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Accelerating Growth through Opportunity Draft Strategic Economic Plan 2014 -2020

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Foreword from the Chair of the Marches LEP

The Marches provides an outstanding business environment. With a strong, loyal and proactive private sector, an excellent history of delivering new housing, jobs and businesses, and superb schools and housing stock, the Marches offers both employers and staff the best of work and home life.

Businesses in the Marches are passionate about what they do and where they are based. A rich mix in typology and scale of SMEs provides all the vital ingredients to sustain a productive local economy. These interplay with some of the country's most recognised business brands, including Muller, Bulmer's and BAE Systems, to create a diverse economy and business offer in the Marches.

This Strategic Economic Plan not only demonstrates our vision for the future of the Marches, but describes how, with a dedicated business base and strong public and community sector, we have the opportunity to deliver this sustainable growth now.

We are seeking new arrangements with government for the creation of an Investment Fund, which sees the capital receipts achieved through accelerating development, reinvested back into the area to enable more sites to come forward. By creating the financial mechanisms, freedoms and flexibilities to control this single pot, the Marches will accelerate growth.

The Marches is brimming with opportunity. We have planning approvals able to deliver thousands of homes quickly, and we have private sector partners ready to invest. With the right interventions we can build on our excellent track record for delivering growth, to be one of the most successful LEPs in delivering housing, jobs and businesses now and in the future.

Alongside our proposals for a Marches Local Growth Deal, working in partnership with Government, this Plan sets out our priorities in addressing areas of business need. These range from infrastructure including transport and broadband, education and skills investment and access to small business finance. These will all assist in supporting our rural areas, Opportunity Towns and Urban Powerhouses to maximise the opportunities to promote economic growth and achieve the ambitions of our businesses and communities.

This Plan sets out our aspirations. All can be achieved by working in effective partnership with government and our local private, public and third sector partners.



Graham Wynn OBE

Chairman

Marches LEP

1 The Marches

The Marches means business. It has a strong, diverse and enterprising business base, operating in an exceptional and connected environment, where the transfer of technology and skills foster innovation, investment and economic growth.

The Marches can deliver. It has provided new homes and new jobs in recent years and new businesses are choosing to start operating here. The Marches is ready to deliver immediately; in 2014 it can create new jobs through new housing and new employment sites; and will diversify its business base by offering new business the support it needs to succeed.

The Marches is distinctive. It has a business base as rich and diverse as its landscape and a strong spirit of enterprise and opportunity that is matched by an outstanding quality of life offer.

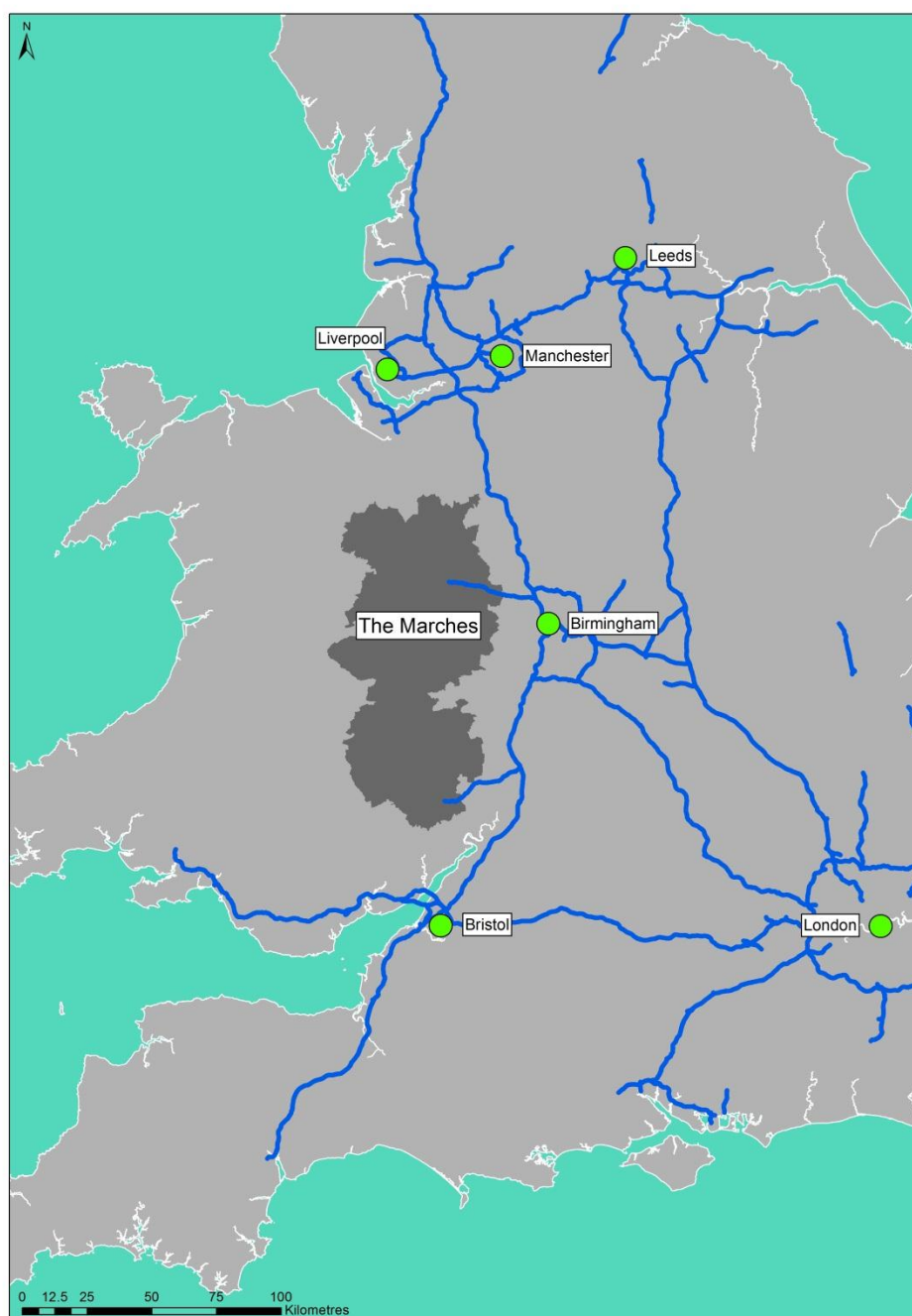
The Marches is a relatively untapped market of business opportunity. There is a wealth of small independent retailers, niche market entrepreneurs and artisan business enterprises that bring an added dimension to the larger employer base and provide an aspect to working life that is distinctive from other areas of the country. This has brought resilience during the recent recession.

The Marches has industry and creativity at its heart. It is the global birthplace of industry, part of a heritage which has ignited an engine room of innovative hi-tech enterprises, operating alongside land-based industries and entrepreneurs flourishing alongside global players.

The Marches is ripe for investment. Encompassing Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin, it is home to more than 660,000 people and 27,095 businesses and currently contributes £10 billion to the UK economy.

The Marches is ambitious. Having delivered large numbers of homes, far exceeding many places across the country, the Marches is ready to deliver new communities and new jobs.

Marches Location Plan



2 A Context for Growth

This Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) will demonstrate that with the right interventions the Marches will continue to be a place which breeds success and through accelerated growth will see the introduction of nearly 40,000 new jobs and over 72,000 new homes.

The Marches is going to do this by capitalising on its strong housing deliverability and employment land allocations. This plan will not only deliver on the new jobs and new homes, but will save the exchequer £30m per annum by getting those who are young and unemployed into jobs. It will also create millions of pounds from capital receipts by advancing its development potential.

The logic for this plan, as shown in figure 1 over the page, has been to understand and capitalise on the Marches strengths: its high performing SME community; its expanding social enterprises and voluntary sector; centres of excellence such as the world renowned agricultural institution at Harper Adams University and its strong agricultural sectors; its large employers who are loyal to the area; and its good housing stock with thousands of units approved at planning stage and shovel ready schemes poised to deliver new communities and enable existing rural and urban communities to thrive. The Marches will use its strong and sustainable communities as springboards for its growth.

This plan will explain the process to achieve accelerated growth and how the Marches has the capability to deliver houses and employment at speed with a dedicated Investment Fund. The fund will allocate resources to areas where small interventions will release development opportunity. Capital receipts will be recycled back into the fund to enable the Marches to 'move onto the next scheme'.

The outcome will be the creation of housing development and new employment sites to create new jobs, synergised with other funding sources to provide focussed business support packages and training programmes to enable new businesses to thrive in the Marches.

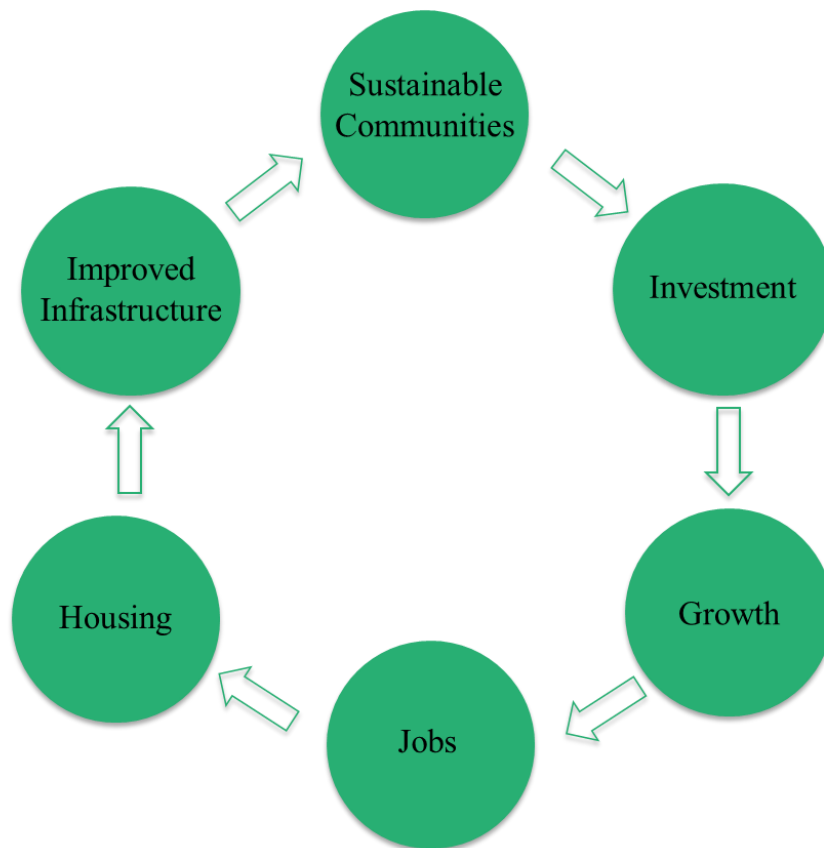


Figure 1: logic chain

2.1 Our Vision & Our Area

The vision for the Marches is a strong, diverse and enterprising business base, operating in an exceptional and connected environment, where the transfer of technology and skills foster innovation, investment and economic growth. This is an area which will accelerate growth through 2014 and beyond delivering high levels of housing development, new enterprise areas and strategic employment sites for new and expanding businesses.

The Marches is a distinctive area. At its heart is the global birthplace of industry, part of a heritage which has sparked a revolution of a different kind with innovative hi-tech enterprises, land-based industries and entrepreneurs flourishing alongside global players. Ideas which changed the world were born in the Marches: the Industrial Revolution in the Ironbridge Gorge; the first modern skyscraper, the Flaxmill in Shrewsbury; the modern Olympic movement in Much Wenlock; the Mappa Mundi in Hereford and Darwin's Theory of Evolution.

These big ideas are evidence of the Marches' pioneering industrial heritage and its entrepreneurial spirit. It has demonstrated its ability to change and adapt to emerging technology and innovation, without losing sight of its rural advantage and the quality of life this offers.

The Marches is geographically one of the largest LEPs in the country, covering 2,300 square miles. It includes the main Urban Powerhouses and designated Enterprise Areas of Telford, Shrewsbury and Hereford and some very rural places supported by a range of Opportunity Towns.

This rich mix of urban and rural, of small businesses and major employers - including international conglomerates - across a substantial geography, provide both challenges and opportunities in the Marches. A SWOT analysis of the Marches economy is included in Appendix A.

The housing, jobs and GDP growth opportunities in the Marches have striking potential, with housing targets in parts of the region being met and strong sector opportunities in industries such as defence, food and automotive manufacturing. This SEP sets about detailing how the opportunities can be brought to fruition.

The economy in the Marches has remained relatively stable through the economic downturn and the acknowledgement that the area has a buoyant and thriving SME community has played an important role in the way in which the area has navigated the recession.

