire Business Board had had a seat on the LEP Board. As the business board no longer existed it was suggested that the Chair of the MBSSG should have a seat on the Marches LEP Board as the MBSSG had members from businesses and intermediaries across the Marches. The Chair had now also been approved as the Small Business Champion.</p> <p><b><i>The Board agreed that that the Chair of MBSSG (Dave Courteen) be appointed a member of the LEP Board (unanimous).</i></b></p>	<p>All</p>

	<b>The relevant documentation for the new directors would be registered at Companies House.</b>	<b>EV</b>
<b>3.</b>	<p><b>Minutes of The Marches LEP Ltd Board meeting on 27 September 2022</b> The Minutes of the meeting held on 27 September 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><b>Matters Arising</b> Item 6 - FM said that the information he had helpfully received from Herefordshire Council on the HCCI project was incomplete. <b>RA would be asked to forward the additional information as detailed in the action in the minutes of the previous meeting.</b></p>	<b>RC/RA</b>
<b>4.</b>	<p><b>LEP Chair and CEO Report</b></p> <p><b>Funding</b> AC confirmed that there was still no news from government on LEP core or Growth Hub funding.</p> <p><b>Devolution</b> MT said that there had been discussion at a recent LEP Network Board meeting regarding devolution deals and that no future bespoke deals would be available. DH commented that any deals would also have to go through the usual local government governance procedures including a vote by cabinets, to be approved.</p> <p><b>Transport</b> RL reported that the LEP had appointed Aecom as transport consultants to further the work of the Transport Officer Group and help develop business cases to secure investment for strategic pan-Marches schemes. FM asked about the processes for appointing the consultant and suggested that the Board should have been informed that the tender process was taking place. MT said that the process had been conducted within the delegated authority of the CEO; the link for which is: <a href="#">Marches Local Enterprise Partnership Scheme of Delegation - Marches LEP</a> <b>The consultancy proposal would be shared with the Board for information. GC offered to work with the consultants from a zero-carbon perspective.</b></p> <p><b>PR and Marketing</b> The LEP would be going out to tender for a new contract in the new year to run from April 23 as the existing contract comes to an end at the end of March 23.</p> <p><b>Growth Hubs</b> MT suggested that withdrawing funding for Growth Hubs during the current recession would be foolhardy and work was ongoing nationally and locally to emphasise the importance of the Growth Hub service to businesses.</p> <p><b>Meeting with Dehenna Davison MP, Local Growth Minister in DLUHC</b> MT told members that this meeting had been postponed but the LEP Network had asked MT to attend the rescheduled meeting ex officio, to discuss the impact on rural areas of levelling up.</p> <p><b>LEP Directors' Liability</b></p>	<b>RL</b> <b>RL</b>

	<p>A discussion took place regarding any ongoing liability for directors should the LEP be wound up. RL would continue to follow up at national level, but the understanding was that the current maximum liability for directors was for £1.  <b>RL would check on the current situation, insurance etc and provide a note to members, including a copy of the LEP's existing director insurance policy.</b></p> <p><b>Employer Representative Body (ERB)</b>          RL reported that the first meeting of the Marches Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) Board had taken place last week. Members discussed the representation on that board. Currently there was no independent representative from the Shropshire business community on the board. Telford businesses were represented by Richard Partington (AceOn Group) and Herefordshire businesses by Debbie Gittoes (Arctic Circle Ltd). The ERB would distribute a survey to businesses in the near future.  <b>RL asked everyone to circulate the information as widely as possible through their networks once the survey link was available.</b></p> <p>KJ told the Board that the Skills Advisory Panel work would continue for this financial year, but would not duplicate ERB work and would support the development of the LSIP. GG had written to Shropshire Chamber of Commerce to ask for confirmation in writing that they had sufficient information from the LEP to inform their role developing the LSIP. The Chamber had confirmed that this was the case.          The business board representatives on the Marches LSIP Board were concerned that the LSIP should not just be about collecting data.          A discussion took place regarding what sectors would be included in the plan, whether large businesses would be engaged with, the skills gap across the region and that the free skills training for renewable energy etc was not being taken up. GG suggested that everyone should complete the surveys and feed back concerns through the business board representatives on the LSIP Board. Neal Hooper was the new Chair of the LSIP Board.  <b>Post meeting action: The LSIP Board list of members would be shared with the Marches LEP Board.</b></p> <p><b>The Board noted the content of the report.</b></p> <p><b>Marches Energy Grant Scheme</b>          RL explained that there was very strong demand from businesses in the Marches for this funding stream but because Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) funding had not yet been confirmed to the local authorities (LAs) by government, the programme could not be launched at the start of December, as had been hoped. The 3 LAs were due to provide match funding for the programme.          AC said that LAs should hear about SPF funding in the next few days. LC, DH and LP agreed that their councils could not make the commitment to underwrite the programme without SPF confirmation.          RL referred members to the Board paper which outlined 3 potential options:         <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Councils underwrite/cashflow their SPF contributions to the project.</li> <li>• The LEP allows the fund to go live and approves up to £100k of the approved £1.575m to be used towards the operating costs including energy audits, up to the end of March 23.</li> <li>• The LEP awards additional funding out of the £500k Energy fund reserve to pay for the operating costs for a set period.</li> </ul>         Members discussed the proposed options. GC said that it was imperative that the fund was launched as soon as possible and proposed that the Board opted for Option 2. PK seconded the proposal.</p>	<p>RL</p> <p>RL, All</p> <p>EV</p>
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	<p><b><i>The Board agreed that Option 2 would be the preferred option and should be actioned (13 For; 1 Abstention)</i></b></p>	RL
5.	<p><b>Report from the Performance Risk &amp; Monitoring Committee meeting held on 7 November 2022</b></p> <p>SR introduced the report and noted that the biggest risk for the LEP was the continued uncertainty over funding. At the PRMC meeting the S151 officer James Walton had confirmed that he was content that risks were being well managed by the Committee and the Board. The Committee provided a continuous review of the risks and their liability to the LEP.</p> <p>SR went through the 5 main risks and said that the LEP had received a Freedom of Information request regarding the Oxon Link Road project, which had been responded to. LP confirmed that Matt Johnson would attend the next PRMC meeting to deliver an update on this project.</p> <p>PK said that it was reassuring that Board members were involved in the regular review of the risks, therefore providing good governance. All new Board members now attended the PRMC. CF commented that, as a new member, as she attended more PRMC meetings, the projects and their history were becoming more familiar. AG concurred.</p> <p>SR thanked RL for her work with project sponsors outside the committee meetings to resolve issues and come up with workable solutions.</p> <p><b>PRMC were now considering how to evaluate the success of programmes.</b></p> <p><b><i>The Board noted the outcomes of the PRMC meeting held on 7 November 2022.</i></b></p>	SR
6.	<p><b>Marches LEP Annual Report 2022</b></p> <p>Members of the Board commented that the electronic format of the report was excellent.</p> <p><b><i>The Board approved the Annual Report.</i></b></p>	RL
7.	<p><b>Telford &amp; Wrekin Council Updates</b></p> <p><b>a. Projects Update</b></p> <p>James Dunn delivered a presentation which gave an update on the following projects: Stronger Communities – Granville scheme; Station Quarter scheme. Getting Building Fund – New College scheme; Glebe Street scheme. JD explained the changes to outputs that were put forward for approval by the Board, following approval by the PRMC. Members discussed the requested output changes.</p> <p><b><i>The Board noted the progress and updates within the report.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>The Board approved the output changes as detailed in the report (unanimous).</i></b></p> <p><b>A contract variation would be required.</b></p> <p><b><i>The Board noted that public and private match funding associated with the projects would continue to be captured and reported on moving forward to demonstrate value for money.</i></b></p> <p><b>b. Telford Land Deal Update</b></p>	RL

