

Meeting:	General scrutiny committee
Meeting date:	Monday 7 December 2020
Title of report:	Marches Local Enterprise Partnership Update
Report by:	Head of Economic Development (the report has been written by the Marches LEP who will attend the scrutiny committee).

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose and summary

This report provides an update on the achievements of the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), its current priority activities and board membership.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- (a) Members receive an update from the Marches LEP**
- (b) Members note current priorities, including Covid 19 response, of the Marches LEP and projects directly benefitting Herefordshire.**

Alternative options

None. There are no alternative options. Scrutiny by local authority partners is actively sought by the Marches LEP and is built into its governance protocols.

Key considerations

The following annual update report has been drafted by the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership, who are due to attend the General Scrutiny meeting to provide an update and answer any questions.

Governance

1. The Marches LEP, one of 38 LEPs established in 2011, supports economic growth across Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin. It is a business led organisation and its vision is found at Appendix 1.
2. The LEP Board, chaired by Mandy Thorn MBE DL, includes the Leaders of the three local authorities of Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin as well as the chairs of Herefordshire Business Board, Shropshire Business Board and Telford Business Board. In addition to private sector members, recruited through open advertisement, the Chair of Hereford Enterprise Zone has a seat on the Board, recognising the importance of this project. The LEP Board is the LEP's ultimate decision-making authority and it comprises both public and private sector partners - a full breakdown of current LEP Board Members may be found at Appendix 2.
3. In response to government instructions, the Marches LEP became a company limited by guarantee in February 2019 and Board members have become directors of Marches Local Enterprise Partnership Limited (company 11822614).
4. The Marches LEP has a detailed Accountability and Assurance Framework (AAF) which may be found at <https://www.marcheslep.org.uk/download/transparency/Accountability-and-Assurance-Framework-2019-final.pdf>. This has been formally approved by the LEP's Government sponsors (the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG)) and it sets out the LEP's key practices and standards in decision making, financial management and accountability. This is an iterative document and is reviewed annually as a minimum by the Marches LEP and its Accountable Body. 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.
5. The AAF includes a number of key policies, including the Marches LEP Code of Conduct and Conflicts of Interest Policy (see Appendix 18 of the AAF) to ensure that there are clear and transparent protocols around decision making. To further support the LEP's governance, a new Director of Corporate Services post has been created and Ilia Bowes joined the LEP team in October 2020. She will be working with the Chief Executive, Gill Hamer, and the Board to review and update all aspects of the Marches LEP's AAF, including its articles of association.
6. Within the AAF, the LEP agreed with each local authority that it will attend its relevant scrutiny panels to provide an overview of key activities undertaken and progress made. The LEP last attended this General Scrutiny Committee in October 2019. In addition, the LEP also attended the Task and Finish Group - Climate Emergency session on 23 July 2020.
7. In line with Government requirements, the Marches LEP has developed an Annual Delivery Plan which sets out its workplan for financial year 2020/2021 and outlines its priority actions. A copy may be found here https://www.marcheslep.org.uk/download/transparency/Item-3-Appendix-1-MLEP-Delivery-Plan-2020-21_2.pdf.

8. Progress against the deliverables is reviewed regularly by the LEP team, Deputy Chair and Chair. Formal mid-year and end of year performance reviews are held with Government (Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG)) to review achievements, to consider examples of good practice and identify areas for improvement. To this end, a formal mid-year review was held on 28 September 2020.
9. 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. These include commissioning joint research, e.g. the Visitor Economy Strategy, Digital Strategy and Innovative Health Strategy to achieve economies of scale, responding collectively to national initiatives and consultations and attending MIPIM together to promote the Marches. In addition, through the Marches Growth Hub, the Marches LEP supports all three local authorities with the promotion of their business support services, enquiry handling and the maintenance of the website's support finder as a shared resource.