Nevertheless, there are a number of interventions necessary to strengthen the economy, creating new jobs and opportunities for the area to increase GDP and local economic spend. Our proposal is to accelerate growth by investment in housing development and employment sites. The Marches has a track record in delivery. It strives to meet the needs of its local businesses and residents offering a strong and loyal community and a passion for its local businesses which is impossible to replicate. Businesses start in the Marches and they stay here. There are plentiful examples of companies who are committed to the Marches for the long term as it provides the business environment and quality of life they need.

The Marches LEP has five strategic priorities as shown in the table over the page. These five priorities have the potential to create significant numbers of jobs and growth. In addition, attention will also be paid to strengthening sectors such as the defence industry, advanced manufacturing, automotive manufacturing, food and drink and agri-technology especially in the Marches Enterprise Zone and Enterprise Areas.

The Marches LEP Strategic Priorities

Supporting Business	We will create an exceptional business support environment for aspiring growth businesses through, access to finance and incentives to innovate. We will promote the Marches as a business investment location.
Physical Infrastructure	We will provide a compelling business investment offer with a progressive planning framework and infrastructure fit for tomorrow's business needs.
Skills Investment	We will support employers to develop themselves and their workforce and to provide employment opportunities for young people.
Low Carbon Economy	We will drive the transition to a high value, low carbon economy, maximising the opportunity in new technologies, reducing environmental costs to business and recognising our environment as an economic asset.
Social Inclusion	We will support socially excluded and marginalised groups by removing barriers to their participation in activities that will improve their economic well-being.

The SME community will be a strong partner in this vision. It has shown a keen interest in introducing new jobs to the Marches. A recent survey of businesses in the Marches indicated that half would be prepared to take on a new employee; even if they need to be trained. If just half of the businesses employing between 10 – 49 people created a full time place, the Marches would see around 1,456 new jobs introduced, which could see a return of over £6m per annum to the exchequer in new taxes.

The LEP is combining the power of its SME community with its major employers. Big business is also vital to the success of the Marches economy. The LEP will work with them to put success and expansion at their core. New jobs have recently been introduced into the area by big businesses including BAE Systems (who are creating 25% more jobs at their plant), Denso (who announced 140 jobs in 2012 for new contracts in the automotive sector), and Muller Dairy who have just introduced a further 100 jobs to the area.

3 The Marches Local Growth Deal

The Marches offers an opportunity for growth on a scale that has significant importance to the UK economy.

Through this SEP the Marches is making an investment proposition. It will demonstrate that with the right financial levers, and investment from Whitehall and continued investment by private sector partners, the area can use its strong platform to bolster economic growth and create prosperity and opportunity to be shared across the Marches.

The investment proposition is based on unlocking the area's potential in full over a 20 year period.

At the heart of this proposition is the notion that through modest investment and pump priming, a significant uplift in growth can be achieved across a range of locations. These locations are spread across the LEP area and have been identified as those places with the most employment and housing opportunity - Enterprise Areas.

The rationale for this proposition is elaborated in subsequent sections with fuller explanations of the economic drivers and successful sectors in the Marches, but the realisation of higher growth is contingent upon the following mechanisms and asks;

- The creation of an Investment Fund, described in section 3.2;
- Additional freedoms, flexibilities and interventions to unlock land, especially public sector land, for housing and employment, described in section 3.3;
- Freedoms to pool existing resources to address area-specific issues of youth unemployment and skills and how these translate to transport problems in the very rural places, described in section 3.5;
- Synergising the funding programmes available to the Marches LEP to prove maximum impact in the Marches (see table in appendix F).

The Marches has a positive approach to growth. Major private sector developers continue to invest here.

Case Study: Cargill - continued investment into the Marches

Cargill provides food, agriculture, financial and industrial products and services to the world, employing 142,000 people across 67 countries. Established in Hereford for over 50 years, Cargill's Hereford site employs around 1,300 people across production and office based functions and offers primary and further processing capabilities for strategic customers across retail and food service markets.

Offering customers a choice of products to meet their needs has always been central to Cargill's success, and today this is no less important. Product innovation is a key focus for the sites in Hereford where new product development and production teams work closely to research and launch new ranges into retail and food service channels on a regular basis. Beyond products, Hereford is also the central base for commercial, marketing, development, finance, trading and procurement teams. Each of these functions play an important role in adding value to Cargill's relationships with its customers; building on a desire to offer the very best in quality products and services.

Recent events, have led to a change in consumer confidence for meat supplied through extended supply chains, bringing about an opportunity for the UK chicken industry to grow its production as supply chains shorten. Cargill are looking to capitalise on this opportunity by making a £29m investment to expand the Hereford plant's capacity. This investment will be made in more efficient processes and equipment that bring it in line with the best in Europe and will also ensure it is able to be operated to the highest levels of food safety and product quality standards, required by the UK retail industry. Investment is also required to expand the local supply chain based at Shobden (£2m), to increase production capacity to match the needs of the Hereford plant.

This investment is evidence of the confidence Cargill has in the UK market and represents significant inward investment from a major US business, and helps to safeguard within the Marches economy the 1,300 jobs directly employed by Cargill as well as those employed in the local supply chain.

Such growth is supported by a competitive and wide ranging housing offer, good schools and services, and an attractive and safe environment. With modest and flexible investment in specific areas, the LEP has the opportunity to capitalise on a series of development opportunities that will deliver above trend growth. This strategic investment will also allow the LEP to address specific issues on youth unemployment and skills, to support short term growth and long term sustainability, providing a joined up approach.

Alongside the economic impacts locally in terms of employment and GDP, the growth opportunities in the Marches also have the potential to generate long term benefits to the Exchequer, including additional tax receipts and benefit savings.

Drawing on the LEP vision of a Connected Marches and the rapid progress that has already been made in terms of collaboration and joint strategy, the LEP focus now is on combining and realising the strengths of the area. Key development corridors in the Marches include the M54, A5, A483 and A49. Strengthening these will impact on the wider region, especially via the linkages to other strategic enterprise areas such as Jaguar Land Rovers new £355m engine plant at the i54 business park, only 12 miles from Telford.

This investment proposition embodies the new policy environment whereby the pursuit of growth is determined through decisions and resources delivered at a local level and it embraces Central Government's invitation to enter into dialogue on a range of innovative funding and finance mechanisms. Each will enable investment to

be achieved through allowing the Marches to capture the proceeds of future economic growth.

The proposition provides ideas, a direction of travel and a Marches Investment Fund, which can be developed. The funding and financing mechanisms set out here will require dialogue with Government in order to agree what freedoms, resources and powers can be provided in order to realise the LEP's vision and growth ambitions.

3.1 Accelerated Growth Scenario

In order to show the potential scale and scope of the growth opportunity in the Marches a comparison has been made between 'business as usual' and a fully supported growth scenario. Business as usual would see just over 36,000¹ new homes introduced, whereas the higher growth scenario will see an introduction of over 72,000 new homes by 2031.

3.2 The Marches Investment Fund

This section describes what the Investment Fund looks like, and some of the financial levers it is seeking as part of the growth deal.

The Investment Fund will be used to service and provide greater access to land primed for housing and employment growth, building synergies between sectors and enabling greater connectivity between people and places.

The LEP is also proposing to invest further in business support, marketing and promoting inward investment. A range of projects aimed at achieving this are set out further in this document.

A 20 year life of the Investment Fund is proposed. Initially sustained through:

- Retention of 100% of all Business Rate Growth within designated Enterprise Areas.
- Enterprise Zone Business Rate uplift
- Growing Places Funding
- Regional Growth Fund
- Earn-back from the proactive stewardship and resolution of planning issues on HCA and other public residential and commercial land on the following basis: 50% retention by the LEP of commercial land sale receipts and 25% retention of residential land receipts.
- Contribution from the Single Local Growth Fund

The Investment Fund should have the ability to financially assist land owners willing to develop but finding it difficult to access finance. This will encourage the commencement of developments that are vital to underpinning growth. The developments will facilitate the inward investment of new business, enable the re-location of expanding companies and support the development of new mixed tenure housing schemes identified in the Local Development Frameworks.

¹ This number is derived using average completions from the past 5 years.

There are already examples of where accelerated growth has led to success for the Marches, with strong relationships demonstrated between the public and private sector.

Case Study: Southwater – stimulating private sector investment

Telford Town Centre is undergoing great positive change thanks to a combination of public and private investment. Built in the 1960's and 1970's, its core is dominated by a retail shopping centre core surrounded by commercial, then residential development. The town's leisure and cultural offer has been poor, with a lack of vibrancy and sense of place, acting as a significant barrier to its growth and sustainability.

In response, Telford & Wrekin Council has worked with partners including Southwater Event Group, Homes & Communities Agency and private sector investors to develop and realise a £250m regeneration of the Southwater area to deliver a true heart to Telford Town Centre. The vision is to create:

- A vibrant and sustainable heart for Telford Town Centre - including a night time economy;
- High quality buildings and public space that will transform the image of Telford;
- Improved cultural, leisure, retail, and event facilities as well as new homes and offices;
- A greatly enhanced convention quarter;
- New jobs, new opportunities and inward investment;
- A place in which people will want to work, live, visit and enjoy; and
- A place to be proud of.

Southwater, forms the ideal location for such a vision, situated in a strategic location between Telford Shopping Centre (a sub-regional retail centre of 1 million sq ft), Telford International Centre (one of the UK's largest conferencing and exhibition venues which attracts over 450,000 delegates every year), and Telford Town Park (a 400 acre green space, enjoyed by 750,000 visitors per year).

The first phase of the scheme will open in Spring 2014 and will see £110m of investment into the town centre with £40m of public sector investment being matched by £70m of private sector investment. Public sector investment has focussed on enabling the site through securing outline planning consent, undertaking infrastructure improvements and creating development plots, delivering supporting developments such as a 600 space multi story car park and high quality landscaping to create a new square, main street and lake, as well as delivering iconic developments including a new interactive library and learning resource, a one stop shop for a range of other public sector services, a £4m refurbishment and extension of the existing ice rink as well as the delivery of 3 new restaurants and a coffee shop.

Public sector investment has been essential to catalyse wider development and create a sense of place thus leveraging in significant private sector investment in a multiscreen IMAX Cineworld cinema, an 85 bed hotel, a new ASDA superstore, a high quality extension to The International Centre's and seven restaurants, all of which are pre let to leading operators including Nandos, Pizza Express, Wagamama and Zizzi. This investment will significantly raise Telford's profile as a destination of choice for leisure and business.

On the back of the success of the Southwater development, owners of Telford Shopping Centre have recently secured outline planning consent for a major extension and redevelopment of the shopping centre. Their proposals amount to an investment of £200m creating a further 2,000 jobs.

Key Principles of the Investment Fund

- A focus on revenue which is derived in those areas of the Marches where infrastructure and other investment takes place;
- Seeking to use growth in the revenue base to fund infrastructure and other investment as opposed to using existing base line income;
- Limiting the need for new powers and or the reallocation of funding from Central Government and making full use of the powers and freedoms available to local authorities under the localism agenda;
- Ensuring options are acceptable to the public and other stakeholders and do not in themselves act as a deterrent to economic development and growth; and
- Mechanisms to collect revenue will be relatively simple and easy to implement and will rely on existing legislation.

The Investment Fund will be overseen by the LEP Board. Governance proposals are outlined in more depth in section 5.

The future economic growth opportunities associated with the proposals also have the potential to result in significant savings to the Exchequer in terms of reduced expenditure on social benefits (such as Job Seekers Allowance). Indeed, based on the DWP Tax/Benefit model that forms the basis of a variety of cost benefit work that is undertaken across the Department², and assuming that the unemployed that benefit from the growth stay in employment for the full 12 months, the first order fiscal benefit of obtaining work is estimated at £7,800 per annum for people on Job Seekers Allowance.

Based on the above estimate, and assuming that 10% of the new jobs in LEP area are taken up by workless residents the benefit to Government could be up to £25m per annum and rising. Notably, the sooner the jobs are created, the greater the potential savings and benefits are over the period being considered.

² DWP, 2011. DWP Worklessness Co-design – Interim Report Annex A

Case Study: Taylor Wimpey, Sutton Grange – investor commitment

Major housing developers have been showing increasing interest in the Marches area, and see huge potential for the LEP. Taylor Wimpey's recently approved Sutton Grange development, forms part of the Shrewsbury South Sustainable Urban Extension Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE.) It will provide 291 houses and major areas of green space (including extending the Rea Brook Country Park). The development is also contributing to a co-ordinated package of infrastructure investment as part of the wider SUE which will deliver strategic and local highway improvements, bus services subsidy and other sustainable transport measures, additional school places, play areas and other community facilities.

Major volume housebuilders are also participating in Lawley Village, Telford's premier new homes development and the Borough's largest housing development. All on HCA land, it will contribute significantly to the economic growth of Telford through both housing supply and jobs. Located just two miles west of Telford town centre, it is one of the largest sustainable new communities in the UK providing over 3,500 new homes, alongside a range of new health, education, retail and leisure facilities. This new destination has been made possible by the coming together of some of the country's best known house-builders along with the Homes and Communities Agency and Telford and Wrekin Council.