	<p>JD updated the Board on the scheme and the achievements to date. Members commented that Telford Land Deal was a very successful partnership and the profit share distribution to the Marches LEP since the start of the project had been £0.75 million. Part of this had been used for support to local businesses across the Marches area following the severe flooding in 2020. MT noted that funds from the profit share distribution was for use across the Marches area. MT congratulated Telford &amp; Wrekin Council on the success of the scheme.</p> <p><b><i>The Board noted the outcomes achieved during the 2021/2022 financial year and overall, since the Land Deal commenced in 2015.</i></b></p>	
8.	<p><b>Marches LEP Finances</b></p> <p>RL presented information to the Board on the Marches LEP finances including where the funding comes from; core spend; the Key Account Management project; the Careers Hub and Growth Hub projects. It was noted that significant savings had been made in operating costs over the last 12 months but that there would still be a £340k overspend overall this financial year.</p> <p><b><i>The Board noted the content of the presentation.</i></b></p>	
9.	<p><b>Strategic Economic Plan – vision and priorities</b></p> <p>KJ gave a presentation on the development of an updated Strategic Economic Plan to replace the original plan launched in 2019. The evidence base would also be refreshed.</p> <p>The plan was being updated in order to respond to the significant economic and societal changes since 2019 including the political and policy landscape. The refreshed plan would also shape the LEP’s external funding strategy.</p> <p>Members discussed how the SEP would align with the recently updated economic plans in the 3 LAs. LP said that the plans would have similar themes so the LEP could look to where the gaps were and where it could add value or be an enabler. It was proposed that KJ work with the LAs and other relevant partners to ensure that the updated plan aligned with the relevant strategies. RL said that other partners also used the SEP e.g., Marches Nature Partnership, and that strategies such as the Marches Energy Strategy and the Skills Strategy should be aligned with it.</p> <p>MT remained optimistic that there would still be opportunities for cross-LA boundary funding and the SEP would inform work on this</p> <p>KJ invited Board members, sub-group members and partners to become involved in the development of the plan and to provide thoughts on the key structure and themes.</p> <p><b>It was agreed that KJ would organise a working group to assist in the development of the SEP.</b></p> <p><b>Everyone was asked to send any comments on the vision statement on p52 of pack to KJ.</b></p> <p><b><i>The Board noted the content of the report.</i></b></p>	<p>KJ</p> <p>All</p>
10.	<p><b>Business Boards/Marches Business Support Steering group (MBSSG)</b></p> <p>RL said that a productive meeting had taken place with business board Chairs, the Chair of MBSSG, PK, MT and RL earlier in the month. RL explained the proposals and it was noted that the MBSSG would not duplicate the work of business boards or the Shropshire Economic Task Force.</p>	



	<p>The Board was asked to approve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointing two additional members to the MBSSG, representing intermediaries such as banks and business advisors.</li> <li>• Appointing a Higher Education representative to the group.</li> <li>• Shaping new initiatives that help address business needs.</li> <li>• Asking businesses that have received support to present to the steering group.</li> <li>• Raising the profile of the Chair, Dave Courteen further to speak about business support and to encourage all members to disseminate information from the group.</li> </ul> <p><b><i>The Board noted the content of the report and approved the proposals to refresh the MBSSG (13 For; 1 Abstention).</i></b></p>	
<p><b>11.</b></p>	<p><b>Any other Business</b></p> <p>This was the last meeting for MT as Chair of The Marches LEP. MT said that it had been a “complete honour to chair the Marches LEP for the last 3 years” and that “there was still an important role for the Marches LEP in a non-devolution LA area as an enabler and facilitator and as an organisation that could bring a business voice to economic development”. MT said that “this was crucial for the area as a non-urban region as we are at risk of being left behind. I know that SR will ensure that the business and community sector voice is heard, and I am thrilled that she is taking over. Don’t forget the opportunities in the area; it is a wonderful place to live and work. It has been my honour and privilege to chair this Board.”</p> <p>SR responded and thanked MT for her selfless public service and contribution to economic development across the Marches.</p>	
<p><b>Next Meeting: 24 January 2023 from 3.30pm to 5.30pm. Location TBC</b></p>		

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<b>Meeting date:</b>	24 <sup>th</sup> January 2023					
<b>Agenda Item:</b>	3					
<b>Item Subject:</b>	Marches LEP Chair and Chief Executive Officer's Report					
<b>For:</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>Decision</b>		<b>Information</b>	<b>X</b>

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

**Summary of Recommendations:** That Board Members note the content of the Report.

## 1. Executive Summary

It was disappointing not to receive confirmation of funding for LEPs and Growth Hubs before Christmas which the LEP Network had made it clear was imperative for many LEPs. The latest position is that we can expect a funding decision by the end of January 2023. While there continues to be uncertainty about the future of LEPs there is plenty that we can be doing and to this end it is suggested that the Board discuss priorities and where to focus our efforts and limited resources in 23/24.