Current Priorities

10. The Marches LEP's current priorities include the delivery of strategically important capital infrastructure projects funded by Growth Deal and, more recently, the Getting Building Fund. These deliver a range of outputs, including job creation and apprenticeship opportunities. See Appendix 3 for details of these.
11. Significant investment in **NMITE** is underway to support phase 1 development of teaching facilities on Blackfriars Street and the phase 2 developments on Skylon Park. Here, the Centre for Advanced Timber Technology (CATT), the Centre for Automated Manufacturing (CAM) and the Centre for Future Skills (CFS) will be developed to enhance teaching and learning facilities to support the delivery of NMITE's Business Plan and the Marches LEP Growth Deal objectives.
12. Other significant investment on Skylon Park includes the **Cyber Quarter – Midlands Centre for Cyber Security** which is a joint venture between the University of Wolverhampton and Herefordshire Council, part-funded by the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The new Centre will offer high quality research facilities through the University's Cyber Security Research Institute, as well as providing office space for the cyber businesses and advanced training facilities. It is expected to create 185 jobs from the investment, along with a range of other economic and skills-based outcomes.
13. The **Shell Store** transformation into a modern incubation centre for Hereford is nearing completion. Funding for the scheme has come from ERDF and Herefordshire Council, plus a loan from the Marches LEP's Marches Investment Fund. It is anticipated that business occupants will have created more than 450 jobs by 2031.
14. The **Marches Growth Hub** www.marchesgrowthhub.co.uk/ provides advice and guidance to new and existing businesses is also an important Marches LEP initiative. It acts as a gateway to business support services delivered by partners across the Marches and has a comprehensive events calendar www.marchesgrowthhub.co.uk/calendar/. Additional government funding to provide business adviser support related to the end of the EU transition period is currently anticipated.
15. The **Marches LEP's Skills Advisory Panel (SAP)** has developed a detailed evidence base to understand the skills needs of its local economy and labour market. The SAP, which includes representation from Herefordshire Council, Herefordshire Business Board and local training

providers, is currently gathering evidence of where this has been used to develop and design new skills programmes, e.g. the Energy Training Centre in Hereford, see Appendix 3, demonstrates a new initiative which reflects the aspiration of the Marches to create new jobs within the environmental technologies sector.

16. A further key activity stream is the implementation of the **Marches LEP's Energy Strategy**. Herefordshire Council is represented at Steering Group level and is supporting work to encourage the take up of grant funding available to businesses across Herefordshire, including the Marches Renewable Energy (MarRE) grant schemes, the Rural Community Energy Fund (RCEF), Business Energy Efficiency Scheme (BEEP) and Sustainable Energy in Public Buildings (SePuBu). The Energy Strategy Steering Group is also striving to attract more 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.
17. 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 Herefordshire and sets out the area's unique strengths in response to the national industrial strategy. Further guidance is awaited from government 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
 - excellence in cyber security and resilience.
18. A breakdown of Marches LEP projects that have directly benefited Herefordshire, including support for skills, broadband and infrastructure programmes, is found at Appendix 3.

Covid 19 Response

19. The Marches LEP has played a leadership role, co-ordinating key stakeholders across the Marches, during the initial Covid-19 lockdown and subsequent economic downturn. 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.
20. The Marches LEP convened an Economic Impact Group comprising sector representatives, business representation organisations including the Chambers of Commerce, the Federation of Small Businesses and the National Farmers Union, to gather information on business conditions to share with senior civil servants, Ministers and local MPs. This enabled a very clear articulation of the issues being faced by Marches businesses and ensured that the rural economy was clearly represented in understanding the economic impact of the Covid-19 outbreak. This was supported through a LEP survey which gathered information directly from businesses to inform feedback on the impact of government interventions. The LEP has also ensured that local representatives have participated in a series of Ministerial roundtables with BEIS ministers.
21. This Economic Impact Group last met (virtually) at the Marches Economic Recovery Summit on 15 October 2020 as part of the LEP's Business Recovery Week. Discussions here reflected on current economic conditions and highlighted actions required to support economic recovery. These will be incorporated into a Marches-wide economic recovery plan developed in partnership with all local partners including Herefordshire Council which will enable cross-local

authority area working on common areas of interest including skills, business support, digital infrastructure and support to market towns.