3.3 Unlocking Land for Housing and Employment Growth

The designation of key Enterprise Areas, directly supported by the proposed Investment Fund, will enable the Marches to fulfil its role as key player in national growth and the achievement of an economically successful and self-sustaining economy.

The clear objectives for growth, and the scope to reinvest some of the returns into the area, will provide a strong incentive to the local authorities to facilitate the early development of sites. This will include the formation of mechanisms to bring forward public land throughout the area.

The Marches – an area of economic confidence and growth

- 27,095 businesses generating £10 billion for UK economy
- Unemployment falling faster than elsewhere in UK
- Large amounts of ready to develop land available
- Potential for nearly 40,000 new jobs and over 72,000 new homes
- All three Urban Powerhouses are designated Growth Points with major town centre redevelopment projects in delivery.
- The rural areas of the Marches are able to make a significant contribution to sustainable employment through initiatives which use their unique assets, demonstrated by the Marches Redundant Building Programme

Mechanisms for advancing the land assets in the LEP area will include:

- A commitment to achieving faster delivery of planned housing sites than that represented by the current less proactively supported market trajectory.

- The designation of further enterprise areas, with a friendly and 'can deliver' private sector approach to development.
- An approach to Planning which supports and enables growth without inappropriate delay, including a one stop shop approach, clear development advice, and effective use of development charters and Local Development Orders within designated growth areas; as set out in the Marches High Level Planning and Housing Statement "Poised for Growth" (2012).
- A marketing approach which indicates that the area is open to development and that stresses the integrated, live, work and invest opportunities of the area.

3.4 Transport Infrastructure for Growth

The Marches is home to some already excellent infrastructure, with the M54 providing a strategic highway in the area, and good transport links to Birmingham and other neighbouring cities. However, transport is not an end in itself, but a means for people to be able to access jobs, education facilities, shops, health care and leisure activities. Therefore the key objectives are for transport investment to work with other policy areas to:

- Help existing and new businesses (especially in the priority sectors) to invest and create jobs, by reducing financial costs that result from congested and unreliable transport networks.
- Enable people to live full, independent and economically productive lives, providing links between where they live and where they need to get to (for a range of journey purposes).
- Help provide enough affordable and high quality houses, which are accessible to jobs and essential services via a range of transport modes.
- Develop socially cohesive and healthy communities where people feel safe to travel by walking, cycling and public transport.
- Protect the natural and built environment which makes the Marches a special place to live, work and play.

Delivering the vision and objectives is based on a transport strategy and investment programme that is fully "joined up" with the wider economic growth aspirations of The Marches.

Therefore the approach is to invest in site, area and corridor packages rather than individual silo-based projects. The SEP strategy therefore aims to "join up" different modes of transport, and linking housing to education and jobs, as a means of growing the economy. As the Department for Transport's Door to Door Strategy makes clear, there must be a focus on every part of the journey – from the time someone leaves their front door until they reach their ultimate destination, and from when goods leave a factory until they arrive in a shop. If any part of the journey is the weak link, then the whole journey is adversely affected and the service to the travelling public and the wider economy will be inadequate.

3.5 **Freedoms to Pool Existing Resources to Address Youth Unemployment and Skills**

Although unemployment as a whole is now falling, the area is a hot spot for youth unemployment. This is a significant cost to the exchequer in benefits alone. Youth unemployment impacts heavily on the long term sustainability of the rural community and particular areas within Urban Powerhouses and Opportunity Towns, potentially creating a 'lost generation' and leading to the creation of significant social problems.

The proposition is for a community focused budget from the three Councils, job centre plus and leading training providers to tackle this problem, and ensure it does not become more wide spread and deep seated. The funding will also be structured so that it is capable of being matched to European Social Funds.

To drive this, the Marches LEP will create a Youth Employment Agency which will focus on delivering this by:

- Providing better, co-ordinated support and advice to help young people choose from the different pathways into work: volunteering, training, higher education, traineeships or apprenticeships.
- Pro-actively supporting local employers to create apprenticeships and training opportunities by working with training providers to ensure that employers can realise the potential of apprentices – as well as the financial support available, removing 'red-tape' which businesses, particularly smaller businesses, may see as obstacles.
- Delivering 'Training Academies' to help young people prepare for apprenticeships and other routes to work. The academies would deliver 'quality marked' training, recognised by employers, such as sector specific apprenticeships through the national frameworks.
- Converting unemployment to self-employment through the Enterprise Hub flagship youth entrepreneurship programme - a public/private venture to create start-up businesses and support freelance contractors aged 18-30.
- Understanding and addressing the barriers – for example transport costs, access to transport and jobs – especially in very rural areas appropriate interview clothing, etc.

Central to this approach is even greater co-operation between the public and private sectors to implement a more effective employer-led skills system. This will ensure that the area is able to develop a workforce which meets the needs of employers. To drive this, the LEP will build on existing experience and initiate skills surveys of all local businesses to understand their skill needs, which will provide an informed brief to education providers.

4 The Marches Growth Strategy

4.1 Physical Infrastructure

Housing and Employment Sites

It is the presence of large scale ready to develop and market friendly sites that gives the Marches the opportunity to deliver growth now in a unique urban/rural setting. All three local authority partners are committed to achieving high targets for housing and employment acceleration. From Sustainable Urban Extensions to small-scale housing development, from development of Opportunity Towns to Enterprise Areas and Business Parks – the Marches is an area primed to deliver growth, and deliver it now.

Taken in combination, through the allocations as described in appendix B, the Marches can create nearly 40,000 jobs and deliver over 72,000 homes.

The Marches will create new communities through its housing growth, with good access to employment areas connecting residents to employment sites. This will be seen in the Urban Powerhouses and Opportunity Towns, and Enterprise Areas of the Marches. There will also be a focus on housing in rural areas to support a strong rural enterprise in the area. Affordable housing will also be a key mechanism to supporting the rural economy, facilitating business enterprise and growth and importantly enable graduates and young people to stay in the area.

Urban Powerhouses and Sustainable Urban Extensions

At the core of the growth strategy for the LEP are the Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUE) to the Urban Powerhouses of Telford, Shrewsbury and Hereford. They will play a vital part in the accelerated growth for the LEP area. Other Opportunity Towns will also cater for significant growth. All three participating Local Authorities are committed to achieving ambitious targets for growth in the area which are above their respective local plan trajectories, if these can be supported by modest investment.

The Opportunity Towns and Rural Economy

The essence of the Marches area is rural and it is one of heartlands of rural England. Much of the Marches thrives on its attractive and distinctive market towns which also provide significant potential for delivering growth now. The Opportunity Towns are a fundamental driver of life in the Marches; over 28 in total, they represent the identity and provide much of what makes the Marches distinctive. The strategic nexus of the Opportunity Towns is strengthened by the role of the A49, A5 and M54 highways.

The Ministry of Defence is also a vital player in life in the Marches, and also takes a large role in housing demand for the LEP. In particular soldiers returning from Germany will need to be integrated with existing civilian communities. For example, in the Marches it is anticipated that up to 1,000 additional homes may be required around Albrighton, Shifnal and Telford. The Marches has the capacity and positive energy to work with the Ministry of Defence to bring forward sites to meet their specific needs.

Strategic Economic Sites

The wide choice of sites of significant scale offers good availability for early investment and development in the Marches. There is potential, if all the currently serviced employment sites were filled, for nearly 40,000 jobs in the Marches. These are detailed in Appendix B of this document.

Beyond these identified employment sites there is also potential for accelerating growth at sites located in the Opportunity Towns across the LEP area. These have capacity to generate large amounts of employment through bringing forward vacant strategic employment land. The largest employment sites include the following.

Leominster Enterprise Park has the potential to offer a further 5-10 hectares of employment land to the Marches, to complement the growth of housing development in the area.

The Model Farm site at Ross-on-Wye offers access to the Motorway network being located a mile from the M50 and as a 10 ha allocation is well placed to foster a hub for knowledge intensive industries in this 'opportunity' town.

Market Drayton has significant capacity allocated for growth of employment sites, building on existing business parks and the success of Muller Dairy in the town, which has seen recent expansion providing a number of jobs for the area.

Oswestry - Opportunity Town

Oswestry Innovation Park is a major business development site of 23 ha located to the north west of Shropshire in the key growth corridor from North Wales to the Midlands. It will attract inward investment and innovative companies in key sectors such as Food and Drink Manufacture and Agri-technology.

The upgrading of the A5/A483 roundabout will take place 100% funded by the Highways Agency early in 2014.

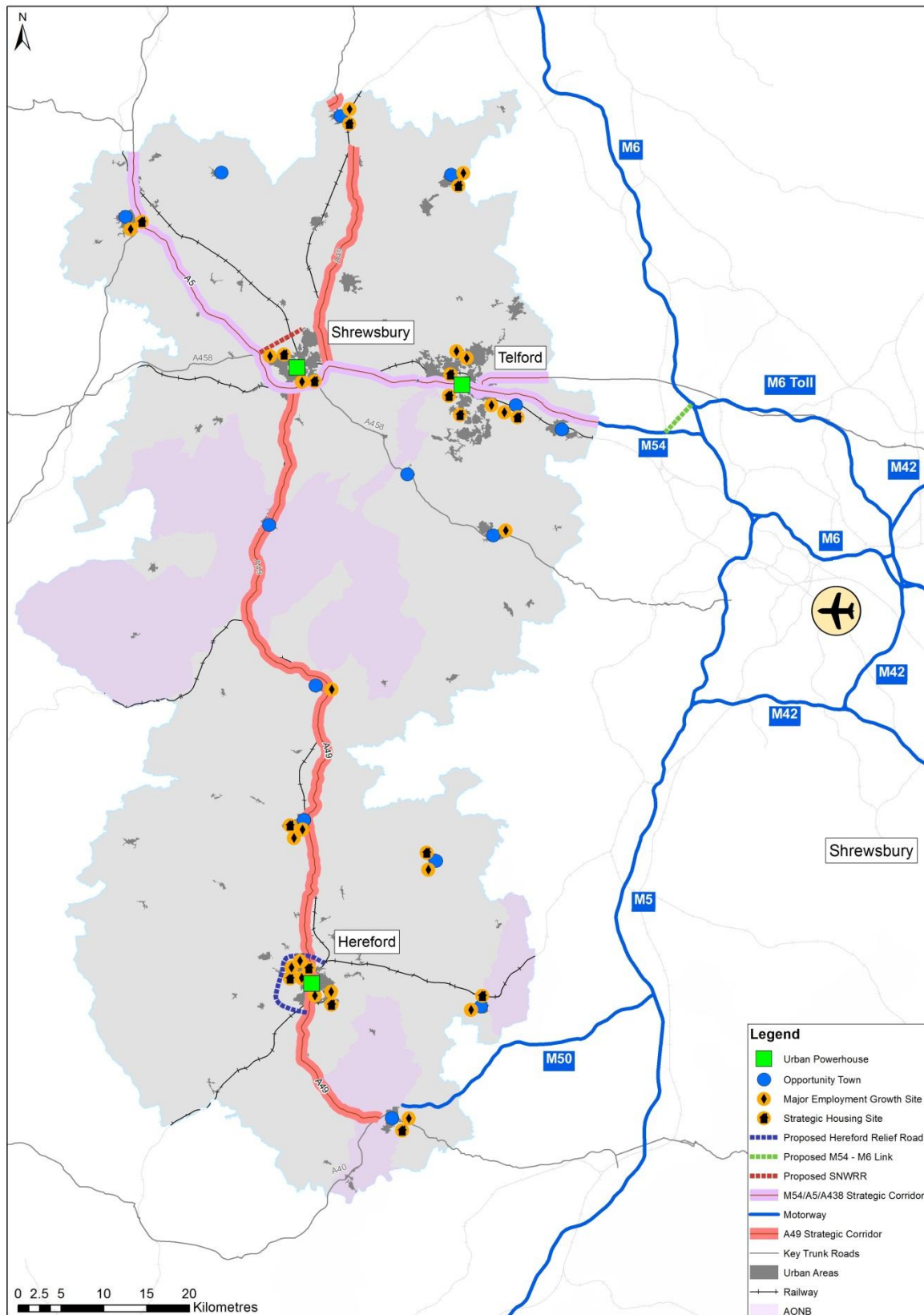
Investment in infrastructure to bring the Innovation Park forward is needed for power line diversions and internal roads.

There will be a 7 hectare office park with 280,000 sq feet of offices and a 16 hectare B1, B2 and B8 industrial park of 640,000 sq feet. In excess of 3000 jobs will be created.

Key growth areas are shown on the map on the next page.