The Marches Energy Grant Scheme has been launched and had a brilliant response showing a real need and appetite for this type of business support. However, with only 2 months to go until the new financial year we have no clarity about whether funding for business support through the Growth Hub will continue.

The LEP Network is promoting LEP activity to ministers and feedback is that ministers are interested in any bodies that can deliver, with a particular focus on innovation. We continue to provide feedback through the network and continue to scan new initiatives as they're published and will make bids into funds as appropriate. With two West Midlands LEPs closing at the end of March, it's important that we work with the remaining West Midlands LEPs to ensure that the issues, challenges and opportunities in the West Midlands are understood by ministers.

The Accountable Body's audit of the LEP was completed just prior to Christmas with no recommendations which was pleasing. The audit focussed on the management and control of our programmes, and it was found that we had a "good" level of assurance in place. A copy of the audit report is attached at Appendix 1.

The Annual Performance review process is underway, with no issues anticipated and the outcome expect in March.

We have had positive feedback about Key Account Management delivery both from the local authorities and DiT and while we haven't got clarity about funding for next year, we will look to continue with this centralised model should funding be allocated for 23/24.

Good progress continues to be made with the Careers Hub work which we have funding for until August. It's important that we continue to link the Careers Hub work, with the Skills and Growth Hub work, particularly linking with businesses and seeking to address the needs and issues they raise.

## 2. Staffing

Mark Schneider joined the LEP team on 3 January 2023 as Head of Business Development and Delivery and is settling in well. Unfortunately, Steph Jones, Marches Growth Hub Project Support Officer, is currently absent on sick leave following an accident over the Christmas period.

Following resignation of the incumbent Project Officer before Christmas we undertook a recruitment exercise. We have been unsuccessful in recruiting anyone of a suitable calibre. We are currently looking at alternative options including using agency staff, re-advertising or managing with the current team with some reorganisation.

Thanks to members of the LEP team for their flexibility considering these gaps, particularly Jo Grivell, LEP Administrator, who is covering Marches Growth Hub reporting in Steph's absence.

We must recognise that uncertainty about the future of LEPs is impacting on our staff retention and our ability to attract new staff which is a message we continue to relay via the LEP network.

## 3. Finance

The cashflow forecast position remains largely unchanged. What is critical now is clarity of funding for next year. We continue to ring fence funding for redundancy and following Board approval have extended a majority of staff contracts to the end of March 23. We have benefited from the increase in interest rates and the slower than anticipated payment of funds to projects. This has meant that projected interest received has increased from £13k to £106k. We expect to finish the year with £859k to carry forward into next year (please see Appendix 2). Our operating costs for 23/24 despite numerous cutbacks are projected to be £925k (including redundancy) against only a confirmed income of £125k. With the funding carried forward we would finish next year with £59k. This is the worst-case scenario and the finances are covered in more detail in a separate finance paper but the important point to note is that we can meet next year's operating costs from our existing funds.

## 4. Accountability and Assurance Framework (AAF)

The AAF has been refreshed to demonstrate recent (minor) changes and updated on the Marches LEP website [MLEP Accountability and Assurance Framework December 2022](#). This has been completed pending new national guidance which is due before the end of the financial year.

## 5. Marches Growth Deal

Following the government's Levelling Up White Paper published last January, we have been working with the Local Authorities to see what opportunities and benefits that could present for the Marches in terms of increased freedoms to make decisions at a more local level, and access to investment opportunities to help improve the economic performance of the whole area. It has been agreed in principle that it would make economic and strategic sense to review opportunities in the following areas:

- Environment and Energy

- Transport and digital
- Skills
- Housing

Other areas will also be considered where it makes sense to and where there is agreement from all three Local Authorities.

We are going to commission updated evidence to support this work which also supports the Strategic Economic Plan refresh

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

The PR and Marketing update is included in Appendix 3. Be Bold have been excellent in the work they have done over the last quarter and the exposure we have got, from the business Breakfast in December, which was over-subscribed; to the launch of the Marches Energy Grant which has had an amazing response and been picked up widely. As the result of the PR we have done about various projects we have been able to increase uptake of funds such as the Business Growth Programme, Small Equipment Grant and Internationalisation Fund which has been to the benefit of the Marches businesses. We do need to consider whether we need to reduce the budget for PR from the current £60k per year given our limited resources.

## **7. Programmes**

### **7.1. GBF**

There were only two projects which had outstanding funding to be paid this year, Herefordshire City Centre Improvements (HCCI) and Integrated Wetlands (ICW). Herefordshire Council has confirmed that all the GBF has now been spent on ICW and some match has been achieved. We are in the process of checking the claim and verifying the evidence. The project isn't yet complete though and will need to continue to be monitored. HCCI has over £1.13m left to spend this year. The Q3 claim is due on the 20/1 and we expect a significant proportion of the remaining funding to be spent, however the risk remains that the funding won't be fully spent by the end of March. If it isn't the grant contract does state that the funding will be decommitted and reallocated.

The rest of the GBF projects continue to report on progress and we'll be undertaking a series of onsite visits of all LGF and GBF projects during the next six months to check physical progress of projects.

### **7.2. LGF**

We continue to monitor the progress of projects, in particular output and outcome achievement to ensure that contracted outputs are achieved. Any projects which appear to be underperforming will be asked to present to PRMC. The main LGF project of concern is Oxon Link Road and an update on the project will be given by Shropshire Council officers at the meeting. The project is significantly behind the original programme and there are concerns about the affordability of the scheme. The Council is currently in the process of procuring a contractor, so clarity around costs of the scheme will still take some time. Planning permission is also outstanding for the project and there has been a significant number of objections to the scheme including from the town councils and an MP.

### **7.3. Energy Fund**

Further to the approval of three projects from the Energy fund in September we have completed the contract on only one project.

The Grant Agreement with Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College for the Herefordshire Low Carbon Technology Centre has now been signed by both parties. The College has already begun the detailed process of procuring its design team. All necessary internal approvals are in place, and the College expects the Centre to be in use by learners from 29th January 2024.

The LEP and Shropshire Council officers are currently in discussion with National Grid Electricity Distribution over the some of the finer details of the grant agreement. It is hoped that the remaining issues can be resolved quickly. NGED have already allocated the monitoring equipment, so will begin installation soon. NGED's supplier (EA Technology) has engaged with the LEP (through Gordon Coppock and Tim Yair) to help identify the most appropriate locations to install the monitoring kit to maximise the benefits.

