

Marches Enterprise Joint Committee

Meeting date:	19 March 2019
Title of report:	The Marches Local Enterprise Partnership Strategic Economic Plan
Report by:	Marches Local Enterprise Partnership Manager

Classification

Open

Decision type

Key

This is a key decision because it is likely to be significant having regard to: the strategic nature of the decision; and / or whether the outcome will have an impact, for better or worse, on the amenity of communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) area.

Notice has been served in accordance with Part 3, Section 9 (Publicity in Connection with Key Decisions) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

Purpose and summary

To approve the Marches LEP Strategic Economic Plan 2019 for publication.

The Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) sets out the vision and priorities of the Marches LEP and will guide future investment decisions. The SEP has been shaped by representatives from business, local government, education and training providers and other local partners. An updated evidence base underpins the plan, which builds on findings from previous reports into key growth sectors. It also reflects the economic growth strategies of each of the local authority partners.

The approved SEP will support the development of the Marches Local Industrial Strategy.

Recommendation(s)

THAT:

- (a) **the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership Strategic Economic Plan at Appendix 1 be approved; and**
- (b) **The LEP Director be authorised to make typographical and formatting changes to the document before publication.**

Alternative Options

1. Not to approve the Strategy. If the Strategy is not approved, the LEP will not have an agreed and updated Strategic Economic Plan to underpin its work and support the development of the Local Industrial Strategy as required by government.
2. The joint committee could identify additional or alternative priorities for the SEP. This is not recommended as the priorities set out in the draft plan at Appendix 1 are based on a comprehensive evidence base and build on previous reports including the economic growth strategies of each of the local authority partners in the LEP. The proposed priorities were subject to extensive consultation with all key stakeholders.

Key considerations

3. The first Marches LEP Strategic Economic Plan was developed in 2014. Following a competitive tendering process, the Marches LEP engaged Metro Dynamics in April 2018 to support the updating of its evidence base, to lead an engagement and consultation programme and to produce a new SEP.
4. The first SEP was used to secure £195m Growth Deal funding (2015–2021) for transport, broadband and skills projects. This has supported economic growth within the region including innovative projects such as the development of Shrewsbury Flaxmill, Newport Innovation & Enterprise, NMITE and the Hereford Cyber Security Centre.
5. The updated SEP (2019 – 2038) is based on a refreshed evidence base compiled by Metro Dynamics. This includes findings from reports into our key growth sectors of Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering, Defence and Cyber Security, Food Processing and Manufacturing, and Environmental Technologies, our Strategic Transport Corridors report, our Freight Strategy, our Energy Strategy report and the Economic Growth Strategies of each of our Local Authority partners. These have been reviewed against the backdrop of technological changes, the demographic trends that are driving the local and regional economy and the uncertainty surrounding the impact of Brexit. Throughout the summer and early autumn of 2018, a comprehensive programme of consultation was undertaken which included open events, led by the three Business Boards and key business representative organisations, facilitated group sessions, telephone interviews, and a widely promoted online consultation survey. Findings from all elements of the consultation have been included within the SEP.
6. The Marches LEP Board has led on the new strategic vision for the Marches to guide its priority activities and future investments. Members have contributed extensively to the SEP's development and refinement through facilitated discussions and review at the May, July and September 2018 board meetings, and by contributing to the drafting of different sections.
7. A presentation by Metro Dynamics and follow up discussion at the Marches LEP Board meeting on 29 January 2019 reflected on how the SEP had been developed and how it would be used to support a Marches Local Industrial Strategy (LIS). The LIS will be based on economic evidence as outlined in the SEP and will be aligned to the Government's National Industrial Strategy. It will set out plans to boost productivity and the creation of good quality jobs across the Marches through targeted investment that build on our strengths identified in the SEP.
8. The SEP, once approved, will be sent to key stakeholders, launched publicly and also made available on www.marcheslep.org.uk. The updated data set is already publicly available, and partners are encouraged to use it to support funding bids and economic growth initiatives.

Community impact

9. The SEP includes a new vision for the Marches LEP which clearly sets out the aspiration that the Marches is '*an inclusive place that enables residents from all communities to thrive and develop*'.
10. With this aspiration in mind, all proposed actions within the SEP are focused on housing, connectivity, economic growth, business and job creation and raising skills levels across the Marches LEP area. There is particular emphasis on the urban areas of Hereford, Shrewsbury and Telford but consideration is also given to how Market Towns can be supported in order to drive economic growth across communities. Opportunities associated with the Marches' environmental technologies sector have also been identified and these will be explored in more detail through the development of the Marches Local Industrial Strategy.

Equality duty

11. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to –

 - (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
12. The public-sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services.
13. Through our consultation process, we have considered how housing, connectivity, economic growth and job creation will support inclusive growth across the Marches area.
14. The equality implications of individual elements of the plan will be considered in more detail as they are taken forward and where decisions are required by the individual member councils to implement projects, the public sector equality duty will be considered during the approval process.

Resource implications

15. There are limited resource implications arising from this report. The budget for SEP development has been allocated as part of the LEP's operational budget. Additional funding to support the drafting, printing and publication of the final document has been secured from Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government within a successful application for capacity funding linked to the LEP Review.
16. Having a clearly articulated SEP will allow the Marches LEP to make the case to government for funding to support economic growth, it forms the foundation of our

Local Industrial Strategy and will be used to prioritise opportunities for funding under the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Legal implications

17. The joint committee must set, monitor and review the SEP because it contains objectives and priorities for strategic economic investment across the Marches LEP area.
18. As required, the SEP has been considered by the LEP board as detailed in the consultation section below.

Risk management

19. If the SEP is not agreed, the LEP will not be in the position to begin work on its Local Industrial Strategy which is a requirement of government.

Consultation

20. The LEP team, Metro Dynamics and partners have supported a wide range of consultation activities and stakeholder to underpin the SEP development. Details of individuals and organisations who contributed to the consultation process may be found at Appendix 1 of the SEP.
21. Earlier drafts of the SEP were presented to key partners for their feedback and comments. To note, this included the Shropshire Council Cabinet and Directors meeting on 9 July 2018, Telford & Wrekin officers on 23 July 2018 and the Herefordshire Council General Scrutiny Committee on 8 October 2018. Feedback from these sessions enabled the SEP to clearly reflect the economic growth priorities of the local authorities and to consider a consolidated approach to identifying support for market towns. The three Business Boards also supported the development of the SEP to ensure that it reflected the ambitions of our key employers and focussed on opportunities for business growth.
22. LEP Board members have contributed extensively to the SEP's development and refinement through facilitated discussions and review at the May, July and September 2018 and January 2019 board meetings, and by contributing to the drafting of different sections.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Marches Local Enterprise Partnership Strategic Economic Plan (also found at https://www.marcheslep.org.uk/download/economic_plans/strategic-economic-plan-update-2019/Draft-Strategic-Economic-Plan-2019.pdf)

Background paper

None identified