Within the rural area there are also a number of larger employers who settle outside of the Urban Powerhouses and Opportunity Towns that are of cumulative significance. Shropshire alone has over 85 small business parks which offer employment for a significant portion of the population in the Marches. Within a rural context and with a large proportion of Marches workers either self-employed or working for SMEs, these smaller sites are of significant importance.

Marches Key Growth Areas



Supporting Growth through Transport Improvements

Transport is central to unlocking growth in the Marches. With the right interventions, we can improve access to jobs, apprenticeships and education. We can also use transport improvements as a catalyst for accelerating growth in the LEP. Not only will transport improvements reduce congestion and journey to work times, but they will enable the Marches to present an attractive offer for inward investment and growth in the LEP.

West Midlands Economic Growth and Transport Statement

The six Local Enterprise Partnerships of the West Midlands have recognised that given the integrated nature of transport, they must take a co-ordinated approach to drafting a joint statement on transport in order to support the submission of SEPs in 2014. The joint statement is not intended to duplicate the work that each LEP will be doing on identifying key transport interventions which support economic growth in their LEP area, but rather would highlight those strategic priorities which have national significance (influencing investment in the strategic rail network, public transport network and Highways) which will benefit UK plc, and which no one LEP could deliver on its own.

Working with the West Midlands Economic Forum, the focus will be the recovery of the regional economy, recent output growth and the strength of our regional export growth. Clearly nationally important motorway and rail infrastructure gives our economy a competitive edge and the close correlation between supplier delivery times and the effectiveness of our transport infrastructure is a critical element to the West Midlands being able to maintain a position of international competitiveness. The work focus on the role that the six LEPs play in supporting the national economy and help to set the context for how we work across Local Authority and LEP boundaries.

Transport Barriers to Growth

The transport and economic growth work reflected in the SEP is based on a clear understanding of the current barriers to growth, which are:

- Current and forecast traffic congestion in the Urban Powerhouses and Opportunity Towns.
- Narrow streets and limited river crossings in some of the smaller market towns.
- Pinch points and missing links in the road and rail inter-urban transport network.
- A lack of highway access into specific sites for car drivers, HGVs, buses, pedestrians and cyclists.
- Poor public transport in rural areas which affects the ability of people without a car to access education and jobs in particular.

Integrated Investment Packages

The development of integrated investment packages is a holistic approach which identifies and tackles all the various policy and infrastructure barriers to development

at the same time, and then proposes the use of targeted public sector investment to enable the private sector to construct housing and employment infrastructure. The integrated investment packages are being developed at four spatial levels, as shown on the map in Appendix E:

- The road and rail Growth Corridors of the M6/M6 Toll/ M54/ A5/A483 (east-west) and A49 (north-south).
- Priority Housing Growth and Strategic Economic sites, which will provide accommodate the most significant levels of growth (including the Enterprise Zone at Rotherwas and other Enterprise Areas).
- The Urban Powerhouses of Telford, Hereford and Shrewsbury and the smaller Opportunity Towns.
- The Rural Area Connectivity which provide the wider catchment for education and job opportunities.

The site specific packages are outlined in Appendix E.

Broadband and Telecommunications

Superfast broadband is recognised as a fundamental enabler for economic growth. Currently the most urban parts of the Marches are already well served by good broadband provision provided through commercial investment. Unfortunately, even with the addition of commitments contained within signed BDUK contracts (Herefordshire and Shropshire) a significant number of SMEs, particularly those in the most rural parts of the Marches, are not expected to have access to adequate broadband speeds without attracting additional intervention.

Poor connectivity remains a key barrier to growth and investment in some of the most rural areas of the Marches where many SME operate. The LEP is committed to improving the digital coverage across the entire area, to maximise the growth opportunities available, both to rural communities as well as potential new investors.

Complementary support initiatives and programmes remain an essential component to maximise the opportunities of the extended broadband networks. New innovative working practices will support economic benefits, including more and better jobs, ultimately increasing the GVA in the Marches.

Our focus for project development and delivery to support of these key aspirations:-

- Providing businesses with access to a High Speed broadband solution. To address the Governments national targets for superfast speeds (95% premises should have access to 24Mbps by 2017), additional funding, as part of the national infrastructure strategy (£250m) will become available during 2014. This will require an element of match funding. Though it is recognised that EU funding will not be available to increase proportional coverage, the Marches will look to harness EU sources to support a coordinated and supportive approach to addressing ongoing market failure by providing connection vouchers to businesses;
- Support and engage with Marches businesses to ensure that the new fibre networks are fully exploited to realise and optimise their economic and environmental potential by demonstrating growth potential; more flexible and

environmentally friendly working practices, higher productivity, increased innovation and improved access to new markets and business opportunities;

- Transfer bespoke advice and training to businesses around the application of ICT to transform businesses;
- Create a common ICT platform from which businesses, products, place and sales can be developed and coordinated;
- Prevent the leakage of land based subsidies which are legitimately available to businesses in the Marches but which fail to be levered due to a lack of ICT competence.
- Ensure that all land based businesses, owners, and managers are proficient in using ICT to operate effectively in order to maximise their opportunities.
- Modernise the way communities interface with public service providers to align with changing consumer patterns Enabling the rapid and effective migration of services to digital channels to offer communities an interface with providers that mirror changes in consumer patterns and create greater efficiency of delivery. Analysis of data sets (big data) from stakeholders will enable and prioritise the migration process.
- Support skill development to enable utilisation of ICT and mitigate digital exclusion.

4.2 Supporting Business

With the potential to create significant numbers of jobs and drive growth, the Marches has identified business support as a key theme, with particular attention being paid to strengthening priority sectors.

The Marches proposes to take a new and integrated approach to business support, that will address the key issues of entrepreneurship, business growth (especially amongst high growth local businesses) and innovation, our delivery model will incorporate both an online portal and accessible face to face business support (which in some areas might be based in accessible public buildings or in others might be developed around existing provision and mobile advisors).

Links to schools and colleges will be a key feature of the "Marches Inspiring Business Programme", which will inspire a new generation of entrepreneurs. The Marches Strategy for Growth prioritises the conversion of unemployment to self-employment and 'work ready' skills for school leavers to support their transition from academia to a business environment. This will support the development of enterprise and innovative skills development beginning at primary school age, with a progression of targeted activity right through to colleges.

The LEP recognises that alongside a delivery mechanism it is imperative to have a set of tangible products to offer the business community to help facilitate company growth and encourage employment. The LEP will offer a small number of flexible and wide-ranging products that will encourage take up through clear and concise branding, these are:

1. A single grant and voucher scheme;
2. Investment in Crowd Funding;

3. Potential regional loan funding;
4. National Opt ins;
5. Inward Investment promotion.

To ensure these products are available to businesses in a fair and equitable manner a number of principles will run throughout these products:

1. The products will be the same across the whole of the Marches LEP geography.
2. They will be available to as wide a range of businesses as is practically possible.
3. The application and monitoring regime accompanying the business support activity will be commensurate to the level of support requested.
4. Flexibility will be paramount especially in cases where there is a direct benefit in terms of job or company growth.

Using the best of online and offline support, in the Marches it will be more relevant to the needs of future entrepreneurs, new enterprises and growing businesses, and importantly more accessible to our business community.

Growth Sectors, Strengths and Opportunities

Since the economic downturn, sectors in the UK economy have been picking up momentum with five in particular leading the recovery: knowledge intensive services; financial services; professional services; ICT; and, energy and environment. The priority growth sectors for the Marches include advanced manufacturing, food and drink, defence and security, the visitor economy and environmental technologies and services. The Marches has particular strengths in these sectors and the LEP is keen to focus on these tangible and exciting opportunities of growth. The Marches can help to expand on its strong and loyal business base attracting new businesses to the area, and helping those succeeding to expand even further.

Economic sectors and LEP's comparative strengths

Environmental Services	London	South East Midlands	Northampton-shire	Greater Manchester	Thames Valley Berkshire	Worcester-shire	Greater Lincolnshire	The Marches	Swindon + Wiltshire
	0.64	0.68	0.70	0.73	1.50	1.51	1.52	1.56	1.57
Food, Drink and Agriculture	Hertfordshire	London	Coast to Capital	Solent	Northampton shire	Cornwall and Isles of Scilly	Humber	The Marches	Greater Lincolnshire
	0.28	0.37	0.42	0.47	2.17	2.34	2.37	2.44	3.41
Advanced Manufacturing	London	Cornwall and Isles of Scilly	Coast to Capital	Thames Valley Berkshire	The Marches	Gloucester-shire	Worcestershire	Black Country	Cumbria
	0.21	0.60	0.62	0.73	1.81	1.85	1.92	2.20	2.20
Defence and Security	Black Country	Sheffield City Region	Tees Valley	Worcestershire	Solent	The Marches	Swindon and Wiltshire	West of England	Gloucester-shire
	0.08	0.10	0.18	0.18	2.89	3.13	3.14	6.46	8.65
Tourism and Leisure	Black Country	Sheffield City Region	Northampton-shire	Humber	York, N. Yorks + East Riding	Heart of the South West	Dorset	Cumbria	Cornwall + Isles of Scilly
	0.62	0.74	0.75	0.80	1.29	1.33	1.35	1.67	1.93

The Marches is 27th compared with 39 LEPs with an LQ of 0.88

Under-represented sector strength vis-à-vis the national economy

Over-represented in the LEP compared to the national economy



Source – Business Register and Employment Survey, 2011 - Nomis

Food and Drink

The Food and Drink Sector is a major employer in the Marches. There are a number of large, multi-national organisations from the sector who have been attracted to the area, alongside a strong base of small artisan producers who supply high end department stores and 'quality regional food' aisles of major supermarket chains.

The Marches is also home to centres of expertise in the Food and Drink Industry including Heart of England Fine Foods (HEFF) and the Shropshire Food Enterprise Centre at Battlefield, Shrewsbury and the Regional Food Academy at Harper Adams.

The sector covers food and drink manufacture, processing, food services and auxiliary services such as packaging, and is worth £179 Billion GVA in UK and £1.9 Billion GVA in the Marches. It has the highest share of GVA at 22% of all Marches GVA which is much higher than the UK figure at 15%. 20% of our total employment is in this sector with 60,000 employees.

The sector has bucked the trend and even expanded at 3% per year during the recession. Employment is shifting to more scientific and professional jobs. On average 1,200 new jobs have been created for the last 5 years.

The Marches has a well-established supply chain, in food packaging; materials innovation testing and development; and specialist logistics and preservation solutions, which are supported by Centres of Excellence and provide support for future investment and business growth. The area boasts a wealth of expertise in a range of agri-business support and in cutting edge-technological development. The Agricultural Innovation Centre at Harper Adams University creates long term links between business and R&D. This is leading best practice within the food security agenda.

The sub-sectors that are really important and growing rapidly in the Marches are meat processing, dairy, confectionary and alcoholic beverages production.

The raw material base is critical and Shropshire has the 6th largest land area for cattle, the 5th for Sheep and 12.2% of the UK poultry comes from the Marches. The strength of the sector is based on these raw materials, a highly skilled work force and strong family businesses.

Agri-Technology Industry

The Government's Strategy for Agricultural Technologies provides a unique opportunity for the Marches LEP to deliver national government policy. Not only does the LEP have the strongest profile in Agri-food related employment of any LEP across the country (see Witty Report employment quotient); but also in Harper Adams University it has a leading institution specialising in this subject area; the number one for agricultural engineering in the UK and nearby is Keele University with its complimentary Sustainability Hub.

The development, in 2013 of the £2.93M Agricultural Engineering Innovation Centre and the National Centre for Precision Farming partly funded by the Marches LEP has meant that the sector now has a nationally recognised Centre of Excellence.

Whilst the exact form of the implementation of the Government's Strategy will not be known until 2014, it is already clear that there will be a focus on bio-informatics (the management of 'big data') and the potential for a key element to involve agricultural engineering. In addition, there are cross-cutting themes on ensuring that advances in Agri-technologies are translated into farming practice; on developing the skills base of the Agri-food sector to be able to achieve that objective; and on improving the efficiency, productivity and profitability of the Agri-food sector, including by promoting UK Agri-technology exports.

The Agri-technology sector is comprised of a range of easily recognised components from public and private sector agricultural research through the supply chain spanning seeds, agro-chemicals, machinery, engineering and other inputs; across arable and livestock agriculture, food processing, packing and retailing. The sector is being taken forward as a CROSS LEP work stream with Staffordshire and Stoke LEP with the sector development plan and an Industry led Leadership Council.

The UK Agri-technology industry supports 3.8M jobs and contributes £96Billion to the UK economy. In Shropshire 81% of the land area is devoted to agriculture and 22% of all businesses are in the Agri-technology sector that is 3000 businesses. Between them Shropshire and Staffordshire have 50% of the sector businesses in the West Midlands.

