



Telford & Wrekin
C O U N C I L

Addenbrooke House Ironmasters Way Telford TF3 4NT

BUSINESS AND FINANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date	Wednesday, 3 November 2021	Time	6.00 pm
Venue	Telford Room, Addenbrooke House, Ironmasters Way, Telford, TF3 4NT		

Enquiries Regarding this Agenda

Democratic Services	Kieran Robinson	01952 382061
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<u>Committee Membership:</u>	Councillors E J Carter, N A M England, J E Lavery, A Lawrence, I Preece, S J Reynolds (Chair), K S Sahota and C F Smith, Co-optees R Williams
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AGENDA

4. **Marches Local Enterprise Partnership Update**

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To receive the report of the Marches LEP, presented by Mandy Thorn.

Councillor D Wright (Cabinet Member: Economy, Housing, Transport and Infrastructure) and Katherine Kynaston (Director: Housing, Employment & Infrastructure) will also attend for this item.

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TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

BUSINESS & FINANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

3 NOVEMBER 2021

MARCHES LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

1 PURPOSE

1.1 The purpose of this report is to enable the Business & Finance Scrutiny Committee to consider the current priorities of the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and Telford's strong track record of delivery of investment and economic growth, channelled via the Marches LEP.

2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1 This report provides an update on the Marches LEP, including an outline of its key information, priorities and projects directly benefiting the Borough including a significant number being delivered by Telford & Wrekin Council. In particular:

- Section 3.1 includes details of Local Growth Deal Fund (LGF), Getting Building Fund (GBF) and Marches Investment Fund (MIF) awarded to projects in Telford & Wrekin since April 2015;
- Section 3.2 focusses on Skills;
- Section 3.3 highlights details of the Marches LEP's work on Energy and Net Zero;
- Section 3.4 focusses on Business Support and emphasises the role of the Marches Growth Hub; and
- Section 3.5 highlights the steps put together by the Marches LEP in response to the Covid-19 Pandemic.
- Section 3.6 details the Governance structure in place at the Marches LEP;

2.2 Work set out in this Report is being undertaken within Marches LEP resources. This includes an annual cash contribution from each of the Local Authorities (£22,100 from Telford & Wrekin in 2021/22) to enable the drawdown of BEIS/DLUHC core funding for the LEP. Financial risk to Telford & Wrekin Council and other local authority partners is limited through the use of Shropshire Council as the Marches LEP's accountable body and the Marches LEP managing its budget efficiently to meet its financial liabilities.

2.3 In mid-April a review of LEPs was commissioned by the Secretaries of State for DLUHC (then MHCLG) and BEIS to re-shape the future role of LEPs. The outcome of this has been delayed and is still ongoing. This is creating significant uncertainty and financial risk to the Marches LEP. As per end of October 2021, in common with all other LEPS, the Marches LEP has only received the first half of its core funding for financial year 2021/22. Unless a positive outcome from the review is announced very shortly a team restructure will have to take place before the end of the current financial

year to ensure the Marches LEP strengthens its financial position.

2.4 The publication of the Levelling Up White Paper, which is expected to articulate how new policy interventions will improve opportunity and boost livelihoods across the country, including the future role of LEPs, has also been delayed causing further uncertainties. Despite this the LEP continue to focus on delivery and ensuring, working with all the Local Authorities in the Marches, a continued focus on promoting and supporting economic growth in the area. While Local Authorities have not been directly involved in the review which is being central Government led Telford & Wrekin Council continue to support the LEP and have lobbied for early resolution of the position.

3 KEY INFORMATION AND PRIORITIES

3.1 Local Growth Deal Fund 1, 2 and 3 (LGF), Getting Building Fund (GBF) and Marches Investment Fund (MIF) - Funding awarded to projects in Telford & Wrekin since April 2015

Telford Eastern Gateway	£3.6m
Telford Growth Point Package	£13.9m
Telford Bus Station	£1.3m
Superfast Telford	£1.004m
Newport Innovation and Enterprise Package	£7.4m
Stronger Communities Regeneration Sites – Donnington, Station Quarter, Wellington/New College	£7m
Marches Centre of Excellence in Health Allied Health and Social Care	£3.5m
Stronger Communities – New College, Wellington & Surrounding site with Wrekin Housing Group (WHG)	£3.066m
Tackling Fuel Poverty Through Zero Carbon Innovation – Wrekin Housing Group (WHG)	£1m
Telford College	£520k
Marches Investment Fund and other grants in support of Strategic Tourism & Business Initiatives	£1.804m
Total funding awarded to Telford & Wrekin	£44,094,000

Appendix 4 provides details of the projects supported under Growth Deal 1, 2 with a focus below on more recent projects which are still in delivery under Growth Deal 3 and the Getting Building Fund 2020.