Following the launch of the Marches Energy Grant fund we have received over 200 enquiries for the Grant, which demonstrates the pent-up need for this project. These enquiries have been passed on to Worcestershire Council. Initially, applications for audits will use some of the remaining ERDF funding through the BEEP project. The Grant Agreement has not yet been signed as the partner local authorities were relying on SPF funding to fund the administration costs of the project, which has only recently been received. The three authorities are going through the internal processes to approve the allocation of their funding. In the meantime, Worcestershire can process the applications and get the energy audits underway using residual Business Energy Efficiency (BEEP) funding and Herefordshire's 30 for 2030 funding. We also gave the option of using some of the capital funding to meet the operating costs until the SPG from the councils was confirmed.

The average grant through BEEP was a little under £10k. If MEG applications are similar, we anticipate the fund being fully committed within a short number of months. Following the funding decisions in September we had £471k of Energy funding left which was one of the options we had suggested could be used to top up the MEG fund. We will see how the fund progresses in the next two months with a view to bringing a paper to the next Board meeting with a recommendation to top up the fund given the demand for funding and difference it can make, both in terms of businesses performance but also in reducing carbon emissions of Marches businesses.

## **8. Business Support**

### **8.1. Marches Growth Hub**

The number of Marches Growth Hub website enquiries increased significantly after the Marches Energy Grant launched in January. The media campaign included radio interviews, social media, and news releases and word of mouth promotion.

As of 17 January 2023, there had been 151 expressions of interest for the grant received through the Growth Hub website contact form. The Growth Hub website had 1322 visitors from the 1<sup>st</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> January compared to 926 visitors in the whole of December. The Marches Energy Grant was the most visited page with 909 page views.

The three physical Growth Hub teams report that there is far more demand for detailed one-to-one support rather than the light touch support which we should look at supporting further. There continue to be several events being run by the Growth Hubs which we're looking at supplementing with our own programme of events to help businesses address potential new and emerging issues as the result of the widely expected recession.

Spend is on track at the end of Q3. The LEP team continues to look for additional savings from within the Growth Hub Core Grant which could be utilised for direct business support. An additional £15k has already been allocated to the local authority teams, with a further minimum of £6k expected to be confirmed for direct business support. While this is very small amount, it is as the result of the internal re-structure and it is felt that as much as possible should be given to direct business support, especially given the turbulent market conditions.

At present, there is no clarity about funding for next year, given we're only 10 weeks away from the new financial year this is a very frustrating position to be in. Businesses know the Growth Hub brand well now and it's almost unfathomable that funding may not be available next year to continue to fund business support activity given the widely anticipated recession. However, the local authorities have been given funding through SPF for business support and when we do have clarity about funding, we can look at options to supplement the business support activity of the LAs, subject to board approval.

## **8.2. Department for International Trade (DIT) – Key Account Management (KAM)**

Further funding has been received from DIT to deliver its Midlands Engine Key Account Management (ME KAM) programme across The Marches during FY 2022/23, totalling £48k. The programme seeks to encourage and support additional investment from foreign-owned businesses based within The Marches. A new delivery model adopted for 2022/23, seeing the account management function contracted out to a single resource to complement the work of local authority economic development teams, has proved successful, demonstrating improved outcomes and receiving positive feedback from DIT due to better quality reporting. This revised model will form the basis for any future business case for funding beyond March 2023 which is being actively pursued by the LEP team.

The 2022/23 programme is currently supporting 28 foreign-owned businesses within the area and 15 identified investment projects. The first of these came to fruition in December 2022 following targeted support provided by the Enterprise Telford team. This has resulted in an investment of £2.2m to install a new production line at the Telford site of a Swedish-owned advanced manufacturing business, creating 4 new jobs and safeguarding 150 others.

## **8.3. Department for International Trade's (DIT) International Trade Support**

Businesses are still being encouraged to access DIT funded support to enable them to find new export markets with 26 referrals to DIT services being made between April and November 2022 through the Marches Growth Hub teams. DIT events are also promoted on the Marches Growth Hub website [Events Calendar](#) to increase take up by Marches businesses.

Agri-tech sector businesses were recently signposted to specialist support available at the Agricultural Machinery and Technology Show held at the NEC on 10 and 11 January 2023,

including the opportunity to meet DIT Overseas Commercial Officers and learn more about new international opportunities.

## **9. Skills and Labour Market Support**

### **9.1. Department for Education (DfE) - Marches Skills Advisory Panel (SAP)**

DfE has continued to fund the operation and data analysis function of the Marches Skills Advisory Panel (SAP), however, the 2022/23 grant of £55k will be the final contribution made by DfE for this strand of work. This reflects the shift in focus to the work of the appointed Employer Representative Body (ERB) and its remit to compile, publish and roll-out a Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) for the area as part of government's commitment to put employers more firmly at the centre of local skills agenda.

The SAP continues to update relevant skills and employment data and research, including that mandated by DfE, and this information contributed to discussions at its meeting on 16 January 2023.

A report will come to the March 2023 LEP Board meeting outlining how the LEP can continue to contribute to and maintain a strategic overview of the skills agenda recognising its vital link to the inclusive economic growth agenda.

### **9.2. Employer Representative Body (ERB) and Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)**

The Marches LEP is providing support to the ERB in its work to produce the LSIP and build on the work reflected in its latest Local Skills Report, refreshed in January 2022. Rachel Laver as CEO is a member of the LSIP Board and attended a meeting on 3 January 2023 to receive updates on progress made. The LEP team is actively encouraging the business community to participate in the surveys being undertaken by the ERB so that local views on labour shortages and priority technical, sector and interpersonal skills issues can be fed into DfE.

### **9.3. Marches Careers Hub**

During the Autumn Term (September -December 2022), the Marches Careers Hub provided support to 62 institutions within the Marches. This included mainstream schools, colleges, alternative provision and SEND schools. Each institution has a careers programme in place to aid them in meeting the 8 Gatsby benchmarks with support from their Enterprise Coordinator.

Each of the 62 institutions now has an action plan, clearly identifying how it can make progress in meeting the Gatsby benchmarks within the Spring term. A copy has been provided to all Headteachers, as well as the named Careers Lead within each institution. Enterprise Coordinators in conjunction with the matched volunteer Enterprise Adviser, will support and drive the implementation of these actions plans.