Top businesses in the sector include the global HQ and academy for JCB in Staffs, McConnel based in Ludlow which is part of the Alamo Group and a global leader in vegetation management technology and machinery. Fullwoods based in North Shropshire is a world leader in robotic milking parlours exports include robotic camel milking parlours to Saudi Arabia. The area is also home to companies such as International Energy Crops and many companies making Anaerobic Digestion plants.

Case Study: The Agricultural Innovation Centre at Harper Adams University – delivering the Agri-technology strategy

The new Agricultural Innovation Centre at Harper Adams University is a national centre in support of advanced technology and manufacturing for the agri-food sector; providing an integrated engineering complex at the northern end of the University's campus, comprising teaching and research engineering laboratories in hydraulics, mechatronics and precision farming applications. The development of this Centre of Excellence has been supported by: the Marches LEP, through its Growing Places Fund; HEfCE; private companies such as AGCO, CLAAS, BASF, JCB, JLR; and the Douglas Bomford Trust. A number of the private sector bodies are also project delivery partners.

Opening in Autumn 2013, the Centre is supporting large businesses and SMEs to adopt cutting edge practices, up-skill their workforce and significantly improve competitiveness in their business. The Centre will also promote long-term links to an R&D and higher-level skills base in the university sector that will enable a network of organisations to take a leading global role on precision farming, providing significant longer term prospects for job growth. The development creates an initial additional 22 new local jobs. A further 200 jobs will be created within local beneficiary private companies.

The Centre, University and partner expertise provides a unique opportunity to support the delivery of the UK Strategy for Agricultural Technologies (July 2103) and the UK Industrial Strategy (September 2012).

The Marches LEP has a number of priorities for delivering Agri-technology growth in the following areas:

- The establishment of a joint LEP Leadership Council mirroring the national Industrial strategy Council for the sector.
- Working in partnership with the Staffs and Stoke LEP to gain funding from the £70M Agri-technology Catalyst Funding to bridge the “valley of death” between lab and market place.
- Government to endorse the 6 centre model for a Catapult Centre for Agri-technology with the Marches and Staffs and Stoke leading on Agricultural Engineering.
- The establishment of incubator space or live/work units to enable Harper Adams University to support new start-ups in the sector.
- The potential for the Oswestry Innovation Park to champion inward investment in the sector.
- The creation of an agricultural advisory service to better connect the research base with farms in the Marches LEP area. The Marches Agri-Tech Advisory Service (MATAS) will be located at Harper Adams University but will be expected to work closely with businesses in the Agri-food sector across the Marches LEP and Staffs and Stoke LEP areas.
- The creation of a business environment where a ‘spin-in’ cluster of Agri-technology companies can congregate in the Marches and Staffs LEP areas, knowing that Harper Adams University is able to work with them to support innovations in their field. This will require a strengthened approach to business support via interventions by the Marches LEP, working closely with the University to ensure that there is collaborative potential between new business investment and the University.
- The promotion of the above strategy nationally and internationally, the latter in conjunction with UKTI. This is expected to highlight the important role that the Marches LEP area plays in UK food production, to promote exports, to encourage inward investment, especially from overseas, and to maximise opportunities in Agri-technology innovation from the overseas connections developed by the University with leading agricultural universities in the USA, China, Japan, New Zealand, and across Europe.
- Another element of this activity will be based on working with the University, and its existing networks, to help harness additional research resources from Horizon 2020.

Defence and Security

The Marches is currently home to a number of key employers in defence and security industry including BAE Systems and Dytechna. The sector is well represented in the Marches, compared to the rest of the UK and is the 4th best represented of all Local Enterprise Partnerships in the country.

Procurement via the MOD will be key to the success of a thriving defence industry in the Marches. Currently the MOD procure £16bn of goods and services annually. It would benefit the area if an agreement was made with the MOD to create a procurement portal, similar to the ‘CompeteFor’ example which was created during the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics, to seek a percentage of contracts to be

awarded to SMEs. This will ensure a good market share of the awards across the sector and would benefit the Marches if a strong cluster of defence suppliers are built up, especially in the designated area of the Enterprise Zone.

Similarly focussed on defence, and particularly aerospace is RAF Cosford. The site currently houses the Defence College of Aeronautical Engineering and other technical training operational units, alongside the West Midlands RAF museum. In the face of growing competition, the MOD has trained 1,200 graduates from 16 different countries in the West Midlands, generating £36m. There is current demand for £130m of generic (ie not type specific) aircraft maintenance training business for the MOD. The aim is to create a National Aeronautical Academy and centre of excellence for aeronautical education and training on the site, led by three West Midlands LEPs in partnership with the MoD, private industry and an educational consortium of surrounding HE/FE institutions.

There is also a role for the LEP in working with the MOD to ensure that the military bases across the Marches remain in the area and maximise their potential to contribute to the local economy. These are a very important part of the local community, providing local economic spend and demand in the housing market.

Defence Support, Person based Services, C4iStar

In part, the rationale behind the creation of the Hereford Enterprise Zone was linking the numerous defence and security related businesses in operation around Hereford to the provision of skills and expertise emerging from the Special Forces bases just outside the City.

The skills offer from this source has resulted in the emergence of a cluster of person based defence and security businesses undertaking such diverse activities as hostile environment training, risk management and insurance, first aid, communications, and equipment manufacture.

Building on the worldwide reputation the British Army has for quality and expertise, these companies are able to exploit the growing export market for the supply of security and defence services. A high proportion of businesses in the Hereford defence and security cluster either export their products directly or provide skilled personnel into overseas markets.

The Hereford Enterprise Zone is looking to support businesses aiming to capitalise on this expanding market through the provision of bespoke business development services, a dedicated site within the wider Zone, and the construction of flexible high quality commercial accommodation.

Advanced Manufacturing

The UK has a strong history of traditional manufacturing. There is a strong UK presence in highly skilled sub-sectors of the manufacturing market. The Marches LEP is strongly reliant on the advanced manufacturing industry with 1 in 7 jobs provided in this sector. The Marches is expected to start to dominate this sector along with the wider Midlands region. The LEP is home to a number of substantial operations, household names, and tier one suppliers, including Ricoh who employ nearly 800 people in the area. Other large employers include Caterpillar, Denso, Doncasters, Makita, Stadco and GKN as well as smaller supply chain firms.

Automotive Manufacturing

The UK automotive sector generates £55 billion in annual turnover and employs more than 700,000 people. Nationally, the automotive sector has never been stronger with seven volume car manufacturers; eight major premium and sports car manufacturers and more than 100 specialist brands; and around 2,350 component manufacturers. The UK Government and the automotive industry have come together in the last few years to agree a strategy for increasing the proportion of UK-sourced components used in cars built here. This has resulted in a major focus for UKTI and the newly created Automotive Investment Organisation, in terms of encouraging foreign firms to establish a UK presence. Recent major investments in the West Midlands and North West by Jaguar Land Rover (JLR), BMW, Bentley and GM have created a significant corridor of opportunity from Liverpool to Oxford, which the Marches is well-placed to take advantage of.

Of particular importance in the future is JLR's new engine plant near Wolverhampton which is only 12 minutes along the M54 from Telford. This represents a major opportunity for Marches manufacturers in particular to do more business with JLR, and puts the LEP in a prime position in terms of future inward investment sites for the automotive industry.

In recent years, the Marches has managed to attract significant inward investment in the automotive sector, thanks in large to its proximity to major manufacturers and its availability of quality sites. Existing automotive suppliers include Denso; Borgers; GKN Auto Structures; Johnson Controls; Mahle Filter Systems and Stadco; along with dozens of smaller specialist companies actively working with the large Original Equipment Manufacturers such as JLR, BMW and Toyota. In addition, Telford's nationally-significant plastics cluster has important links with the automotive sector and offer future opportunities around new technologies, materials and processes.

The Marches has the geography, the track record, the existing manufacturing base and the workforce demographics that make it a compelling location for the automotive sector.

Visitor Economy

A thriving visitor economy is present in the Marches, which generate visitor spend on accommodation, retail, transport, food and drink and attractions. The Visitor economy is strong in the Marches, which contains numerous substantial tourism assets. The tourism industry of the Marches is characterised by a relatively low number of big businesses and a very large proportion of SME businesses across a large rural area. This visitor spend, therefore, provides revenue into local tourism businesses but also for businesses in the supply chain, making local services viable, supporting local infrastructure and creating local jobs.

The Marches is home to numerous unique and outstanding tourism assets. Its unparalleled landscapes include the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, part of the Wye Valley AONB, the Rivers Severn and Wye, Offa's Dyke national long distance trail and the Meres and Mosses Nature Improvement Area. The Marches heritage assets include two World Heritage Sites – Ironbridge Gorge with its ten museum sites in Telford and Wrekin, and part of the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal in the north west where Shropshire borders Wales. The heritage visitor offer also includes a portfolio of churches, castles, historic houses, towns and villages of historic character. Hereford City with the cathedral and the Mappa Mundi, and the historic county town of Shrewsbury are both key heritage visitor destinations. These Urban Powerhouses also have a good cultural offer which includes Shrewsbury's Theatre Severn and redevelopment of the Music Hall as Museum and Art Gallery, and Hereford's Courtyard Theatre, museums and art galleries.

Telford is a different type of destination with modern retail and entertainment offers including cinemas, large indoor shopping centre, snowboarding and ski centre. Telford is emerging as a leading convention and business tourism capital in the UK, home to the Telford International Centre which is the 6th largest conference centre in UK.

Research has shown that the Marches is not a recognised consumer brand as a visitor destination. Some of its key tourism towns and areas do however have the potential to become so. A reliance on widely dispersed SMEs has made it difficult for the area to achieve the focused investment and development it needs in research, new product, quality and marketing. To increase market share destinations and businesses need to act collaboratively to provide the best context for business development, to improve product position and continue to innovate to develop new product and services to meet challenging customer needs.

The strategic priorities to support growth in the Marches' visitor economy sector are:

- Infrastructure – tourism requires the right conditions for growth. These include broadband access, good mobile networks, effective transport networks
- Strategic Product Development – larger projects and site developments such as RAF Museum Cosford, Severn Valley railway, Telford/ Southwater, recreational walking, cycling routes, waterways, drive visits to the area, create significant growth in visitor numbers and generate significant new business for SMEs providing supporting visitor services in the sector.
- Investment in cultural/heritage assets (including festivals and events) - heritage and cultural infrastructure are key assets for the Visitor Economy sector. Investments in both the rural and urban context can deliver significant job creation and SME productivity outputs whilst improving the visitor experience and propensity to visit.
- Marketing and PR – businesses and destinations need to collaborate to have an impact in the market. SMEs which are often only offering one element of the visitor experience, need a strong destination profile and framework within which their individual offers can be effectively sold to a market which is dispersed and geographically distant.

The Marches LEP recognises the importance of this business sector which will access the business support offer in respect of requirements around advice and training,

access to finance, workforce development and R&D, innovation and ICT, detailed elsewhere in this report.

Environmental Technologies and Services

Environmental technology and services is a burgeoning sector in the Marches. As a LEP, the Marches is the second best represented with regard to environmental services and technology, with a number of market leading companies and technologically cutting-edge enterprises covering renewable energy, water technology, waste management and pollution control.

The LEP is keen to capture this expertise to increase the uptake of innovative technologies and resource efficiency measures to ensure sustainable development and facilitate growth towards a green economy. Initiatives such as the Marches Environmental Technologies Network and the Business Environmental Support Scheme assist in improving environmental impact management across the business base and promote environmental business growth.

Case Studies: Supporting environmental business growth and improving environmental performance in business

Marches Environmental Technologies Network

The Marches Environmental Technologies Network (Metnet), set up in June 2010, is a business network that supports collaborative working and business growth for small to medium sized environmental businesses, including waste and recycling companies, across Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Telford and Wrekin, and Shropshire. It also supports businesses looking to diversify into the sector. Metnet achieves this through offering a series of events and interactive website presence that encourages businesses to network, provides information, promotes collaborative working and innovation, helps businesses to promote themselves and keeps members up to date on funding, sector news and business opportunities. Operating across the Marches and Worcestershire LEP areas, with over 450 member businesses, it uses contacts within higher education institutions, major agencies and the local Councils, to provide a point-of contact for businesses that have queries or questions concerning the sector in the Marches, want to access leading specialists or simply need to know who to speak to within its local Council. Delivery partners include Shropshire Council, who have developed and managed the project, and Herefordshire Council, Telford and Wrekin Council and Worcestershire County Council.

Business Environmental Support Scheme for Telford

The Business Environmental Support Scheme for Telford (BESST) assists businesses to improve their environmental performance in order to boost competitiveness and reduce their impact on the environment. The network is steered by a private sector led group made up of Ricoh, Simmonsins, DENSO, Lyreco and Epwin as well as the Environment Agency and Telford and Wrekin Council. Working in partnership with other organisations, such as the Environment Agency, NISP, Shropshire Wildlife Trust and Sustainability West Midlands.

