

<b>Marches Enterprise Joint Committee</b>	
<b>Meeting date:</b>	<b>24 July 2018</b>
<b>Title of report:</b>	<b>Annual Report of Activity</b>
<b>Report by:</b>	<b>Marches Local Enterprise Partnership Programme Manager</b>

## **Classification**

Open

## **Decision type**

This is not a key decision.

## **Purpose and summary**

To approve the annual report for the third year of activity (2017/18) of the Marches Joint Committee.

The Marches Enterprise Joint Committee (MEJC) is a formal joint committee established by Herefordshire Council, Shropshire Council and Telford and Wrekin Council. The MEJC provides democratic accountability for the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) decisions. The Terms of Reference of the MEJC require an annual report on the activities of the joint committee to be provided to the three partner councils.

Key areas of work in 2017-18 covered in this report include:

- approval of the Marches Investment Fund (MIF) allocations;
- Growth Deal 3 Single Local Growth Funding allocations;
- endorsement of the Marches and Mid Wales Freight Strategy;
- approval of the Marches LEPs Code of Conduct and Conflicts of Interest Policy; and
- approval of the national Register of Interests template, Confidential Reporting procedure and Whistleblowing policy.

## **Recommendation(s)**

**THAT the Joint Committee:**

- (a) Agree the content of the report which can be used in updating their respective Council's on the work of the Committee.**

## Alternative Options

Not to produce a report. This is not recommended because it is a function of this committee to produce an annual report on the activities of MEJC to the three partner councils.

## Key Considerations

1. The Marches Enterprise Joint Committee (MEJC), is a formal joint committee (established for the purposes of Part VI of the Local Government Act 1972 and Part 1, Chapter 2 of the Local Government Act 2000), formed in 2014 in preparation for the arrival of the first substantial public funds for the Marches LEP in April 2015.
2. The MEJC provides democratic accountability for the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) decisions having regard to the recommendations from the Marches LEP Board, ensuring decisions meet with government public finance and accountability requirements. Decisions of the Joint Committee are subject to scrutiny by the three council scrutiny committees, (Herefordshire Council General Scrutiny Committee, Shropshire Council Place Overview Scrutiny Committee and Telford and Wrekin Council Scrutiny Management Board.
3. Herefordshire Council provides administrative and governance support to the MEJC. Dates of meetings, agenda papers, reports and minutes are published in line with regulations on the Herefordshire Council website at <http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=873&Year=0> and linked to the websites of the other member councils.
4. The Terms of Reference of the Marches Enterprise Joint Committee Form Appendix 1 of this report. These Terms of Reference include the following Joint Committee responsibility:  
  
*“(To) Provide an annual report on the activities of MEJC to the three partner councils”*
5. Over the past 12 months, the MEJC has been required to meet on four occasions and has undertaken five key areas of work, approving the Marches LEP Board recommendations relating to:-
  - a) The approval of the Marches Investment Fund (MIF) allocation(s), including approving its use as an interest free Recyclable Grant for Public Sector Led Schemes. Historically allocating MIF funding had been difficult, therefore this course of action was deemed as the most effective in ensuring the funding was used to promote the delivery of growth and jobs. It was agreed that authority be delegated to the LEP Director (in consultation with the relevant council’s Section 151 officer) to determine the terms and conditions with each project promoter. Currently no MIF projects have been contracted with, however it is contracts will be completed for the Shell Store and Residential Opportunities Fund within this financial year, whilst other projects are under development.
  - b) The LEPs Growth Deal 3 Single Local Growth Funding allocations. Following the Marches LEPs Growth Deal 3 Submission, funding awarded by the Government was not sufficient to cover the agreed 5 projects. A paper was developed for MEJC providing a solution that was fair and equitable to all projects, whilst ensuring projects continued to deliver their approved outputs and outcomes, providing economic growth for the Marches area. The Marches LEP is currently contracting with each of the Growth Deal 3 projects.
  - c) Endorsement of the Marches and Mid Wales Freight Strategy. The Strategy was

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Further information on the subject of this report is available from  
Nicholas Alamanos, Marches LEP Programme Manager, 01743 462026

[nicholas.alamanos@marcheslep.org.uk](mailto:nicholas.alamanos@marcheslep.org.uk),

developed to take advantage of the opportunities and strengths emerging from the evidence base. This is being used to lobby for funding to take forward interventions and actions across the transport authorities in both Wales and England.

- d) The approval of the Marches LEPs Code of Conduct and Conflicts of Interest Policy. This policy was developed to ensure both stakeholders and members of the public understood how the LEP Secretariat, its Board Members and LEP sub-group Members manage declarations of interest and conflicts of interest.
  - e) The approval of national 'Register of Interests' template, 'Confidential Reporting' procedure and 'Whistleblowing' policy was based on examples set out within HM Government's 'Best Practice Guidance' paper (January 2018). The adoption and implementation of these documents formed part of a wider Government review on strengthening LEPs role in driving economic growth, ensuring a minimum standard of robust corporate governance was being met. These standards have become the basis which LEPs are monitored by Government, non-compliance may impact negatively on the LEP and any grant it receives.
6. The Joint Committee's Scheme of Delegation has been used once over the last 12-month period. Following a procurement process Metro Dynamics Limited were awarded £69,050 (excluding VAT) to review and refresh the Marches Strategic Economic Plan and develop the Marches Local Industrial Strategy. These two strategic documents will be key in the development of economic growth over the coming years.
7. The work of the MEJC continues. Over the course of the next 12-month period it is anticipated that the following planned areas of work will be undertaken:
- The endorsement of the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership Energy Strategy.
  - The updating of the Marches Strategic Economic Plan following consultation with partners.
  - The development of the Marches Local Industrial Strategy.
  - The implementation of recommendations following the national review of Local Enterprise Partnerships

## **Equality duty**

8. 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.

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9. 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. As this is a decision on back office functions, we do not believe that it will have an impact on our equality duty.

## **Resource implications**

10. There are no resource implications arising from this report.

## **Legal implications**

11. It is a function of this committee to provide an annual report on the activities of MEJC to the three partner councils. This report can be provided by the LEP Director to the three councils under the scheme of delegation.

## **Risk management**

12. There are no specific risks or impacts related to the content of this report.

## **Consultation**

13. None.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Marches Enterprise Joint Committee Terms of Reference

## **Background papers**

None identified