The Marches Careers Hub has delivered four Careers Leader Community of Practice Meetings, providing support, CPD, resources and the opportunity for networking. In addition, three Enterprise Adviser Community of Practice Meetings have been delivered to support these business volunteers through the provision of resources and to facilitate networking.



Headteacher engagement continues to be a priority, with the Marches Careers Hub Lead presenting to headteacher fora in both Herefordshire and Telford & Wrekin. The date for the Shropshire Forum is awaited. Headteacher engagement is crucial in ensuring that careers education is driven from the top within our educational institutions.

The Autumn term saw the launch of our Learn Live broadcasts, to support young people in understanding our local labour market. October had a focus on the Business and Professional sector with 1,962 individuals joining the live broadcast to hear directly from industry professionals about this sector and employment opportunities available within the Marches. In November the focus was on Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering with 2,677 individuals joining the live session to learn more about local careers within this sector.

The Autumn term also saw our Cornerstone Employer Group grow – this now comprises:

- Aico
- Capgemini
- Kier Highways
- Sequani
- Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust
- Muller
- Wrekin Housing Group

This group is currently working on raising the profile of our Enterprise Adviser Network (business volunteers) and in highlighting ways in which businesses can provide opportunities for SEND young people within the workplace.

Marches Careers Hub funding will be used to co-sponsor the [Shropshire Apprenticeship Show](#) on 7 February 2023 and the Telford & Wrekin [Apprenticeship, Employment & Skills Show](#) on 16 March 2023. Funding has been reserved to co-sponsor a similar event in Herefordshire when advised by Herefordshire Council.

**Background papers/documents:**

- [Appendix 1 - Audit Report](#)
- [Appendix 2 - 22-23 Latest financial position](#)
- [Appendix 3 - PR and Marketing Update](#)

**Report Authors:**

Sonia Roberts, Marches LEP Chair

Rachel Laver, Marches LEP CEO

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<b>Meeting date:</b>	24 January 2023				
<b>Agenda Item:</b>	4				
<b>Item Subject:</b>	Report from the Performance Risk & Monitoring Committee meeting on 15 December 2022				
<b>For:</b>	<b>Discussion</b>		<b>Decision</b>		<b>Information</b> <b>X</b>

**Purpose of the Paper:** To report on the PRMC meeting on 15 December 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.**

**1. Summary of PRMC meeting held on the 15 December 2022**

The minutes of the meeting are attached to this paper. Specific matters that we'd like to draw the Board's attention to are:

**a. Risk Registers**

The risk registers were reviewed. The highest risk continued to be future funding for the LEP. Oxon Link Road remains high risk and an update is to be given at the Board given uncertainty about the project, specifically around budget and planning permission. Station Quarter project to be added to the risk register.

*Post meeting note-* due to no confirmation of core funding by the end of year, we have to recognise the impact this may have on staff retention and the ability for the LEP to continue to operate effectively. If staff leave it may be very difficult to recruit new staff for short term contracts or very expensive to use agency staff.

**b. Oxon Link Road**

Good presentation from the Matt Johnson from Shropshire Council on the project but concerns remain about the project, therefore escalated to the Board.

**c. Integrated Wetlands**

Project expected to fully spend all outstanding GBF by end of October. Update on progress with the project against contract requested at the next PRMC meeting.

**d. Transport**

Aecom gave an informative update on the work they'd been asked to undertake on a strategic transport plan across the Marches.

**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

**Draft Minutes of the Marches LEP Performance, Risk & Monitoring Committee (PRMC) Monday 15 December 2022**

**Present**

<b>Sonia Roberts (Chair)</b>	<b>SR</b>	<b>Deputy Chair of the Marches LEP Board</b>
Frank Myers	FM	Marches LEP Board Member
Sara Williams	SW	Marches LEP Board Member
James Walton	JW	Section 151 Officer, Shropshire Council
Karen Morris	KM	Deputy nominated by Section 151 Officer, Herefordshire Council
Dainy Runton	KM	Deputy nominated by Section 151 Officer, Telford & Wrekin Council
Rachel Laver	RL	Marches LEP Chief Executive
Kathryn Jones	KJ	Marches LEP Head of Partnerships and Strategy
Jo Grivell	JG	Marches LEP Office Administrator
Alex Collins	AC	Deputy Area Lead, Cities & Local Growth Unit
Matt Johnson	MJ	Shropshire Council – Oxon Link Road
Neil Macdonald	NM	AECOM – Transport Consultancy
Jodie Robins	JR	

<b>ITEM</b>		<b>ACTION</b>
<b>1</b>	<p><b>Welcome, apologies and introductions</b> The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies received from Ken Clarke, Andrew Lovegrove, Mark Barrow, Alex Green, and Clare Fenton.</p> <p><b>Declarations of interest</b> There were no declarations of interest.</p>	
<b>2</b>	<p><b>Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising</b> The minutes of the last meeting on 7 November 2022 were reviewed, checked for accuracy, and approved as an accurate record of the meeting.</p> <p>Action from last meeting from FM, asking that the Section 151 officer provides assurance on LEP risks. A new process has been put in place where the risk registers will be sent to the Section 151 Officer to be signed off, in advance of the papers being distributed.</p> <p><b>All other actions were completed with exception of the Energy Fund projects being added to the Risk Registers. RL took action to complete this in the Project Officer's absence.</b></p>	<b>RL</b>
<b>3</b>	<p><b>Marches LEP Update</b></p> <p><b>a) Future of LEP</b> The LEP is developing its SEP and updating the Energy strategy. Still waiting for clarity from Government on funding and mandate for LEPs. Had hoped to receive this before the Christmas break but AC advised it was unlikely.</p> <p><b>b) Funding and staffing</b> Staff are on contract until March 2023, with exception of staff involved with the Careers Enterprise Company funded project, who are contracted until August 2023. <b>RL proposed to take a paper to the January 2023 Board meeting on extending the contracts.</b></p>	<b>RL</b>