4.3 The Skills Proposal

The Marches vision regarding skills is to have a growing economy supported by a skilled and flexible workforce where young people can realise their potential. The LEP has a central role in ensuring that the skills agenda has a high priority amongst local businesses and stakeholders. The development of the Marches Skills Plan is underpinned by the principles of collaboration and engagement with partners from across the LEP area, which marks an important step in the process.

The aim is to create an efficient and effective infrastructure to support skills development in the Marches, which in turn will provide clear strategic leadership and direction. To do this, we propose a range of integrated activities that will:

- Align the range of activities and interventions which partners undertake;
- Effectively communicate and promote what is available to employers and the workforce; and
- Develop and co-ordinate interventions to address specific local needs.

The Marches Skills Plan sets out a series of interventions to tackle the key skills and employment issues which have been prioritised by partners within the Marches and is supported by a Marches Apprenticeships Plan and a Skill Plan for the Hereford Enterprise Zone (see http://www.marcheslep.org.uk/document-library/cat_view/10-marches-lep-skills-plan).

The actions proposed in the Plan revolve around four priorities set out below:

Priority 1: Developing the skills required for business growth;

Priority 2: Supporting enterprise and access to employment;

Priority 3: Realising the potential of young people;

Priority 4: Developing a shared responsibility for skills through effective partnerships.

The LEP cannot deliver its Marches Skills Plan on its own, but in its strategic leadership role to promote the national skills agenda it will look to the actions of all partners to contribute to the Plan's successful implementation. There are already many interventions and activities undertaken by our partners and others that promote the aims of the Marches Skills Plan. One of the roles of the Marches Skills Plan is to inform and align these in the most effective way to ensure that the benefits to local businesses are maximised and that local skills initiatives take place within this wider Marches context. The Plan therefore highlights and references existing local policies to identify Marches-wide issues which align with local priorities.

Scope for supporting further and higher education in the Marches

Investing in education and skills is a priority for the Marches LEP and is essential for it to be successful. An educated and skilled workforce is a major attraction to prospective in-movers and investors. Both quantity and quality will be important for the provision of skills in the future. In particular there is on-going requirement especially in developing new skills that are 'ahead of market'.

Businesses are the main source and procurer of training but the level of growth that could be achieved goes beyond the normal workings of the market, which often tends to be reactive, rather than looking to the medium and longer term. The public sector has made significant education and skills investments in recent years, and now has some of the highest performing secondary education schools in the UK.

There are, however, a number of areas where the Marches shows weakness with regard to Further and Higher Education, with:

- A lack of HE presence in the area: Relative lack of Higher Education provision within the LEP area makes it more challenging for local businesses to collaborate on innovation initiatives with HE establishments; and leads to a shortage of easy to recruit graduates.
- Out-migration of young, educated graduates: Loss of young people including graduates from the area due to lack of HE provision and job opportunities, perception of limited social scene/nightlife and low wage levels is an issue for the Marches to address.
- A lack of experience in the graduate/high skills market: small businesses have limited experience of the benefit that can be gained from employing higher skilled workers and graduates or assume that graduate skills are beyond their budget.

The challenge is to enable students to study locally in the Marches and to attract new students into the area. The principal outcomes would be an increase in the higher skills / occupational base, increases in economic activity / GVA and a raised profile and identity for the Marches.

In order to achieve this there are a number of opportunities which the Marches can offer, these include:

- Marches Business Graduate Scheme: a two year LEP pilot project which aims to improve SME engagement with a higher skilled/graduate workforce, raising awareness and experience levels among small businesses of business growth potential through transfer of new knowledge and innovation and access to higher level skills.
- Further Education Colleges: Ambitious growth plans, including an expansion of their offer to higher education courses.
- A New University for the Marches: The wider picture is that many campuses in cities are constrained by space, or may wish to diversify their offer in terms of place and quality of life. Establishing a new university with a distinct brand, new sense of place and vision to grow steadily over the next ten, twenty, thirty years and into the future can be a compelling proposition for a range of teaching and academic institutions.

Higher Education

The most obvious gap in the Marches is the provision of Higher Education provision at any scale, beyond the very effective specialist provision offered by Harper Adams University and the small University of Wolverhampton Campus and HE courses offered by some of the FE colleges that are awarded by Universities outside of the area, such as Staffordshire and Keele.

Case Study: Harper Adams University – A Specialist University Presence

Harper Adams University is the UK's largest university specialising in agriculture, food and related areas of study. It has a specific commitment to knowledge transfer to support the rural economy and the national and international dimensions of environmental and food chain sustainability and generating and promoting innovation in the application of science and technological advances within the global agri-food chain and the wider rural sector. The university offers sandwich degrees which, in addition to its research and knowledge transfer activities, create a very close connection with companies in the agri-food sector, across the UK and internationally.

The university caters for more than 3,000 students, with about 2,500 students on undergraduate and postgraduate awards. It is currently in the top three universities for its graduate employment rates, with a massive 98.3 per cent of students graduating from full-time first degrees in 2011 having moved into work or further study after six months (HESA). It is also currently within the top 10 higher education institutions in the UK in the National Student Survey.

Case Study: University of Wolverhampton , Telford Campus – A Track Record in Knowledge Transfer Activity

The University of Wolverhampton has a strong heritage in the manufacturing and technical industries dating back over 150 years. Occupying three main teaching campuses located in Wolverhampton, Walsall and Telford, the University educates more than 23,000 students and employs over 2,000 employees. In addition to these campuses, the University also delivers courses in Burton and runs the University of Wolverhampton Science Park. Since opening in 1997, the Science Park has focused on the support and enhancement of innovation and enterprise and is now home to some 80 businesses. The Telford Innovation Campus hosts both an e-Innovation Centre as well as a recently opened Business and Technology Centre which together are home to some 60 businesses. The campus delivers degree programmes to more than 200 full-time undergraduate students in engineering and manufacturing disciplines as well as health and environmental programmes to a further 130 undergraduate students.

The University of Wolverhampton is a major provider of Knowledge Transfer activities for business and the wider community, both nationally and internationally. It is at the forefront of the Higher Education sector in working with regional businesses and holds first position in England for the number of Knowledge Transfer Partnerships it operated between 2008 and 2011, and has recently been awarded the prestigious Times Higher national award for their impact on business."

The Marches LEP notes with interest the recent announcement of Department of Business Innovation and Skills on University Enterprise Zones and is looking to explore options with its partners on this opportunity.

The gap to be addressed is more locally-provided, employer-driven courses. The opportunity to be realised includes greater economic growth through more, higher educated employees within businesses and through the HE institution itself in contributing to the local economy.

Case Study: Marches Business Graduate Scheme (January 2013 – June 2015) – Improving SME engagement with graduates

In January 2013 the Marches began a two year LEP pilot project which aims to improve SME engagement with a higher skilled/graduate workforce. The ERDF-funded Graduate Placement Scheme provides small firms with the opportunity to apply for funding (45% salary costs) to create a graduate placement within the business for a period of 6 months to support their growth priorities. The Scheme, delivered by Shropshire Council, provides a 'matching service' for the graduate and participating businesses and supports both parties during the placement. The Scheme was developed in consultation with the Universities of Keele, Wolverhampton and Aston.

The pilot project began in Shropshire and was built upon research, which indicated that Shropshire is a preferred graduate workplace location and that there was scope to improve small firm engagement in R&D, innovation and engagement with universities. There are currently 13 SMEs in Shropshire benefitting from a graduate placement through the project. Demand has exceeded capacity however and the work is now being rolled out across the whole of the Marches area.

A New Higher Education Facility in the Marches

The potential feasibility of establishing a new university needs to be further explored. Options include attracting a university seeking to develop a new presence in the UK or to expand its existing footprint and/or the realisation of non-state-led models.

There are a range of space constrained institutions currently operating within England and a host of developing regions and growing universities in countries including China, South Korea and India that could be attracted to a proposition to develop a new UK base in the Marches. The relative close proximity to Birmingham International airport and major cities in the Midlands and accessibility across the country exists and is being improved, including the runway extension at BHX which will enhance its ability to connect more distant international routes.

However, the real compelling advantage and distinctive local offer is the potential to develop a new high quality University base in the Marches with access to beautiful countryside and relatively low land costs and the quality of life offered outside of a major urban environment.

4.4 Low Carbon Economy

Decarbonising the economy plays a key part in achieving sustainable and balanced growth, with a focus on maximising the opportunities and minimising the costs of the green economy transition. The Marches benefits from considerable 'natural capital' that is either currently tradable or likely to be so in the near future for example in emerging carbon markets. The Marches LEP commissioned research into the low carbon economy (Supporting the Low carbon Economy Under the 2014-20 EU Programme in the Marches, Worcestershire and Stoke & Staffordshire LEPs August 2013) which identified a number of key areas for potential investment falling under the following three priority areas:

New Technologies

- Development and deployment of micro anaerobic digestion;

- Development of distribution and supply chains for biomass and biofuel energy supply;
- Demonstrator projects to develop and showcase energy and resource efficiency deployment and new renewable technologies;
- Support the development and deployment of energy efficient technologies and processes in Energy Intensive Industries.

Reducing Environmental Costs

- Resource efficiency support including grants, awareness raising, business support and skills development;
- Business Support and capacity development including supply chain development;
- Retrofit activities including demonstrator buildings and the integration of new construction/retrofit capital investment with the provision of local employment, training and apprenticeship activities;
- Demonstrator projects to develop and showcase energy and resource efficiency deployment and new renewable technologies; and
- Training support including integration between schools, FE, HE and businesses, careers advice, apprenticeships.

Environment as a key economic asset

- Water supply and flood defences.

These potential areas of activity are currently being explored for inclusion within the future programme of work, particularly through the Marches EU Structural and Investment Funds Strategy.

4.5 Social Inclusion

The Marches will also prioritise socially excluded groups and ensure that there is strong provision through funded programmes, such as its European programmes, to help those who need it most into employment.

Socially excluded or marginalised groups include (but are not limited to): offenders and ex-offenders; lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender groups (LGBT); young people not in education, employment and training (NEET); Gypsy and traveller groups; women; the elderly; the working poor; complex and troubled families; the homeless; the disabled (physical and those with mental health issues); carers; and black and minority ethnic groups.

Supporting those furthest from the job market into employment will transform the lives of individuals and families from these socially excluded/ marginalised groups, providing a sustainable route away from poverty. Securing employment provides the single most important means through which people are able to turn their lives around. This will be the focus for the LEP in this area of work. A greater

understanding of the barriers faced by people from these groups alongside tried and tested solutions is critical if trends are to be broken.

Youth unemployment is also particularly prevalent in the Marches, and the LEP will seek to provide the support, through infrastructure, guidance and improvements in education and business, to ensure that these young people have the access to jobs and employment that they deserve. The Marches LEP will place an emphasis on early intervention and action to break down barriers and enable progression into training, learning and work. This requires a joined up approach from all, working at a local level to ensure long term change, adding value to existing programmes, learning from approaches which have worked, finding solutions where gaps have been identified and ensuring innovative ideas and new organisations are identified and encouraged. This is being considered in the development of LEP projects and programmes, recognising that, although social inclusion is a priority in its own right, it fits within the other strategic priorities of the LEP.

5 Governance for Accelerating Growth

5.1 Commitment to Good Governance

The Marches partners have a governance structure that is fit for purpose in delivering the aspiration of the SEP against a focussed delivery programme. The strategy for growth is firmly business-led. Delivery will be undertaken by public, private and third sector partners, while taking full advantage of existing local authority partner administrative processes, to ensure requirements of transparency, good governance and accountability for the administration and use of public funds are met.

A number of underlying objectives underpin the Marches LEP approach.

- **Strong Leadership.** The governance model provides strong leadership with an emphasis on swift decision-making and efficient delivery.
- **Business led.** The business sector plays a leading role through three Area Business Boards and our governance also ensures appropriate involvement of other leading sectors, including local authorities and other public sector, higher education and the voluntary and community sector.
- **Flexibility.** The model enables funding decisions to be made quickly, robustly and easily while using a range of different delivery mechanisms.
- **Co-operation.** The LEP has established a shared vision and embedded principles of co-operation between all participating stakeholders, ensuring 'joined-up thinking'.
- **Understanding of the broader context.** Decisions made will reflect the wider interests of the LEP area as well as implications for local community beneficiaries.
- **Simplification.** The LEP is committed to simplifying arrangements, reducing bureaucracy and taking best practice from private sector approaches.

The management and governance arrangements reflect the core principles of partnership working and engagement. It seeks to embed core partners within its governance structures. The model for delivery outlined below illustrates how this is being achieved.