22. In addition, the Marches LEP approved a business case submitted by Herefordshire Council, in partnership with Herefordshire Business Board, in May 2020 to award an allocation of £444,220 to support the visitor economy sector. This was in recognition that the sector has been significantly impacted this year, firstly by flooding and then by Covid-19. This project supports the soonest possible recovery of the visitor economy sector through a marketing and PR campaign, promoting Herefordshire as a great place for day and overnight staycation visits.
23. The impact of Covid-19 has seen an increase in unemployment across the Marches. Members of the SAP are working with partners to promote the Kickstart programme and to signpost to apprenticeship opportunities with local employers, including those being created under LEP funded projects.

Community impact

24. The SEP includes a 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*'.
25. With this aspiration in mind, all proposed interventions within the SEP and actions outlined in the Annual Delivery Plan 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 and rural areas can be championed in order to support their communities.
26. The SEP and the wider work of the Marches LEP will support the delivery of the Herefordshire Council Corporate Plan through the achievement of the priority to "*Support the growth of our economy*", specifically by '*supporting economic growth and connectivity (including broadband, local infrastructure, transport and economic development)*'.
27. The LEP's performance management framework considers a basket of measures to assess impact, including quality of life indicators.
28. Local social and economic benefits are considered within procurement scoring to increase the local impact of LEP revenue expenditure.
29. Capital projects are scored in line with the LEP's AAF and are considered following formal sign-off by their project promoter, e.g. local authority, in line with their own internal assessment processes.
30. As part of the 2020 Local Growth Fund Open Project Call process, applicants had to answer the following questions when completing their Business Case submissions:
 - How will this project provide Social Value and build on local knowledge and understanding within the local area?
 - How does the project maximise positive environmental impacts or mitigate potential negative impacts?
31. These responses were reviewed and scored by an Independent Technical Evaluator procured by the LEP for impartiality. These scores fed into an overall matrix from which the LEP Board approved projects.

Environmental Impact

32. The Marches LEP is continuing to support its Local Authority partners in reaching their respective Climate Emergency Goals. Examples of this include direct support to Herefordshire Council from the Senior Energy Projects Officer, the submission of proposals to Government which address energy and fuel poverty, the implementation of the Marches Energy Strategy and the proposed clean growth strategy which underpins the Marches Local Industrial Strategy.
33. Project proposals put forward to the Marches LEP are only considered for funding once they have been formally approved through the project promoter's governance process. They are then scored in accordance with the LEP's AAF. As detailed earlier recent project calls have asked project promoters to consider how projects can maximise positive environmental impacts or mitigate potential negative impacts.
34. As part of the AAF review process, consideration will be given to increasing the importance of social, community and environmental gains within the LEP's decision making and project appraisal protocols.
35. The Marches Growth Hub encourages businesses to access funding and advice to support them in using green technologies and the Marches LEP, through the Midlands Engine Energy Hub, will bid for elements of the £3 billion green investment package announced as part of the covid-19 recovery package in order to bring additional resources to the area.

Equality duty

36. 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 –
 - eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
 - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
37. 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.
38. The Marches LEP's vision clearly sets out the aspiration that the Marches is '*an inclusive place that enables residents from all communities to thrive and develop*'. This demonstrates that it supports the council in discharging its Equality duty.

Resource implications

39. There are no new financial implications for Herefordshire Council. Work is undertaken within Marches LEP resources – this includes a cash contribution from Herefordshire Council (£23,240 in 2020/21) and an in-kind contribution of £167,000 (the costs of staff employed on the Hereford Enterprise Zone) which enable the drawdown of BEIS/MHCLG core funding for the LEP.