	<p>Marches LEP continues to trade at a loss but at a smaller loss than previously due to savings made on staffing and other operational costs. Planned expenditure and use of reserves remains within the budget shared with LEP Board members.</p> <p>Glenn Barrowman the Project Officer has resigned. As he was still on probation, he was only required to give a week's notice. An advert has now gone out to fill the vacancy. As a result, the team will be short staffed again in project management until the post is filled.</p> <p>The new Head of Business Development and Delivery, Mark Schneider will be joining the LEP team on 3 January 2023, he will be able to cover some of the project management work.</p>	
4.	<p><b>Top 5 Risk Registers</b> As per the action from last PRMC, an exercise was done to consolidate all the risks as there is so much duplication. This has <b>reduced the risk registers from 80+ to fewer than twenty. It still needs to be further refined which will be completed before the next meeting.</b></p> <p><b>FM asked that in addition to the Top 5 Risks, that RL shares with the PRMC any risks that have changed either up or down even if not in Top 5.</b></p> <p><b>A) Corporate Risk Register</b> No change to the Top 5 corporate risks as they mainly relate to the same topic regarding the uncertainty of LEPs.</p> <p><b>B) Programme Risk Register</b> The biggest risks relate to delivery of projects such as Oxon Link Road, where the funding has been spent but the project not completed, hence the update being provided later on the agenda on this project. RL advised that despite staffing issues the LEP has good systems in place to monitor the programmes and the LEP is aware of its contractual obligations and need for transparency. To further support this the LEP has just received another draft clean audit report. A copy will be circulated to PRMC and the LEP Board once finalised.</p> <p><b>SR queried that Station Quarter project was not listed on the programme risk register, nor the Energy Projects. RL confirmed she would ensure that they are added to the latest version of the risk register for the next meeting.</b></p>	<p>RL</p> <p>RL/JG</p> <p>RL</p> <p>RL</p>
5	<p><b>Oxon Link Road Update</b> Matt Johnson gave an informative presentation and general overview of the <a href="#">Oxon Link Road project</a> and the contracted outputs and how it fits into the wider scheme for the North West Relief Road. There is a joint planning application for the two schemes but only the Oxon Link Road portion is funded by the Marches LEP money. The Local Authority has also determined to appoint a single contractor for both roads to take advantage of economies of scale in delivery costs.</p> <p>RL asked questions on Shropshire Council's match funding and how much of it is already secured including the status of the Section 106 monies. MJ advised the Council is confident it will receive the £8.1m which is expected through the Section 106 agreements.</p> <p>MJ advised that build costs have risen by between 15-30% but assured the LEP, that the Local Authority is contracted to cover any uplift in costs.</p>	

	<p>A number of factors have impacted the planning determination date, mostly with the Environment Agency, Severn Trent, and Natural England objections to the planning. Final statement of environmental information is due to be submitted on 19 January 2023 which will satisfy their objections. It is hoped that planning determination will be complete in March 2023. Procurement is now underway with an open tender.</p> <p>SR asked if there are any concerns/risks that could derail the Oxon Link Road being delivered. MJ advised they have been careful around the environmental position and compliance which might impact planning approval and subsequently any judicial review if planning permission granted.</p> <p>MJ agreed to come back to the PRMC in June 2023 to provide general update on planning permission outcome and give an update on the main works programme dates once the procurement is complete. The 2027 date for completion is worst case scenario.</p> <p><b>JG to confirm date on the Forward Plan for next presentation to PRMC.</b></p>	JG
6	<p><b>Performance monitoring – Exceptions</b></p> <p><b>a) Growth Deal Update and b) Getting Building Fund update</b> RL advised it has been a challenge to get some of the returns from projects.</p> <p><b>RL reminded the three local authorities that the LEP requires quarterly reporting to get the monitoring information required by Government.</b> The LEP should not need to chase missing information as it makes it difficult for the LEP to complete its reporting on time.</p> <p><b>RL will task the new Project Officer with visiting each of the projects to see that the projects are physically complete and to capture all their output and match information.</b></p> <p><b>FM requested that the Wetlands project is invited back to provide details of spend. The Wetlands is listed for the next PRMC in February 2023 to give an update on progress and confirm how the funding has been spent in line with the contract.</b></p> <p>There was a general discussion regarding the projects that are still to deliver. SR asked if there is a deadline when the money has to be spent, as the delivery dates were several years away (2027). <b>RL confirmed they have spent the LEP’s money and have until 2025 to capture the outputs. It is not stated in the contract when the LEP expects the match funding to be spent. RL to confirm.</b></p> <p>AC confirmed that LGF is assessed at programme level and as long as the LEP delivers the finances and outputs within the programme, they are not particular where the outputs come from at a project level. As the Oxon Link Road extends past 2025, <b>AC to confirm if there is going to be any counting of outputs past the programme AC deadline.</b></p> <p>FM stated he was uncomfortable that late projects have spent the LEP money first but not their own match funds. RL confirmed there is provision in the contract for intervention rates and there is a clause whereby if the project comes in having spent less money than planned, the LEP can claw back money pro rata based on the intervention rate in the contract.</p>	All LA’s RL JG RL

	<p>JW confirmed that the first target of government for these programmes is that the LEP funding is spent. There was a strong push to get the LEP money spent, and if it is spent before any match funding that is fine because the projects are contractually obliged to deliver the match funding and the projects as described in their contracts.</p> <p><b>a) i. Hereford City Centre Transport Hub</b> Action from previous meeting for Hereford City Centre Transport Hub to provide a high-level overview of the project, what was originally contracted and to include what the LEP's funding has been spent on and the contracted output position. The overview document was sent out with the meeting papers and can also be found <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p><b>c) Growth Hub Update</b> Have held a session with PR &amp; Marketing partners, Be Bold, to look at how to promote the Growth Hub in 2023 and to be more proactive in promoting support programmes. The Intermediary event was held on 1 December and was very well attended and was oversubscribed. Looking to run the same event in Herefordshire in March 2023. <b>RL to take options paper to the LEP Board in January if the Growth Hub does not get central Government funding.</b></p> <p><b>d) Key Account Management</b> A formal review took place with Department for International Trade (DIT). They are satisfied with the revised delivery model for KAM. Funding for next year is still not determined.</p> <p><b>e) Skills Support (SAP/Marches Careers Hub)</b> The LEP continues to support the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) and will be seeking guidance and approval from the LSIP on the use of the remaining Skills Advisory Panel funding.</p> <p>Careers &amp; Enterprise Company (CEC) funded Marches Careers Hub project. There is a deadline of the end of December to collate information and will get an update on performance mid-January of how the Marches Career Hub Team directly influences schools and colleges performance around their career's education programme. There is no update on funding after August 2023.</p>	
7	<p><b>Transport Project Consultancy Update</b> NM/JR gave an informative overview of what they have been tasked to do by the Marches LEP. AECOM responded to a tender opportunity to support the LEP with the preparation of a transport narrative, which runs alongside the SEP.</p> <p>AECOM will help guide and support the existing Transport Officers Group with their strategic and local scheme pipeline. They shared their <a href="#">high-level mobilisation plan</a> to help maximise any investment and deliver the desired outcomes in terms of transport and connectivity across the Marches.</p>	
8	<p><b>PRMC Forward Plan</b> RL advised that all the projects that have been of concern in terms of delivery have now been to the PRMC or delivered i.e., Flaxmill, NMiTE. A new <a href="#">Forward Plan</a> has been drafted for 2023. <b>SR asked if anyone has any nervousness on a project that they request it be brought to the PRMC. For example, the Wetlands has been brought forward to the February meeting.</b></p>	All