5.2 Governing Growth

The Marches LEP has revised its governance requirements and delivery structures as part of the development of the Marches LEP SEP, including the EU Structural and Investment Funds Strategy and Growth Deal. The Marches LEP will work with Managing Authority Departments (DCLG, DWP and DEFRA) and BIS Local, in finalising the detailed design. ARUP has been appointed to support this work as part of its contract to develop a Marches LEP SEP and is acting as 'critical friend' in testing governance and delivery propositions. The detail of final arrangements will depend on the final agreed deal and wider programme, including detailed proposals included in the final ESIF Strategy.

The principles of the Marches LEP governance model are as follows:

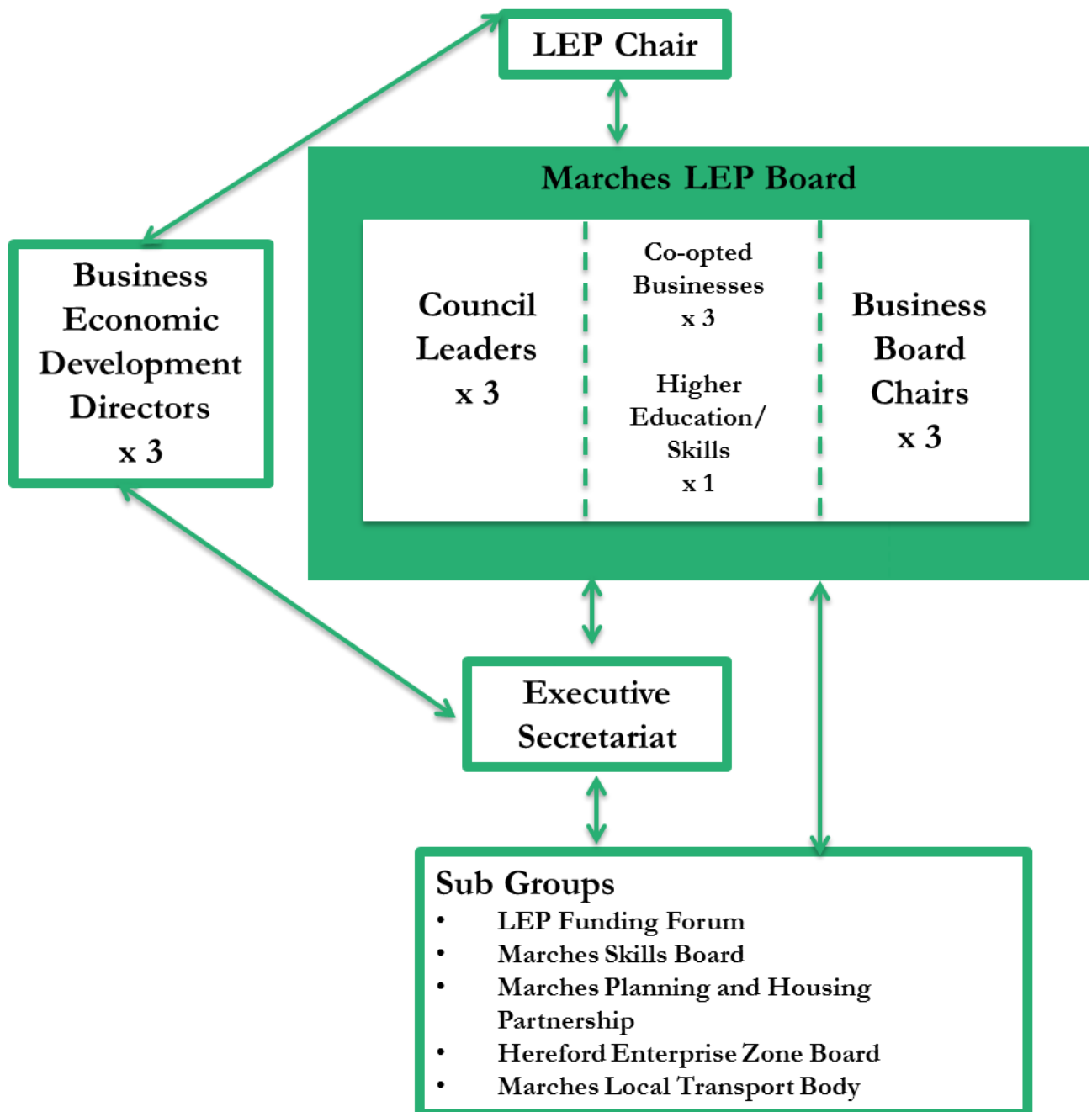
- **The LEP Board make decisions via a 'single conversation,'** on the delivery of the SEP, including project prioritisation and allocation of funding. Local authority members of the Board (the Leaders) have wide powers of delegation

with their respective councils to ensure that decisions can be taken through a transparent and accountable process.

- **The LEP Executive Group** delivers the programme of work on behalf of the LEP Board. The three Local Authorities have senior representation on the Executive Group to work with the SEP Secretariat in coordinating and performance-managing delivery at a local level, thereby reducing delays and streamlining process.
- **The overall LEP strategy and growth deal** is endorsed by all the three Councils together with the LEP Board. It also takes into account the views of key stakeholders. The growth deal will also be agreed with Government and any amendments to the approach agreed in a similar way.
- **The local authority partners** act administratively as the accountable bodies for the purposes of handing resources, accounting and audit. Shropshire Council is providing the lead role, assuming responsibility for the sound financial management of all budgets and finances which are channelled through the LEP from this point onwards. This Council will also support a constitution and standing orders for involvement and decision taking by the LEP Board. Established areas of expertise on existing programmes will be retained and Telford & Wrekin Council will therefore continue to provide the accountable body role for the Marches Local Transport Body and Herefordshire Council will continue to provide the same for the Regional Growth Fund Projects delivered through the Marches & Worcestershire LEP's Redundant Building Grant Programme.
- There is an on-going communications programme with the **business community and wider stakeholders**. This is used to communicate the work of the LEP and to seek feedback on priorities and the work programme.

5.3 Governance Structure

The Marches LEP operates a slim-line structure developed in the interests of minimising bureaucracy, cost and duplication and achieving speedy decision making and delivery. **This new governance structure has been designed with the requirement to deliver the LEP programme of accelerated growth at its heart.**



The LEP Board provides business-driven strategic direction on priorities to achieve economic growth across the Marches. The eleven-Member Board includes:

- the Leaders of the three Local Authorities;
- the Chairman of the Hereford Enterprise Zone Board;
- the Vice-Chancellors of the Universities; and
- Chairs of each of three Area Business Boards which strengthen the LEP Board by providing an underlying, combined 60-strong business constituency that contributes experience and views to support LEP decision-making. The Area Business Boards have key representation from our two Chambers of Commerce, the Federation of Small Businesses and Universities.

The LEP Secretariat has responsibility for the day to day operations of the LEP and includes one full time Coordinator who is directly responsible to the Chairman and LEP Board and a part time EU Technical Assistant shared with Worcestershire LEP who is supporting the development of the ESIF Strategy. The secretariat will receive a significant boost in capacity through the appointment of further posts providing specific skills, including in financial management, inward investment, project delivery and management and EU technical assistance. The core secretariat will be funded via local authority contributions, Central Government funding and EU Technical Capacity. In addition, essential technical support is provided by the three local authorities, with officers of the LEP and local councils working together to achieve agreed outcomes.

The LEP Executive Group, comprises of the LEP Chairman, the LEP Coordinator, three Directors with responsibility for promoting economic growth and senior staff from three Unitary Councils (across relevant disciplines including economic development, transport, housing, finance and funding programme management, publicity). This Group provides the engine room for the LEP, supporting the work of the LEP Board by bringing required resource and coordination to project development and delivery, working to the Board's identified priorities and activities.

The LEP Sub Groups. There are a set of other important Sub Groups that report in to the LEP Executive Group and, thereafter, on to the LEP Board. These include: the LEP Funding Forum; the Hereford Enterprise Zone Board; the Marches Local Transport Body; the Marches Skills Board and the Marches Housing and Planning Partnership.

The LEP Funding Forum is made up of local authority officers from the three Unitary Councils who have a range of expertise in funding; including extensive experience of EU funding regulations, programme development, governance and delivery arrangements. The Funding Forum advises the LEP Executive and Board on technical aspects of funding and funding programme development and has led the development work for the Marches European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) Strategy including the detailed stakeholder consultation and Task & Finish Group facilitation and reporting. The Marches LEP has engaged a wide range of partners during the development of the ESIF Strategy.

Hereford Enterprise Zone Board. Hereford Enterprise Zone Ltd. is the management company tasked with developing and overseeing delivery of the programme of work for the Hereford Enterprise Zone, providing recommendations to Hereford Council on Zone delivery. The Enterprise Zone Board has representation

from across the Marches and works closely with the LEP; the Chairman of the EZ Board also being a LEP Board Member.

The Marches Local Transport Body (LTB) is an informal partnership between four full member organisations, namely Telford & Wrekin Council, Herefordshire Council, Shropshire Council and the Marches LEP and associate Members such as the Department for Transport and Highways Agency. The LTB role is to develop and promote the transport priorities of the Marches Sub-Region, providing transport advice and input to the development and delivery of the Marches SEP and liaising with neighbouring LTBs, LEPs, Network Rail and the Highways Agency regarding the development of strategic cross boundary schemes.

The Marches Skills Board was established in 2012 to support the LEP Board by providing expertise and advice on advancing skills development in employers, their workforce, students and Marches residents and to oversee the development and implementation of the Marches Skills Plan 2013-15, the Marches Apprenticeship Plan 2013-15 and Hereford Enterprise Zone Skills Plan 2013-15. Board membership includes: employers; representatives from Councils, schools, FE and HE; training providers; the Skills Funding Agency; Job Centre Plus, the National Apprenticeship Association; voluntary sector organisations and the Hereford Enterprise Zone. The Skills Board is chaired by the Marches LEP Skills Champion who is a member of the LEP Board.

The Marches Planning & Housing Partnership was formed in 2011 from the merger of the Marches Housing and Planning Auxiliary Group and the West Housing Market Area Partnership. The new partnership is made up from elected decision makers, senior housing and planning professionals, sector experts and engaged regional advisors and provides the principal vehicle for high level coordination of planning and housing strategy and delivery at a sub-regional level with the aim of maximising the role of housing in contributing to economic growth; providing leadership on strategic planning and housing policy decisions for the LEP; developing joint interventions within and across housing sectors; and monitoring performance.

A Collaborative Approach

Given the context of stretched and reducing finances, the aim has been to design the most cost effective structures possible to manage finances and strategy delivery in a transparent, accountable manner. In practice, this means making the most of existing resources, collaboration and a pooling approach to drive efficiencies. This collaborative approach also ensures that bureaucracy in setting up and managing projects is avoided where an existing initiative or structure can simply be extended instead.

The Marches LEP proposals acknowledge the significant additional tasks that need to be completed, for instance around strategy and financial management and delivery, project development and appraisal, monitoring and intelligence, and partnership development. The LEP proposals provide appropriate structures which bring together or pool local resources where this adds value. This includes consideration of how, for example, economic development resources across local authority areas can work together as part of the LEP to deliver economies of scale, drive collaboration, and to support LEP development at the same time as serving local needs and working collaboratively with other LEP partners particularly in delivering the ESIF Strategy work.

Programme Delivery, Governance and Risk Management

The project prioritisation, governance and management structures for delivering our Marches LEP SEP and ESIF Strategy are currently under development. Final details will depend upon the financial mechanisms and delivery models being used, however all arrangements will be stream-lined and appropriate and proportionate to overseeing the on-going strategic development and delivery of the LEP Programme of work. The EU Programme cross-cutting themes [sustainability, equal opportunities and social innovation] will be incorporated within governance structures and delivery processes as part of the development, application, assessment and delivery of projects.

The Marches LEP has engaged a wide range of partners during the development of the programme of work and this will continue during the delivery of the programme. Collaboration with other LEPs across the West Midlands and beyond has formed a key area in developing the work programme and this will also be reflected in management and governance, where appropriate and expedient, and in the interests of economy and transparency.

The Marches LEP Board is developing a framework around its delivery models, including local procurement, project bidding and commissioning and opt-in arrangements. The Marches LEP Board will agree with its Managing Authority the delivery processes, models and procurement routes to be adopted. These will ensure transparency of decision-making, elimination of conflicts of interest, management of risks and ensuring independent appraisal.

5.4 A Track Record of Good Financial Governance

The Marches Local Enterprise Partnership has already been awarded over £25.5 million by the Government including the Growing Places Fund, Regional Growth Fund (Marches Redundant Building Grant) and a range of projects and programmes through the current EU Programme. From these and the award of Enterprise Zone status for Hereford's Skylon Park, it is already successfully delivering upfront capital funding for physical infrastructure and direct support to SMEs.