3.1.1 Growth Deal 3

The latest award of Growth Deal 3 funding was announced in March 2017 providing a boost of £21.9 million for the Marches LEP area with a focus on innovation and skills, to help create jobs, support businesses and encourage growth.

Newport Innovation and Enterprise Package - A £9.2m project, including £6.3m from Local Growth Fund, the Newport Innovation and Enterprise package (Ni-Park) which started on site in December 2019 is creating serviced employment land including an Agri Tech Enterprise and Science Park with direct links to the Harper Adams University's innovation facilities. It will attract investment from high tech businesses, stimulating complementary research and development activities. It will encourage supply chain growth across a wide range of companies engaged in new agricultural technologies and with links to Telford's strong advanced manufacturing sector. The Park has been recognised and promoted by the Department of International Trade as a 'High Potential Opportunity' area to international agritech and agrifood businesses looking to invest in the UK.

At the 24 March 2020 LEP Board Meeting it was agreed to award this project an additional £1,036m in 20/21 taking the total Local Growth Fund contribution to £7.4m, reflecting the project's original allocation. This additional funding is being put towards stabilisation works to a retaining wall.

The package is well advanced in opening up 10 hectares of employment land creating 50,000m² of new commercial space, which will aim to deliver 954 jobs and 1,070 new houses. To date the project has delivered 80 jobs, 567 new homes, 4,579m² employment floorspace and 10 hectares of employment land.

Stronger Communities Regeneration Sites - The Stronger Communities Regeneration Sites project is a £16.9m project which includes £7m of Local Growth Fund and comprises of three sub projects which will deliver the regeneration of brownfield sites and new, mixed tenure housing in key locations across Telford. This includes sites adjacent to one of the most deprived wards, Donnington and Station Quarter in the Telford Town Centre.

In total the project will create 60 new jobs, 495 homes and unlock 3 acres of employment land by the end of 2024/25. Outputs start to come into delivery from 2021/22.

On 7 September 2021, the project was awarded a further £685,950 LGF. The additional funding is enabling the purchase of a further 1.02 acre (0.402 ha) site within the Station Quarter masterplan, one of only two sites within the development boundary which are outside of Telford & Wrekin Council's ownership and control. Station Quarter is also being supported by investment from the Council directly and through Nuplace and Telford's Towns Fund. The specific site sitting on the principal route between Telford Train Station and Shopping Centre, is fundamental to the development and the creation of active frontages which provide interest, legibility and a sense of place. The site has been identified as a key location for the development of a Digital Skills & Enterprise Hub in partnership with Telford College and the University of Wolverhampton, delivering education and training for Levels 2-6, upskilling, re-skilling and intermediate skills and outreach to disadvantaged pupils with a focus on maths and digital disciplines. The

location of the Hub on this site will free up other, Council owned land within the wider masterplan, for the delivery of a further 46 residential units.

Marches Centre of Excellence in Health Allied Health and Social Care - A £5m project, including £3.5m of Local Growth Funds upgrading and refurbish space on the University's Telford campus, including the installation of state-of-the-art equipment, creating technologically advanced learning facility to support the Health, Allied Health, Social Work and Care sectors within the Marches. See section 3.2.2 below for details.

3.1.2 Getting Building Fund

Getting Building Fund (GBF) is a £900m programme announced by Government in August 2020 to deliver jobs, skills and infrastructure across the country. The investment is targeted in areas facing the biggest economic challenges as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and is supporting the delivery of shovel-ready infrastructure projects to boost economic growth, and fuel local recovery and jobs. In September 2020, the Marches LEP secured £14m from the GBF for a wide-ranging package of projects that will deliver a boost to the local economy.