9	<b>Any other business</b> None.	
<b>Next Meeting of the Marches LEP PRMC: 16 February 2023 14:00-15:30</b>		



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<b>Meeting date:</b>	24 <sup>th</sup> January 2023				
<b>Agenda Item:</b>	5				
<b>Item Subject:</b>	Budget approval				
<b>For:</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>Information</b>

**Purpose of the Paper:**

To seek approval from the Board of the budget for 23/24

**Summary of Recommendations:**

It is recommended that the Board approve the draft budget.

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

At present we have no indication whether the LEP will receive any core funding or Growth Hub funding for 23/24. This follows a year where the funding was cut by 25% and 50% respectively.

While we have made significant savings over the last year or so mainly through reducing our headcount, it isn't feasible to reduce this any further as we won't have the capacity to meet our contractual obligations or have any resilience left to deal with peaks in workload and or extenuating circumstances such as sickness.

We have drafted a budget based on this year's actual costs, allowed for inflation and made a modest suggested cut to our PR budget of £10k. We could reduce this further and we could also reduce other costs such as our £24k contribution to Midlands Connect.

Our main costs after staff costs, is local authority support which is expected to reduce to £100k in 23/24 which reflects the reduced project work. We are looking to retain the LEP offices as I feel it's important for the sharing of information and ideas for staff to continue to work centrally at least a couple of days a week. We have looked at renting rooms for meetings instead and it still makes financial sense to maintain the office. We have also looked at reducing the number of rooms we rent and will keep this under review during the year to see if we could manage with one less room.

The budget allows for continued support of the business boards with a 10% inflationary increase and a budget to support the Careers Hub role should we secure Careers and Enterprise Company funding again. We are currently required to provide 50% of the costs of the Careers and Enterprise Co-ordinator. A budget to cover any inflationary staff pay rises agreed by the Council is also provided.

At present until we get confirmation of the core funding position from Government, we are assuming only £125k of income which is prudent. We haven't assumed any local authority income which was £85k per annum for the last two years, but if we do have core funding it is likely to again be a condition that we have match from the local authorities. We will need to have a discussion with the authorities about funding once we have a decision from Government.

We do have additional guaranteed income of £100k due from the Shell Store loan each year which is paid into our Marches Investment Fund account. This funding can be used to meet

core costs should it be required. We do also have over £1m unallocated in the MIF fund and will continue to accrue interest on the energy fund monies until they're drawn by the approved projects.

We also hold £400k of Land Deal returns with further returns expected this year.

There are conditions around the use of capital funds of which the majority of MIF funding is, which does restrict its use slightly but we understand other LEPs have used MIF (came from Growing Places Fund ) to meet operational costs. This is an option we may want to consider in 24-25 if appropriate.

In summary our funding position is:

<b>Funds held</b>	<b>£</b>
Balance carried forward	858,820
<b>Core income</b>	
Hereford Enterprise Zone	100,000
Interest earned	25,000
Total	983,820
<b>Operating costs 23/24</b>	<b>( 924,620)</b>
Balance	59,200
<b>Other funds held</b>	
MIF (unallocated)	1,038,970
Land Deal	399,743
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,438,713</b>
Income expected	
Shell Store Loan repayments	100,000

The full breakdown of the proposed 23-24 budget along with MIF finance sheet is included at Appendix 1. Again, to be prudent we haven't assumed any income from the Land Deal for next year until we get greater detail about the deals anticipated to be completed.

**Financial implications:**

The budget is based on worst case scenario, which is prudent given uncertainty about LEP funding and means the LEP can continue to trade as a going concern.

**Legal implications:**

None at present based on the approval of the budget only.

**Risks, opportunities and impacts:**

The budget highlights that the LEP continues to trade at a loss but can meet its expenditure from reserves. If the LEP is to continue to operate beyond 23-24 it needs to look at new securing new sources of income.

**Equality implications:**

n/a

**Report Author: Rachel Laver**

**Background papers/documents:**

[Appendix 1 Detailed core budget 23-24 and MIF budget 23-24](#)

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<b>Meeting date:</b>	24 <sup>th</sup> January 2023				
<b>Agenda Item:</b>	6				
<b>Item Subject:</b>	Board Member Fiduciary Responsibilities				
<b>For:</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>Decision</b>		<b>Information</b> <b>X</b>

**Purpose of the Paper:**

To provide Board members with information on potential liabilities attaching to the Company's directors in the context of a winding up and the appropriateness of the current level of insurance.

**Summary of Recommendations:**

- Members of the Board are asked to note the content of the report.
- The directors discuss if they would like any changes to the current level of insurance given our current trading position.
- That we arrange for a year of run off insurance to be put in place at the point of winding up the company.

**Main points:**

Following the discussion at the last Board meeting we have sought legal advice on ongoing liability for directors and whether the insurance cover is appropriate.

The attached paper provided by Bevan Brittan sets out the positions.

We have requested the full wording of the insurance documents as recommended.

The Marches LEP isn't currently winding up and our investment activity is on a steep downwards trajectory so the current level of insurance may be considered appropriate with changes around run off insurance only made, when the LEP takes steps to wind up.

**Financial implications:**

Any increase to the insurance cover would come at an additional cost. Quotes will be sought if changes are requested.