40. The Marches LEP is continuing to make the case to government for funding to support economic recovery and to increase understanding of the area's economic priorities.
41. An overview of projects directly benefitting Herefordshire and their financial value is attached at Appendix 3.
42. The LEP is currently in dispute with Herefordshire Council in respect of the funding agreement for the South Wye Transport Package project. The Funding Agreement was for £27m of Local Growth Funds and £3.8m of this had been paid out for the project to date. In January 2020 the LEP Board considered the project and took the decision to instruct Shropshire Council, as the Accountable Body for the LEP (and the legal party to the agreement), to serve notice under the funding agreement to terminate it with immediate effect and require Herefordshire Council to repay the total sum of the grant paid due to the unsatisfactory progress toward delivery and completion of the project and the fact that the £27m awarded would not be spent by 31 March 2021 as required. The Accountable Body on behalf of the LEP is engaging in appropriate pre-action correspondence with Herefordshire Council to try to resolve the matter. This matter has been included on the LEP's risk register.
43. It should be noted that the council strongly disputes the basis for the termination and clawback, believing that the Funding Agreement has been wrongfully terminated and is seeking to counter claim for monies owed.

Legal implications

44. The Marches LEP is a company limited by guarantee and its Articles of Association set out its membership, obligations, decision making processes.

Risk management

45. Performance against the Annual Delivery Plan is formally reviewed by government. A performance rating is awarded to each LEP and the process provides an opportunity to highlight examples of good practice to share across the LEP network. The process also enables the identification of areas for improvement. The Marches LEP has achieved positive feedback on all aspects of its delivery; strategy, governance and delivery, and, in response to government feedback is developing a plan to improve diversity through Board and sub-group membership.
46. In addition, the LEP has been asked to align the terms of reference of the Business Boards (tenure, etc.) to the main LEP Board in a way they can retain their independence but demonstrate clear governance. This is currently being undertaken.
47. The 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.
48. Financial risk to Herefordshire Council and other local authority partners is limited through the use of Shropshire Council as the LEP's accountable body and the LEP maintaining adequate reserves to meet all anticipated financial liabilities.
49. The Marches LEP, through the LEP Network, is lobbying for a longer-term financial settlement. The current public funding round (Growth Deal and funding from EU schemes) is coming to an

end and there is currently no sight of future programmes. This potential gap in funding, coupled with the impact of Covid on the local economy, poses a significant risk to economic recovery.

50. The impact of Covid 19 is a significant risk to the Marches economy. As referenced above (para 19) the LEP have worked with business leaders to understand the impacts of Covid 19 on the economy, has secured additional Get Building funding, and has provided additional support through the local authorities.

Consultees

51. The Marches LEP consults regularly with public and private sector partners to inform its work programme. Specific consultation is undertaken as required to support different work streams, e.g. consultation throughout the Business Recovery Week held w/c 12 October 2020 is being used to inform the development of an economic recovery plan for submission to government.

Appendices

Appendix 1 (below) - Marches LEP Vision

Appendix 2 (below) - LEP Board Membership

Appendix 3 (below) - Marches LEP Investment in Herefordshire Infrastructure, Skills and Innovation

Appendix 4 – slides to be presented at the General Scrutiny Meeting

Background papers

Marches LEP Strategic Economic Plan 2019

https://www.marcheslep.org.uk/download/economic_plans/strategic-economic-plan-update-2019/The-Marches-LEP-Strategic-Economic-Plan-2019.pdf.

Marches LEP Delivery Plan 2020 – 2021

https://www.marcheslep.org.uk/download/transparency/Item-3-Appendix-1-MLEP-Delivery-Plan-2020-21_2.pdf

Glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.