Stronger Communities - New College, Wellington and surrounding site with Wrekin Housing Group (WHG) - This is a £21m project which includes £2.38m from the Getting Building Fund. The New College site and WHG housing sites are located within or adjacent to one of the most deprived wards in the Borough and are gateways into Wellington. The project will unlock this stalled site, delivering new residential units and incorporating sustainability in design, whilst also improving walking and cycling routes into Wellington. The project will deliver 110 residential units across both sites by 2023/24 and unlock 3 acres of brownfield development land by the end of 2024/25. Additional place shaping outputs will also be delivered in the form of footpaths and a mini football playing pitch. Outputs will come into delivery in 2022/23.

Tackling Fuel Poverty through Zero Carbon Innovation – Wrekin Housing Group (WHG) - £1m was awarded to this project from the Getting Building Fund as part of a £1.4m project. Wrekin Housing Group, through this investment, will produce zero carbon homes across Telford & Wrekin using a combination of energy technologies to be retrofitted to existing homes or fitted into brand new homes. Impacts include low energy bills easing fuel poverty in Social Housing; reducing the load on the local grid; and eliminating carbon through energy consumption. By the end of 2024/25 the project aims to retrofit 68 homes with energy saving technology (PV and Battery Storage), deliver 11 non-Passiv haus zero carbon new builds. The project will also create 87 new jobs and provide new learning space to train 130 learners in the new technology in partnership with Telford College. Outputs are in delivery and claims are currently being verified by the LEP.

3.1.3 Growth Deal 1 and 3 Skills Capital Investment

Growth Deal funding has been allocated to local further education providers to allow capital investment in their training facilities and infrastructure. This investment is underpinning the development of new training programmes in line with local employer needs. See section 3.2.1 below for details.

3.1.4 Other Marches LEP Projects

Marches Investment Fund (MIF) - MIF is a capital fund derived from an initial £8.1m through Government Growing Places Fund allocation, a proportion of any local profit share from the Telford Land Deal and annual repayments and interest from MIF private-led loan schemes. MIF loans have been awarded in Telford & Wrekin to:

- **£650k** to Mold-based developer, Dicentra, to bring the former Brintons carpet factory on Halesfield 15 back into economic use – this supported the redevelopment of 6,292 sq.m of industrial floor space and a site totalling 4.04 hectares.
- **£750k** to Harper Adams to support the development of the Precision Agriculture and Engineering Innovation Centre with the remaining funding coming from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and Harper Adams University.

Telford Land Deal - This Deal, negotiated by Telford & Wrekin Council, was secured as part of the Marches LEP Growth Deal. Under the Deal, Telford & Wrekin Council are responsible for the marketing and disposal of all development land owned by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), with receipts generated invested locally into site preparation and with any profit share earned benefitting both Telford & Wrekin and, via a MIF contribution, the wider Marches region. is set to see up to £44.5m of land receipts reinvested in the local area over 10 years. Up to the end of 2020/21 28 commercial sites and 20 residential sites have been brought forward by the Telford team delivering over 914 homes and 1726 jobs.

Marches Growth Hub - Business Support - Since April 2015, £1.3 million has been allocated to the delivery of business support services through the LEP team, the www.marchesgrowthhub.co.uk website and as a contribution to the operating costs of the Marches Growth Hub sites in Shrewsbury, Telford and Hereford. See section 3.5 below for details on Marches Growth Hub.

Key Account Management - The LEP has secured funding to support engagement with and account management of foreign-owned companies across the Marches. Within Telford & Wrekin, this Department of International Trade (DIT) funded programme is managed by the Council's inward investment team and is targeted at increasing engagement with foreign-owned businesses to support relocation to Telford and to encourage existing companies' expansion and investment plans.

3.2 Skills Projects

3.2.1 Telford College - Under Growth Deal 3, Local Growth Fund allocations were awarded to the Marches further education providers to enable capital investment in their training facilities and infrastructure so that skills provision could be developed to meet local employer need. Telford College benefitted from a £684k project, including £520k provided by the Marches LEP's Local Growth Fund, under the 'Investing in our Future Workforce' project. The funding was used by Telford College to develop a virtual and augmented reality (VAR) training suite enabling students across curriculum areas to engage with the latest VR platforms and learning programmes and enhance their education with bespoke technology packages.