**Legal implications:**

None

**Risks, opportunities and impacts:**

None

**Equality implications:**

None

**Additional Documents:**

[Appendix 1 Bevan Brittan paper on Potential Directors' Liabilities in a Members Voluntary Liquidation](#)

**Report Author: Rachel Laver, CEO, Marches LEP**

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**Item 7 - Oxon Link Road Update - presentation**

**Item 8 - Board discussion about future priorities of the LEP**



**Item 9 – Marches Growth Deal verbal update**

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<b>Meeting date:</b>	24 January 2023					
<b>Agenda Item:</b>	Item 10					
<b>Item Subject:</b>	Update of the Marches Strategic Economic Plan					
<b>For:</b>	<b>Discussion</b>		<b>Decision</b>		<b>Information</b>	<b>X</b>

**Purpose of the Paper:**

**To provide an update on progress made with updating the Marches Strategic Economic Plan and outline the next steps to be completed.**

**Summary of Recommendations:**

**That Marches LEP Board members note the content of the report, progress made, and next steps being undertaken.**

**Main points**

**Background**

As outlined at the November 2022 Board meeting, the Marches LEP is updating its Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) in order to:

- articulate updated ambitions and priorities for the Marches region and the commitment of different partners to achieving these;
- align to emerging government policy on funding available for local growth in line with the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill;
- define the Marches LEP’s work programme, Delivery Plan and underpin the development of its External Funding Strategy;
- reflect the most recent local, regional and national strategies and policies;
- shape communication with external stakeholders including MPs, government departments, neighbouring local authorities (including those in Mid-Wales) and public, private and third sector partners.

**Work completed to date:**

Following an open procurement exercise, the Black Country Consortium has been contracted to update the Marches evidence base. An initial data set has been received and, following the Working Group meeting held on 15 December 2022, additional data commissioned to fill gaps in understanding and to better demonstrate the Marches’ challenges and economic opportunities.

Discussions at the Working Group meeting also resulted in an updated Vision statement (see Appendix 1) and, based on initial data received, SEP drafting will be framed on core priority areas of:

- Driving sustainability through everything we do;
- Increasing productivity through innovation;
- Improving social and economic inclusion.

To meet these priorities, it is proposed that the following elements will be highlighted for potential focussed intervention:

- Infrastructure development (physical and digital), transport and movement;
- Skills development;
- Renewable energy production and the move to a low carbon economy;
- Housing.

The Marches LEP team is also holding sector-based discussions with stakeholders, including health and social care, construction and agritech in the first instance, to ensure that specific issues facing these sectors are clearly articulated.

**Next steps**

It is proposed that the timescale for finalising the SEP is extended to May 2023 in order to better align with a number of priority workstreams being undertaken by the LEP team, including:

- The development of a strategic transport intervention programme being undertaken by Aecom on behalf of the Marches LEP to provide additional resource for the Transport Officers' Group;
- The updating of the Marches Energy Strategy;
- The completion of a Land Use study commissioned by the Marches LEP to understand opportunities associated with energy generation, carbon capture and new approaches to land management.

In the meantime, work will continue to finalise the evidence pack and agree how this can best be presented to ensure that it is a valuable resource that can be easily understood and used by the LEP team and wider partners.

**Financial implications:**

An allocation of £5k from the Marches LEP Core budget has been ringfenced to support data collection work and the updating of the SEP evidence base.

**Legal implications:**

None

**Risks, opportunities and impacts:**

Having an updated SEP will highlight Marches-wide economic challenges and opportunities. This will enable the Marches LEP to make a case to government for investment which supports inclusive growth, based on a well evidenced assessment of local priorities and opportunities.

The updated evidence base will be made available on the Marches LEP website as a resource for partners to use to underpin funding bids.

**Equality implications:**

It will provide an evidence base to attract funding to support inclusive economic growth across the Marches area.

**Additional information:****Report Author:**

Kathryn Jones, Head of Partnerships & Strategy, Marches LEP  
[kathryn.jones@marcheslep.org.uk](mailto:kathryn.jones@marcheslep.org.uk)

**Background papers/documents:**

## Appendix 1 updated Vision statement

1. A place which is open for business, up for business and encourages clean, inclusive growth.
2. A growing place, attracting more people to come, stay and build their careers and businesses.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. A collaborative and proactive place with businesses, further education institutions (FEIs), higher education institutions (HEIs), public and community organisations working together to agree what needs to happen and getting things done. Known as a good place to start and grow a business.
6. A pioneer in the provision and testing of digitally driven health and social care for dispersed populations to support healthy ageing and economic participation in later life.
7. A global centre of excellence in cyber security, agritech and advanced manufacturing, driving innovation in sustainable agriculture, food and drink production and energy generation.
8. An inclusive place that enables residents from all communities to thrive and develop with quality jobs offering good wages, training and progression.

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<b>Meeting date:</b>	24 <sup>th</sup> January 2023				
<b>Agenda Item:</b>	11				
<b>Item Subject:</b>	Transport Officers Group (TOG)				
<b>For:</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>Decision</b>		<b>Information</b> <b>X</b>

<p><b>Purpose of the Paper:</b> To review the progress of the consultants Aecom Ltd.</p>
<p><b>Summary of Recommendations:</b> Members of the Board are asked to note the content of the report.</p>
<p><b>Main points:</b> Aecom Ltd have been hired to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist in the identification and definition of a number of connectivity pipeline priorities needed to support the priorities of the developing Marches Strategic Economic Plan and wider government policy priorities (Growth, Levelling Up (Rural Mobility) and Decarbonisation);</li> <li>• Develop an updated, relevant and robust (evidenced and deliverable) strategic narrative necessary to attract cohesive future investment into strategic transport infrastructure across the Marches geography;</li> <li>• Enhance the early stage business case evidence base and support the TOG in ongoing dialogue needed to embed emerging investment commitments into wider stakeholder capital investment programmes; and</li> <li>• Set out a roadmap needed to progress business case development for prioritised transport investments</li> </ul> <p>Aecom presented their plan to the TOG on the 11<sup>th</sup> January 2023 and it was agreed that the group will work with the consultants to help identify an initial list of five key Marches transport infrastructure projects. A subgroup consisting of the 3 Marches local authorities and Ceredigion Council will work closely with Aecom to facilitate the identification of the projects allowing the work to be completed by the end of March 2023.</p>
<p><b>Financial implications:</b> None</p>
<p><b>Legal implications:</b> None</p>
<p><b>Risks, opportunities and impacts:</b> None</p>
<p><b>Equality implications:</b> None</p>
<p><b>Report Author:</b> Mark Schneider, Head of Business Development and Delivery, Marches LEP</p>

**End**