AAF - Accountability and Assurance Framework

BEEP - Business Energy Efficiency Scheme

BEIS - Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy

CAM - Centre for Automated Manufacturing

CATT - Centre for Advanced Timber Technology

CEC - Careers & Enterprise Company

CFS - Centre for Future Skills

DEFRA - Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs

DfT - Department for Transport
DWP - Department for Work & Pensions
ERDF - European Regional Development Fund
ESF - European Social Fund
ESFA - Education and Skills Funding Agency
ESIF - European Structural and Investment Fund
EU - European Union
FEI - Further Education Institution
GBF - Getting Building Fund
GVA - Gross value added (productivity measure)
HEI - Higher Education Institution
HETAS - Heating Equipment Testing & Approval Scheme
HEZ - Hereford Enterprise Zone
HGTA - Herefordshire Group Training Association
LAG - Local Action Group
LEP - Local Enterprise Partnership
LGF - Local Growth Fund
LIS - Local Industrial Strategy
MarRE - Marches Renewable Energy Efficiency Scheme
MCCS - Midlands Centre for Cyber Security
MHCLG - Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government
MIF - Marches Investment Fund
NMITE - New Model in Technology and Engineering
OFTEC – Oil Firing Technical Association
RDPE - Rural Development Programme England
SAP - Skills Advisory Panel
SEP - Strategic Economic Plan
SePuBu - Sustainable Energy in Public Buildings
SLR - Southern Link Road
SME - Small or Medium sized Enterprise

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 October 2020

Marches LEP Board Members		
Sector	Name	Job Title and Organisation
Private Sector Chair	Mandy Thorn MBE DL	Chair, Marches Care Ltd
Community & Voluntary Sector	Sonia Roberts ¹	Chief Executive, Landau and Deputy Chair of LEP Board
Area Business Board Chairs	Frank Myers MBE	Chair of Herefordshire Business Board
	Paul Bennett	Chair of Shropshire Business Board
	Paul Hinkins ²	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/Agri Tech	Christine Snell	Business Partner, AJ & CI Snell
Financial/Professional Services	Paul Kalinauckas	Retired Chief Executive, BCRS Business Loans Ltd
Skills & Workforce Development	James Staniforth	Principal and CEO, Shrewsbury Colleges Group & Chair of Skills Advisory Panel
Construction	Ruth Shepherd	Founding Director, Results Communications Ltd
Manufacturing	Sara Williams	Marketing Manager, Protolabs
Local Authority Leaders	Cllr David Hitchiner (Alternate - Cllr Ellie Chowns)	Leader of Herefordshire Council
	Cllr Peter Nutting (Alternate - Cllr Steve Charmley)	Leader of Shropshire Council
	Cllr Shaun Davies (Alternate - Cllr David Wright)	Leader of Telford & Wrekin Council

¹ Sonia Roberts acts as the Marches LEP Diversity Champion

² Paul Hinkins acts as the Marches LEP SME Champion

Appendix 3 – Marches LEP Investment in Herefordshire Infrastructure, Skills and Innovation (since April 2015)

Local Growth Deal 1, 2 and 3 (LGF), Getting Building Funds (GBF) and Marches Investment Funds

Hereford City Centre Transport Package	£16m
Broadband (Fastershire)	£1.674m
NMITE Phase 1 and 2	£8.4m
Cyber Quarter – Midlands Centre for Cyber Security (Hereford)	£3m
Hereford Enterprise Zone Infrastructure	£5.432m
Hereford City Centre Improvement	£3m
Integrated Construction Wetlands	£1m
Skylon Park Campus Development (NMITE)	£1.6m
Herefordshire Group Training	£83.2k
Herefordshire and Ludlow College	£197.4k
Herefordshire and Ludlow College & HGTA Joint project	£464.7k
Energy Training Centre	£129k
Shell Store	£2.49m
Covid-19 visitor economy sector support	£444k
Total funding awarded to Herefordshire	£43,914,520

Growth Deal 1, 2 and 3 – Capital Infrastructure Projects Overview (including Getting Building Fund 2020 and investment made in the Hereford Enterprise Zone)

Growth Deal 1:

Hereford City Centre Transport Package

Investment through Local Growth Fund (LGF) is enabling the development of a new link road between the A465 and A49, an integrated transport hub at Hereford Railway Station, public realm improvements on key routes into the city centre and new and improved cycling infrastructure.

The aim of the project is to improve the provision of housing in the County, providing a more sustainable and pedestrian friendly city centre and supporting the delivery of long-term economic benefits and sustainable growth for Herefordshire. The project has so far delivered 803 jobs and 107 homes. Over the lifetime of the project it will deliver 800 homes, along with other economic outcomes for the city.