The project had delivered 152 apprenticeships and assisted 3,992 new learners by

contract completion on 31 March 2021.

3.2.2 Marches Centre of Excellence in Health Allied Health & Social Care - A £5m project, including £3.5m of Local Growth Funds, upgrading and refurbishing space on the University of Wolverhampton's Telford campus, including the installation of state-of-the-art equipment, creating technologically advanced learning facility to support the Health, Allied Health, Social Work and Care sectors within the Marches.

The use of equipment will be used to create new and more flexible learning pathways based on employer and market needs, enabling learners to engage with real life situations (e.g. road traffic incidents and major emergencies) in a controlled environment. This investment will result in 72 new jobs being created, the development of 10 new courses, 2 new apprenticeship programmes, attracting over 1,139 new learners and recruiting 174 new apprentices into the field of Health and Social Care and Allied Health by the end of 2024/25.

To date the project has delivered 1,326m² of new or improved learning/training floorspace with 128 students enrolled on HE courses and created 3.5 new jobs.

3.2.3 Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) is a national network set up to inspire and prepare young people for work by connecting schools, colleges, employers and careers programme providers across England. CEC-supported Enterprise Coordinators are in place for each of the Marches LEP's three local authority areas and a programme of school and business engagement activities has been developed. Funding of £25k per year for each Enterprise Co-ordinator through the Marches LEP is matched by each of the three local authorities.

Further funding has been secured by the Marches LEP, until August 2022, to strengthen support for schools and colleges and increase business engagement through the continuing development of the Careers Hub which was formally launched in April 2021 and led by a full-time Hub Lead. The hub working with the Local Authority partners now supports 62 schools and colleges across the Marches to attain Gatsby Benchmarks and creates a network that connects schools and colleges, employers and careers programme providers to create high-impact careers opportunities for young people.

The Marches Hub Careers Fair was held virtually on 8 July 2021 and attracted 48 exhibitors from across the Marches' employer network and almost 600 students to support our schools and colleges in enhancing their provision of meaningful employer encounters by providing the opportunity for students to engage with local employers, as well as receiving valuable information from colleges, training providers and universities. It also offered employers an opportunity to engage with the future workforce and share what they are seeking in an employee, what school subjects have particular significance to roles within their sector and the types of opportunities available.

The hub hosted a workshop in May 21, delivered by Workpays, for all school Careers Leaders who wished to develop their understanding of free support available to help them promote apprenticeships and centred around the Apprenticeship Support & Knowledge (ASK) programme.

3.2.4 Marches LEP Skills Advisory Panel (SAP) - The SAP works to identify and address local skills priorities. Funded by the Department for Education (DfE), it aims to strengthen the link between employers and skills providers including colleges, independent training providers and universities. The Marches panel comprises 27 members from across HE, FE, local authorities, independent training providers and business representatives, and includes representation from Telford College, Harper Adams University, Telford Business Board and Telford & Wrekin Council. The panel is also supported by a Higher Education sub-group, which includes representatives from Harper Adams University and the University of Wolverhampton.

Graham Guest, Principal & CEO of Telford College, assumed the role of SAP Chair, for a 2 year term, on 4 October 2021 and will oversee a periodic review of the [Marches Local Skills Report](#) due with DfE by January 2022.

Members of the SAP continue working with partners to promote the Kickstart programme and to signpost to Telford's all-age employment support programme, Job Box, as well as promoting apprenticeship opportunities with local employers, including those being created under the Marches LEP funded projects. Telford & Wrekin Council have committed to providing 100 placements for kickstart, the largest number being delivered by a single employer in the Borough.

3.2.5 Strategic Fund Development Pilot - Following a successful Marches wide combined bid, led by Telford College and including Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College, Shrewsbury Colleges Group and SBC Training, the consortium is now working to deliver a pilot Government Strategic Development Fund programme to support the development of a high-value curriculum offer in support of longer-term skills priorities across the Marches and strengthen the relationship with the region's employers

The project has seen some extremely positive collaboration between local partners, both in drawing up the bid and in subsequent delivery and will seek to address the significant skills gaps identified and, more widely, to influence and inform policy on future devolved funding initiatives.