Growth Deal 2:

Broadband Fastershire

Fastershire is bringing faster broadband to the county of Herefordshire, through the project over 92% of Herefordshire properties have access to 30mbps or greater service, with the second phase aiming to achieve up to 97% coverage.

The Fastershire project has helped 35,000 premises across Herefordshire access superfast broadband.

Growth Deal 3:

NMITE (Growth Deal 3)

£8.4m of LGF funding has been awarded for the delivery of NMiTE: a new independent, not for profit, world-class teaching institution which will address the shortage of skilled graduate engineers in the Marches and British businesses in advanced manufacturing, agri-engineering, data, defence, resources security, and sustainable/smart living technology sectors.

Phase 1 (£2.7m) – Following NMiTE securing a 50-year lease from the Department for Education on the former Robert Owen School building on Blackfriars Street in Hereford, the LEP have now awarded £2.7m to the project. The funding will allow the buildings to be improved, adapted and equipped to provide 3205m² of teaching and learning space at the Blackfriars site and will also allow 270 learners to be taught on the site, 37 jobs to be created and 75 companies to be supported by March 2022. The LEP grant is due to lever £3,133,750 of private sector match and generate £6.48m of GVA into the local economy.

Phase 2 (£5.7m) – NMiTE Phase 2 focuses on the North Magazine Development, comprising the Centre for Advanced Timber Technology (CATT), the Centre for Automated Manufacture (CAM) and the Centre for Future Skills (CFS). These three buildings are core teaching and learning facilities to support the delivery of NMiTE's Business Plan and the original Marches LEP Growth Deal objectives. The project will lever £7.7m of private sector match, deliver 195 jobs, 810 new learners and 750 undergraduates for the investment and will generate £27.52m GVA.

Cyber Quarter – Midlands Centre for Cyber Security (Hereford)

The trail-blazing Cyber Centre is a joint venture between the University of Wolverhampton and Herefordshire Council, part-funded by the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

The new Centre will offer high quality research facilities through the University's Cyber Security Research Institute, as well as providing office space for the cyber businesses and advanced training facilities designed specifically to tackle threats in cyberspace. The new Centre will organise, facilitate and support the development of cyber security on a global scale whilst at the same time present opportunities to develop high quality academic, vocational educational and training programmes to address the digital skills shortage being experienced nationally. It will provide innovation workspace for small and start-up businesses to operate from, offering consultancy support from the University and shared facilities including laboratory space and training rooms. It will offer a range of specialist facilities for the cyber sector including server space and high-speed broadband as well as research and development laboratory space. The new Centre will stimulate an enhanced base of businesses engaged in cyber security solutions which will improve insight for businesses on the challenge faced in the future and drive up levels of innovation activity across the Marches. The project is expected to complete in 2025 and, as a

result of LGF, the centre is expected to create 185 jobs from the investment, along with a range of other economic and skills-based outcomes.

The Government also awarded funding to Worcestershire, the Marches, Gloucestershire and Swindon and Wiltshire LEPs to undertake a Science and Innovation Audit to develop and understand better their asset base to evolve and grow this sector. This study is being used to inform cyber-related activity.

Hereford Enterprise Zone Infrastructure

Hereford Enterprise Zone Infrastructure is an £8.491m project which includes £5.432m of Local Growth Funds. It will include substantial infrastructure interventions at the Hereford Enterprise Zone to encourage business investment, occupancy and jobs. The range of works will open up 10 hectares on the North Magazine site and help to prepare new plots for development. The work will be carried out alongside the design and implementation of a number of Active Travel Measures and the purchase of an electric bus to encourage sustainable travel to and from the Zone. The Growth Deal investment will support infrastructure works including landscaping, installation of utilities and road access to open up a further seven hectares of employment land on the North Magazine, creating 500 new full-time jobs. The 110-acre development has already attracted significant private sector investment with 38 companies occupying new premises in the Zone.

Getting Building Fund

The Government has made £900m available through the new Getting Building Fund (GBF) for investment in local, shovel-ready infrastructure projects to stimulate jobs and support economic recovery across the country. The Marches LEP has secured £14m from the GBF for a wide-ranging package of projects that will deliver a boost to the local economy.