3.2.6 Appendix 3 includes details of European Social Fund projects funded under Marches LEP allocation.

3.3 Energy and Net Zero

3.3.1 The **Marches LEP's Energy Strategy** was launched in 2019 to help deliver the clean growth agenda; its implementation is monitored by the Marches LEP Energy Steering Group on which Telford & Wrekin Council and Telford Business Board are represented.

3.3.2 The Energy Strategy Steering Group is striving to attract funding to the area under the £3 billion green investment announced as part of a Covid-19 recovery package. This includes Green Homes Grants, decarbonisation initiatives, the Green Jobs Challenge Fund and automotive transformation fund.

3.3.3 Other grant funding available directly to businesses across the Borough, which Telford & Wrekin Council has directly benefitted from, include the Marches Renewable

Energy (MarRE) grant schemes (finishing at the end of December 2021), the Business Energy Efficiency Scheme (BEEP) and the Sustainable Energy in Public Buildings (SePuBu). In the Borough, these schemes are promoted through the Marches LEP, Telford & Wrekin Council and Telford Business Board.

3.3.4 The Marches LEP has committed to support Telford & Wrekin Council, as well as the other two local authorities, to meet their net-zero targets. Examples of how the Marches LEP is supporting Telford & Wrekin Council via the Regional Senior Energy Project Officer are listed below:

- Working on carbon footprinting and energy projects.
- Supporting the implementation of the Council and Borough action plans.
- Supporting delivery of fuel poverty projects e.g. Local Authority Delivery Element of the Green Homes Grant (LAD2).
- Identifying new potential sources of funding through BEIS and the Midlands Energy Hub.
- Funding for COP26 Regional Roadshows across the Borough.
- Supporting on the extension and decarbonisation of the Southwater Heat Network.

3.3.5 In May this year, the Marches LEP Board appointed an Energy and Net Zero Champion, Gordon Coppock, to challenge future decisions and to signal the Marches LEP's aim to promote more sustainable growth in the region.

3.4 Marches Growth Hub and Business Support

3.4.1 The Marches Growth Hub www.marchesgrowthhub.co.uk/ offers a single point of access to information and guidance on business grants, loans, support and advice available to new and existing businesses across the Marches regardless of their sector or size. The hub combines an online advice centre linked with three physical sites based in Hereford, Shrewsbury and Telford. Telford & Wrekin Council operate the Telford Growth Hub from the Priorslee Campus of UoW delivering a full business support programme including clinics/meetings with clients, networking and best practice events and providing hot desking facilities for local and national business support providers, including the Department for International Trade, Innovate UK and the Intellectual Property Office.

The Telford Hub is funded by the Council, UoW alongside the Marches investment and funding by the European Regional Development Fund..

Developed by the Marches LEP, the online, virtual hub is a first-class, business-friendly website packed with links to local, regional and national support programmes, funding and finance opportunities, employment advice and skills updates and support for start-up businesses. The website also holds information on training and best practice events for new and existing businesses with an online booking facility www.marchesgrowthhub.co.uk/calendar/.

The work of the Marches Growth Hub is overseen by the Marches Business Support Steering Group that is chaired by Dave Courteen, who is also the Marches LEP's Small Business Champion. Telford & Wrekin Council and Telford Business Board are represented on the Marches Business Support Steering Group.

3.5 Covid-19 Pandemic Response

3.5.1 The Marches LEP has played a leadership role during the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent economic downturn, co-ordinating key stakeholders across the Marches. The Marches Growth Hub enhanced its online offer, enabling access to a wide range of virtual events, business information (updated daily in line with Government announcements) specialist advice and grant funding.

3.5.2 Following the Marches Economic Recovery Summit in October last year, the Marches LEP has produced a Marches-wide economic recovery strategy which aims to enable cross-local authority area working on common areas of interest including skills, business support, digital infrastructure and support to market towns. The strategy encapsulates everything the Marche LEP is doing/has underway within the existing available funding (echoing the Annual Delivery Plan).