Hereford City Centre Improvement

A £6m project which includes £3m of GBF. The refurbishment of the historic core of Hereford through investment in the streetscape with high quality materials and consistent soft and hard landscaping. This scheme will increase footfall and the economic potential of businesses, improve active travel opportunities and air quality and increase private investment in property, providing a modern city centre environment. The project will bring benefits to the public realm in the historic core of the city centre, including the High Town area and the adjoining Cathedral and River Wye Quarter with improvements to paving, street furniture, landscaping and street trees and public art. The project will create 90 new jobs and an additional 100 construction jobs.

Integrated Construction Wetlands

A £3m project which includes £1m GBF, this project takes forward development of new integrated wetland sites which will function as tertiary wastewater treatment works, addressing the failing levels of phosphate in the River Lugg catchment area of the Special Area of Conservation. This will unlock a high number of current planning applications which are on hold, preventing significant economic activity, jobs and growth in Herefordshire. This project also delivers strong environmental benefits, enhancing local biodiversity. The project will see the construction of up to eight integrated wetlands to provide natural filtration downstream of existing wastewater treatment works to significantly improve the water quality as well as bringing major environmental improvements. The project will create 500 new jobs and enable the development of 1,385 houses currently on hold once the moratorium is lifted.

Skylon Park Campus Development (NMITE)

Skylon Park Campus Development is a pivotal component of NMITE, comprising three cutting edge, world-class buildings and teaching facilities: the Centre for Advanced Timber Technology (CATT), the Centre for Automated Manufacturing (CAM) and the Centre for Future Skills (CFS). NMITE has already received £5.7million from the LEP's Growth Programme in June 2020 and has now secured a further £1.6m from the Getting Building fund as part of a £12.137m project to accelerate completion of the build programme for the Centre for Automated Manufacturing. The project had also previously received another £2.3m for its Blackfriars Campus in the city centre as part of Phase 1.

The project will accelerate the creation of 26 new jobs, 100 construction jobs, 2,500m² of new learning space and assist 200 new learners with short courses, under and post-graduate courses and degree apprenticeships. The CAM will boost manufacturing output and digital connectivity through its work with partners and businesses, enhancing automation capability through skills, training and applied research.

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, e.g. advanced manufacturing and engineering courses, and improving the providers' IT infrastructure to support digital skills development. Growth Deal funding will result in additional and improved apprenticeship provision and increased vocational training opportunities for post-16 students and the local workforce.

Growth Deal 1 Skills Capital

Herefordshire Group Training

A £166k project, including Growth Deal funds of £83,267, the project is to transform the Centre of Vocational Excellence for Engineering in Hereford by acquiring more appropriate and up to date engineering equipment. The project has enabled increased provision of advanced apprenticeships and mature workforce qualifications in skills shortages of engineering. By 2021, this project aims to deliver 91 apprenticeships, 637 additional qualifications and to support an additional 40 businesses.

To the end of Q4 2019/20 the project had delivered 67 apprenticeships and 613 additional qualifications. On-going monitoring is taking place to record and report outputs to Government.

Herefordshire and Ludlow College

A £394k project, including £197.4k Growth Deal funding, the project has enabled the college to fit out the new land based and vehicle engineering workshop at the Holme Lacy Campus. The project included increased facilities for welding and fabrication, modern computer linked engineering equipment and agricultural machinery for teaching purposes and will deliver 40 apprentices and develop a higher engineering course by 2021.

To the end of Q4 2019/20, 154 apprenticeships and 894 additional qualifications had been delivered.

Herefordshire and Ludlow College and HGTA Joint project

A £663k project, including £464,763 Growth Deal funding, the project has developed a centre for excellence for engineering and manufacturing in Herefordshire which is led by two partners, Herefordshire & Ludlow College and Herefordshire Group Training Association. The project provides an environment that will help local industries move to higher skilled automated processes by increasing the ability to offer in-service training. The project will recruit 260 additional apprentices, deliver 300 additional qualifications and will support 225 businesses by March 2021.