3.5.3 In May 2020, the Marches LEP approved a business case submitted by Telford & Wrekin Council, in partnership with Telford Business Board, to award an allocation of £404k to support strategically important and tourism sector businesses. This was in recognition that the sector had been significantly impacted, firstly by flooding and then by Covid-19.

This project comprised **£230k** to support the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust deal with the loss of visitor income caused by the flooding to museum buildings in the Gorge in February 2020 and the impact of the closure of the whole museum owing to Covid-19.

In addition, **£174k** was targeted towards re-energising local and regional consumer demand across Telford's retail, hospitality and leisure sectors, with a particular focus on six key Borough Towns/Centres. The funding has supported a programme of High Street activity delivered during 2021 and the development of a Telford shop/spend local app for residents and visitors to promote local shopping.

This funding was drawn from the Marches Investment Fund (MIF) which, each year, benefits from a contribution of Telford Land Deal profits for investment across the Marches area.

3.6 Governance

3.6.1 The Marches LEP was established in 2011 and it has since supported economic growth across the three local authorities of Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin. It is a business led organisation and its vision can be found at **Appendix 1**.

3.6.2 The Marches LEP Board (the Board), chaired by Mandy Thorn MBE DL, includes the leaders of the three local authorities as well as the chairs of Herefordshire Business Board, Shropshire Business Board and Telford Business Board. The Board is the Marches LEP's ultimate decision-making authority and it comprises both public and private sector partners. Details of the Marches LEP Board's membership can be found at **Appendix 2**.

3.6.3 The Marches LEP has its own Performance, Risk and Monitoring Committee that meets every two months to review the Risk Register, identify any new risks and ensure mitigation is reflective of operational/quality assurance framework practice. This is a strategic group with delegated responsibility from the LEP Board and its reports form part of the governance reporting for the Board of Directors.

3.6.4 In response to Government guidelines, the Marches LEP became a company limited by guarantee in February 2019 and Board members have since become directors of The Marches LEP Limited (company **11822614**). The company's articles of association (<https://www.marcheslep.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/The-Marches-LEP-Articles-of-Association-v7-Jan-2021.pdf>) set out its membership, obligations and decision-making processes. Specialist legal advice was commissioned to identify any issues arising as the result of the Marches LEP having become a company limited by guarantee.

3.6.5 The Marches LEP has a detailed Accountability and Assurance Framework (AAF) which can be found at <https://www.marcheslep.org.uk/downloads/accountability-and-assurance-framework-2019-2/>. This has been formally approved by the Marches LEP's Government sponsors (the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC)) and sets out the Marches LEP's key practices and standards in decision making, financial management and accountability.

3.6.6 The AAF is an iterative document and is reviewed at least once a year by the Marches LEP and its Accountable Body (Shropshire Council). The s151 Officer at the Accountable Body has a responsibility to formally confirm each year that the local AAF meets all standards set out in national guidance.

3.6.7 Within the AAF, the Marches LEP agreed with each local authority that it would attend its relevant scrutiny panels to provide an overview of key activities undertaken and progress made. The Marches LEP last attended Telford & Wrekin Council's Business & Finance Scrutiny Committee on 9 December 2020.

3.6.8 In line with Government requirements, the Marches LEP has developed an Annual Delivery Plan which sets out its workplan for financial year 2021/2022 and outlines its priority actions. A copy can be found at <https://www.marcheslep.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Delivery-Plan-2021-22.pdf>. Progress against the deliverables is reviewed regularly by the Marches LEP team, Deputy Chair and Chair. Performance against the Annual Delivery Plan is also formally reviewed by Government.

3.6.9 Formal mid-year and end of year performance reviews are held with Government (BEIS and DLUHC) each year with a performance rating awarded and the process providing an opportunity to review the Marches LEP's achievements, consider examples of good practice and identify areas for improvement. To this end, during financial year 2021/22, a formal mid-year review was held on 6 October 2021.

3.6.10 To support the sharing of best practice and effective cross-local authority working, the Marches LEP holds monthly operational meetings with the Heads of Economic Development, discussing common challenges and considering joint working approaches including commissioning joint research and to support all three local authorities with the promotion of their business support services.

3.6.11 In response to Government feedback, in March this year, the Marches LEP launched its Inclusive Economy and Diversity Policy and Implementation Plan which aims to a) promote equality, diversity and inclusion, b) reduce inequality and c) narrow the gap on average earnings, unemployment, ambitions, skills and education between the area and the national average (outside London) and within the area. A copy of the policy can be found at <https://www.marcheslep.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/MLEP-Inclusive-Economy-and-Diversity-Policy-March-2021.pdf>.

3.6.12 The Marches LEP submitted its draft **Local Industrial Strategy** https://www.marcheslep.org.uk/download/marches_local_industrial_strategy/Marches-Local-Industrial-Strategy-Final-draft-20.12.19.pdf to Government in December 2019. This was developed following extensive business consultation across Telford & Wrekin and sets out the area's unique strengths in response to the national industrial strategy. Further guidance is awaited from Government as part of the current review and linked with the Levelling Up Agenda on how local industrial strategies will be taken forward and their role in economic recovery but the LEP is continuing to champion the major local growth opportunities connected with:

- high-tech, energy-efficient manufacturing and engineering;
- modern and environmentally sustainable food production, packaging and distribution through agri-tech innovation; and
- excellence in cyber security and resilience.

Report prepared by Ilia Bowles, Marches LEP Director of Corporate Services

Appendix 1 – Marches LEP Vision

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

Appendix 2 – Marches LEP Board Membership

Sector	Name	Job Title and Organisation
Private Sector Chair	Mandy Thorn MBE DL	Chair of the Marches LEP Board
Community & Voluntary Sector	Sonia Roberts ¹	CEO of Landau and Deputy Chair of the Marches LEP Board
Area Business Board Chairs	Frank Myers MBE	Chair of Herefordshire Business Board
	Beth Heath	Chair of Shropshire Business Board
	Will Westley	Chair of Telford Business Board
Enterprise Zone	Andrew Manning Cox	Chair of Hereford Enterprise Zone
Higher Education	Dr Catherine Baxter	University Secretary, Harper Adams University
Food & Drink/ AgriTech	Christine Snell	Business Partner, AJ & CI Snell
Financial/Professional Services	Paul Kalinauckas ²	Midland Engine Investment Fund Strategic Oversight Board
Skills & Workforce Development	Graham Guest	Principal and CEO of Telford College and Chair of the Marches LEP Skills Advisory Panel
Construction	Vacant	
Manufacturing	Sara Williams	Marketing Manager, Protolabs
Local Authority Leaders	Cllr David Hitchiner (Alternate - Cllr Ellie Chowns)	Leader of Herefordshire Council
	Cllr Lezley Picton (Alternate - Cllr Ed Potter)	Leader of Shropshire Council
	Cllr Shaun Davies (Alternate - Cllr David Wright)	Leader of Telford & Wrekin Council
Co-opted Member	Gordon Coppock ³	Director, Pomona Solar Co-operative

¹ Sonia Roberts acts as the Marches LEP Diversity Champion

² Paul Kalinauckas acts as the Marches LEP Access to Finance Champion

³ Gordon Coppock acts as the Marches LEP Energy and Net Zero Champion

Appendix 3 – European Social Fund Projects funded under Marches LEP allocation

Life Ready, Work Ready - This project, delivered by Telford & Wrekin Council, is funded under ESF investment priority 2.2 to improve the labour market relevance of education and training systems. It brokers opportunities to encourage and increase work experience, work placements, traineeships, apprenticeships and graduate placements, particularly through wider employer engagement involving supply chains. It also keeps local employers across Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin informed about local education and training provision, delivers activities to engage young people and develop their employability and vocational skills and enhances school-business engagement to ensure routes to local employment opportunities are promoted.

Building Skills & Growth Capacity - This project is delivered by University Centre Shrewsbury and funded under ESF investment priority 2.2 to improve the labour market relevance of education and training systems. The project focuses on supporting the growth of SMEs and microbusinesses across Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin by ensuring they can identify and access skills development options that align with and unlock their growth plans.