To the end of Q4 2019/20, 144 apprenticeships and 666 additional qualifications had been delivered. On-going monitoring is taking place to record and report outputs to Government.

Growth Deal 3 Skills Capital

Energy Training Centre

A £129k project including £70k Growth Deal funding to create a training centre at the Hereford campus focusing on energy production, installation and servicing technologies, with an emphasis on low carbon and renewable energy sources. The investment will create the necessary physical workshop and training space within the existing Construction Centre and enable the expansion of the construction curriculum offer to incorporate Gas training & assessment, Oil training and assessment (OFTEC), renewables (Solar Voltaic, Solar Thermal, Ground Source Heat Pump etc), and potentially a HETAS training centre (for solid fuel/Biomass heating appliances). The project will deliver 38 apprenticeships, 278 qualifications at level 3 and 4 and create 174m² of new training floorspace.

Other Marches LEP Projects

Hereford Enterprise Zone

The Hereford Enterprise Zone (HEZ) was designated as the Enterprise Zone for the Marches LEP in 2011. Herefordshire Council is the principal landowner and is investing in the necessary infrastructure to open up the site and make plots ready for sale and development.

The 110-acre zone at Rotherwas, designated eight years ago as the enterprise zone for the Marches LEP region, is home to 43 businesses employing 819 people with another 1,281 jobs expected to be generated by those companies as they grow.

More than 54 acres of land has been sold or is committed to development, with 61,000m² of workplace already constructed or in the pipeline as the result of a total investment to date in land and buildings of over £44m. As part of the HEZ Deal Herefordshire Council provides £100,000 from Business rate uplift towards the LEP Team Costs.

Developments on Skylon Park made great strides in 2019/2020 as two of Hereford Enterprise Zone's biggest investments to date came to fruition. Both the £7.3m transformation of the historic Shell Store and the building of the £9 Cyber Quarter – Midlands Centre for Cyber Security are nearing completion.

Marches Investment Fund (MIF)

Shell Store

There has been an ambitious transformation of a former munitions store on Skylon Park into a 2,500m² flagship business incubation centre for Hereford. The former derelict Shell Store is now a modern, open plan space offering office and conference facilities built within the existing steel frame of the original building. Funding for the scheme has come from the ERDF and Herefordshire Council as well as a loan from the Marches LEP's Marches Investment Fund and anticipated business occupants will have created more than 450 jobs by 2031.

Support for strategic tourism and business initiatives affected by the impact of the floods and COVID-19 virus

The Marches LEP approved a business case submitted by Herefordshire Council, in partnership with Herefordshire Business Board, in May 2020 to award an allocation of £444,220 to support the visitor economy sector. This sector has been impacted by flooding and then by the Covid-19 lockdown. This project will support the soonest possible recovery of the visitor economy through a marketing and PR campaign, promoting Herefordshire as a great place for day and overnight staycation visits in the summer and autumn 2020.

Marches Growth Hub - Business Support

Since April 2015, £1.3m 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 Herefordshire.

The Marches Growth Hub provides access to advice and business support for pre-start, start up and growing businesses, including specialist support services funded through EU programmes. The Marches LEP funding, from BEIS, also contributes towards the cost of the Marches Growth Hub – Herefordshire team which co-ordinates, promotes and delivers a programme of events and provides business adviser support (currently virtually) across Herefordshire.

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 now in place for each of 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 is matched by each of the three local authorities. Herefordshire Enterprise Co-ordinator, Karen Banks, is employed through Herefordshire Council.

In 20/21, additional funding has been secured by the Marches LEP to strengthen support for schools and colleges and increase business engagement through the development of a Careers Hub.

Key Account Management

The LEP has secured funding to support engagement with, and account management of, foreign-owned companies across the Marches. Within Herefordshire, this Department of International Trade (DIT) funded programme is managed by the [Invest Herefordshire](#) team to increase resources available for engagement with foreign owned businesses and encourage their expansion and investment plans.