Skills Support for the Workforce - This project, delivered by Dimensions Training Solutions, is funded under ESF priority 2.1 to enhance equal access to lifelong learning. The project aims to address skills shortages and gaps across the Marches area, particularly in priority employment and high growth sectors, and supports small and medium sized businesses through a training needs analysis and delivery of fully funded training to develop the skills of the workforce, improve productivity and help employers to meet their business goals. The project also supports people affected by redundancy to update their skills or retrain to help secure employment in new sectors.

Marches Centre for Manufacturing - Skills for Growth - This project is delivered by the Marches Centre for Manufacturing and Technology (MCMT) across Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin and funded under ESF investment priority 2.2 to improve the labour market relevance of education and training systems. MCMT have developed a project that will assist SMEs to grow and develop through assessing key skills development that are essential to the business. There are two themes to this project, one being Building Business Skills for Growth and the other Building Skills for Future Employment.

Building Better Opportunities - The project is co-funded by the National Lottery Community Fund and ESF and managed by Landau in partnership with organisations from the community and voluntary sector. It seeks to tackle the root causes of poverty, promote social inclusion and develop the employability skills of people furthest away from the labour market across the Marches.

In2 Youth Support Partnership - In2 is supporting young people aged 15-24 in the Marches who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) or at risk of becoming NEET. The project, delivered by Landau, is funded under ESF priority 2.1 to support the sustainable integration of young people into the labour market and co-financed by the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

Appendix 4

Growth Deal 1

The Marches LEP secured £75.3m in the first round of Growth Deal funding in 2014. The funding focused mainly on road infrastructure projects to enable housing and employment sites to be developed, with an element invested in skills capital projects to improve facilities and equipment for training in the advanced manufacturing sector in line with industry needs.

Telford Eastern Gateway - A £5.2m project, including £3.6m from Local Growth Fund, which aimed to maximise opportunities to attract advanced manufacturing investors linked to the I54 site just 12 miles to the east of Telford. The project comprised utility infrastructure works at the Telford 54 (T54) site and network capacity improvements to M54 J4. It opened up the potential of the 31 hectare T54 development site immediately next to junction 4 of the M54 and has brought wider economic benefits to the automotive supply chain. The project aims to deliver 3,438 new jobs, 1,400 new homes and 31 hectare employment land by the end of 2024/25.

This project is now financially complete with all Growth Deal funds having been claimed. To date the project has opened up 31 hectares of new employment land and delivered 1,005 new jobs, 19 safeguarded jobs and 379 new homes.

Telford Growth Point Package - This £17.37m project, including £13.9m from Local Growth Fund concentrated on improving road capacity in Telford adjacent to major employment sites including Hortonwood and Hortonwood West maintaining and enhancing their potential for inward investment, and also on-site infrastructure to open up development sites. The package also included sustainable travel measures to encourage cycling. It aims to create 5,369 jobs and bring forward 2,845 new houses across the Telford & Wrekin Council area by the end of 2024/25.

This project is now financially complete with all Growth Deal funds having been claimed. To date the project has delivered 1,224 new jobs and 2,142 new homes.

Telford Bus Station - A £1.9m project, including £1.3m from Local Growth Fund centered on the replacement of the existing bus station including re-modelling of entrances and footpaths, supporting the regeneration of Telford Town Centre as well as providing an enhanced public transport interchange. The project was a key element of the overall development strategy for Telford Town Centre and supported the Telford Shopping Centre masterplan. It aims to unlock 8,800 sq m of retail development land and create 300 jobs at the site (from a total of 14,358 across the Borough) by the end of 2024/25.

This project is now financially complete with all Growth Deal funds having been claimed. To date the project has delivered 10,327m² of commercial floorspace creating 63 new jobs.

Growth Deal 2

The Marches LEP secured £7.7m in the second round of Growth Deal funding. The funding focused entirely on supporting the rollout of superfast broadband to enable

more households and businesses to access superfast provision, particularly addressing market failure in rural areas.

Superfast Telford – Marches Broadband Scheme - A £3.9m project, including £1.004m from Local Growth Fund. The aim of the project was for Telford to be one of the first areas in the UK to exceed the UK target for fibre broadband coverage by 2020, to support the town's growth, economic prosperity and digital inclusion. More than 9,323 premises (including 1,398 businesses) that were unable to access faster fibre broadband have been supported to gain open access to a network of providers. The project is now complete.