The Marches LEP partners have more than 10 years of experience in delivering and providing the accountable body role for the European Regional and Development Fund (ERDF), European Social Fund and Rural Development Programme for England. The three local authorities have experience in developing and delivering: Action Plans (over £30 million in total value); Strategic Packages (over £75 million in total value); RDPE Programme including LEADER in the Northern Marches, Shropshire Hills and Vital Herefordshire; and large scale strategic projects including Switch on Shropshire, Hereford Learning Village and Leominster Access Road. The local authority partners are delivering over £6million European Social Fund for 14 – 19 year olds and all three have dedicated resources in their Finance and Funding Teams to support delivery of current programmes and to prepare for the future programmes.

Appendix A

SWOT analysis

Strengths

- The diversity of our economy across the business sectors has provided resilience in recession, which provides opportunity for growth.
- A high proportion of business enterprises (44 per 1000 population, ranked joint third among LEPs).
- Manufacturing accounts for 15% of total employees. This is above the national average.
- The Marches has a number of multi-national companies which have chosen to base operations here.
- A distinctive visitor economy/tourism offer.
- Food & Drink processing sector thrives, based upon the highest quality local produce and our advantages of accessibility, skills, quality land & premises.
- A higher than average employment rate (73% March 2011) and self-employment rate.
- Major on-going investment and growth in the three Urban Powerhouses.
- Good business survival rates (80.4% surviving after 2 years).
- The Marches has a good track record in delivering the Redundant Building Programme which supports expanding businesses to create sustainable employment by bringing empty property back into use.
- Central geographic location and generally good connections to the motorway and rail network, linking the Marches to West Midlands and further afield. Also reasonable access to International air connections.
- Strong transport/travel links between the Urban Powerhouses of Shrewsbury and Telford, which have enabled a mutually beneficial economic relationship to be established.
- Large number of Opportunity and Market Towns provide a different and attractive sustainable lifestyle offer for the location of houses and jobs.
- Excellent schools and educational achievements.
- Good experience of running student and graduate placements in companies
- Relative proximity to NEC which attracts major international trade shows.

Weaknesses

- A static enterprise population with relatively lower rates of company births and deaths compared with other areas despite good enterprise density.
- Lower than average GVA per head reflecting low levels of pay and out commuting of higher skilled workers.

- The penetration of the knowledge intensive sectors in the Marches LEP is below the regional average and significantly below the national average.
- An identity and brand that is not sufficiently well recognised at the national and global level resulting in assets not always being connected to realise their full potential.
- Rural based micro & small businesses simply don't have proximity to faster road and rail links and are at a competitive disadvantage in terms of fuel & distribution costs and also in attracting skilled workers.
- One of the LEP areas with the lowest share of total employee jobs in foreign-owned enterprises, which closes access to an avenue of finance available in other better-served areas.
- LEP with lowest rate of patenting per 100,000 residents.
- Poor superfast broadband and mobile phone infrastructure, exacerbating the issue around accessing services in rural areas – this is not taking into account the good coverage provided in Telford.
- Inadequate commuting and business travel rail links between the Marches, the West Midland and London, which limits the development of labour markets and restricts wider job opportunities and inward investment.
- Poor road links between Hereford and Shrewsbury/Telford.
- Pockets of deprivation within both urban and rural areas and amongst excluded groups.
- Limited university presence in the 'less urban' west of the West Midlands has long been noted.
- The Enterprise culture whilst resilient can have low levels of interest in innovation.
- Parts of the LEP area are less well connected to the national motorway network.

Opportunities

- The Marches has a strong enterprise culture, with a stable and flexible, wage-competitive workforce, a high quality of environment with a good supply of development land & premises available, with an enviable work-life balance making the area very attractive to aspiring businesses, entrepreneurs and investors.
- Significant growth potential in key sectors: food & drink; agri-technology; advanced and automotive manufacturing; defence & securities; tourism & leisure; environmental technologies & services and social enterprise.
- Significant growth potential in the exploitation of renewable energy and broadband technology potential within the area.

- The natural resources and the environment ideal for the production of food and renewables.
- Centres of Excellence add real value to the wider business support offer, providing advice on product development, market research and bespoke business space.
- RAF Cosford, MOD Donnington and RAF Shawbury provide substantial business within their community and a strong local skills base in a range of engineering, IT and other areas.
- Growing potential for business tourism.
- A centrally positioned business location with an existing road and rail infrastructure providing connections to major airports which offers the opportunity to be strengthened further to improve links to London/SE in particular.
- Strong economic connections with other LEPs, (particularly the Black Country, with Jaguar Land Rover's £355m new i54 engine plant set to support 3,000 new jobs and up to 1,500 companies and with defence and securities industry links in Worcestershire. The M54 is potential catalyst for this, and further economic growth.
- Opportunity to enhance the support for local businesses in particular in relation to employees, access to finance and business skills.
- Scope to work with more universities outside the immediate Marches LEP area (eg Wolverhampton, Keele, Staffordshire, Chester and the Birmingham Universities).
- There is potential to unlock, add value and speed up strategic employment sites by: proving high quality land and workspace; adding to the areas Centres of Excellence; supporting broadband and mobile telecommunications delivery; unlocking private sector investment in areas of business opportunity; supporting transport improvements, and supporting the major town centre redevelopment schemes in the three Urban Powerhouses.
- The Urban Powerhouses are designated Growth Point towns, with plans for an additional 354ha employment land and town centre regeneration schemes under development that are capable of generating £450m private investment and 3,500 sustainable private sector jobs.
- The strategic sites including the Enterprise Zone in Hereford and Enterprise Areas will create a further 7,400 private sector jobs and a further £250m private sector investment.
- The strong presence of innovative Agri-Food businesses, such as Muller, Cargill, ABP, etc., along with assets such as the Food Enterprise Centre and the Regional Food Academy, the Agricultural Innovation Centre and a range of food market signals, such as health and food security offer the foundation for food sector innovation.

- The presence of clusters of environmental technology and services businesses within the Marches LEP area is an opportunity for the LEP, particularly if strongly connected to the knowledge base.

Threats

- Continued poor quality broadband infrastructure especially in more sparsely populated rural areas preventing businesses to operate and communicate within a competitive, international market place.
- Sluggish economic growth is making business investment aspirations very challenging, with a lack of access to finance for micro and small businesses stymying growth potential.
- Protracted timetables on MOD restructuring and uncertainty around the future of RAF Cosford, Copthorne Barracks and MOD Donnington is a barrier to growth.
- Loss of young people including graduates from the area due to gaps in the existing HE provision and job opportunities, perception of limited social scene/nightlife and low wage levels.
- The Marches overall has a higher than average number of young people not in education, work or training.
- Significant problems around public transport limiting easy movement of the workforce and preventing access to jobs.
- An imbalance between levels of housing and job creation may force people to commute longer distances to find work, thereby making areas of the Marches “dormitories” for larger settlements in the West Midlands.
- Severe problems with utilities provision in some key employment areas, particularly electricity in North Shropshire (Whitchurch) and water quality in the River Wye, River Clun and River Lugg (affecting growth in South Shropshire and Hereford City) and intermittent mobile telecommunication in more rural parts of the Marches area.
- Continued low wage levels could have implications for the GVA per capita and the attractiveness of the area to a more mobile workforce.
- Around 28% of the workforce is currently employed in a contracting public sector services.
- Changes are required to Government regulation for small businesses and Government support is required.
- Marches competitiveness is under threat as neighbouring areas and global competitor areas gain access to 4G. The Marches does not yet have universal 3G coverage.
- The working age population is declining in Shropshire and Herefordshire, (although it is growing in Telford).

Appendix B

Key Sites

Housing Growth Sites

The population of the Marches is predicted to grow significantly over the next two decades, increasing to over 700,000 by 2031. Under the accelerated growth scenario the Marches could provide over 72,000 new homes.

The current major housing sites in progress are summarised in the table below.

Site Name	Units
Holmer West, Hereford	500
Three Elms, Hereford	1000
Lower Bullingham, Hereford	1000
Leominster SUE	2300
Hildersley SUE, Ross-on-Wye	900
Viaduct SUE, Ledbury	800
Hardwick Bank SUE, Bromyard	500
Shrewsbury West SUE	750
Shrewsbury South SUE	900
Oswestry SUE	750
Lawley Village, Telford	3500
Lightmoor Village, Telford	800
Telford Millenium Village, Ketley	600
West of Tilstock Road, Whitchurch	500
Shillingstone Drive, Shrewsbury	230
Greenfield Road, Craven Arms	200
East Shifnal	550
Bowbrook-Radbrook, Shrewsbury	550
Total	16,330

Key Growth Locations

The Hereford Enterprise Zone at Rotherwas was designated in 2011. It contains 120 acres of land, of which 72 hectares is contained in Skylon Park. The site presents over 60 hectares of free, ready to develop land and is excellently located on the A49, with easy access to the M50, with proximity to three major airports in Cardiff, Birmingham and Bristol. The site is also located within the highly attractive and historic City of Hereford. If the correct investment is achieved, this site could accommodate 4,200 jobs and with an emphasis on attracting advanced manufacturing and defence industries could act as a draw for recent graduates, attracting high skilled young workers to the area.

Telford contains a large amount of 'ready to go' commercial land of regional significance. There is over 400 acres of serviced land for business, there are two major employment sites within this area: Hortonwood and Telford 54. It has regional scale retail and conference facilities and offers opportunities for large scale commercial development.

Hortonwood is home to the Telford International Railfreight depot and represents a serviced site with capacity to particularly support the development of a Ministry of Defence hub in the area. Telford 54 is also of strategic importance, representing a 78.11 acre site, which is allocated as a committed employment site within the Local Plan. It is located less than 1 mile from Junction 4 of the M54, and as such has a direct link to the larger I54 in neighbouring Wolverhampton/Staffordshire. It is also located close to Stafford Park, one of Telford's major industrial estates, and is less than 2 miles from Central Telford and 15 miles from J10a of M6. The site offers fully serviced plots to attract employment from Industrial, Warehousing and Research and Development companies.

Shrewsbury is an important regional and cultural centre and offers a wide range of opportunities for housing, employment, retail, leisure and the night time economy. In this part of the Marches, it is complemented by Oswestry, one of the largest Opportunity Towns, with a strong service offer and significant potential for growth.

Urban Extension Centres

The main locations are:

- Holmer West, Hereford: 500 new homes, 350 space P&R, pre-school etc.
- Three Elms, Hereford: 1000 new homes, 10 hectares of employment land, 150 place transport interchange and a primary school.
- Lower Bullingham, Hereford: 1000 new homes, 5 hectares of employment land, 350 space park and ride and a primary school
- Shrewsbury West Sustainable Urban Extension: 750 new homes, up to 12 hectares of employment land, a new Oxon Link Road between the A5 Bypass and the Holyhead Road, and a new expanded local centre.
- Shrewsbury South Sustainable Urban Extension: 900 new homes, 26 hectares of employment land, a local centre, community facilities and public open space.
- Lawley Village, Telford: 3,500 homes, £75+million of investment for the delivery of a new school, play areas and leisure facilities.
- Lightmoor Village, Telford: 800 high quality homes, which includes a primary school and shops and community facilities.
- Telford Millennium Community, Ketley: 600 high quality homes, community facilities and public spaces.

Strategic Employment Sites

The major strategic employment sites within the Marches, the land available and the potential they can achieve with regards to jobs generation are summarised below.

Site Name	Available Land (Ha)	Potential Job Numbers
Hereford Enterprise Zone	64	4,200
Bridgnorth	14.5	1,557
Holmer Road, Hereford	16	1,392
Hereford City	15	1,305
Ledbury	12	1,044
Leominster Enterprise Park	10	870
Market Drayton	24 ³	2,520
Model Farm, Ross-on-Wye	10	870
Oswestry Innovation Park	23	3,000
Shrewsbury West SUE	12	1,044
Shrewsbury South SUE	26	2,262
Telford 54	32	3,438
Hortonwood, Telford	92	9,979
Hadley	11	941
Whittington	14	1,826
Whitchurch	20	2,608
Total	395.5	38,856

³ 8 hectares of this is for the Muller development.

Appendix C

Project list from the Marches

Exemplar Project List

-  Project in delivery
-  Project requiring funding package completion
-  Project in development phase

*Details of all strategic employment & housing sites and transport schemes omitted here as detailed elsewhere in Draft SEP.

	Project Summary	The Business Opportunity	Project Lead/ Delivery Partners	Project Finance	Project Timescales	Measuring Success
	Priority 1: Supporting Businesses					
	We will create an exceptional business support environment for aspiring growth businesses through support, access to finance and incentives to innovate. We will promote the Marches as a business investment location.					
●	Marches Business Support Project Providing advice and training to companies and entrepreneurs in Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin via three schemes: ▪ Start up and Shape Up: Supporting pre-start up and new businesses to develop stronger entrepreneurial culture through enterprise coaching and intensive bespoke business advice, training and on-going support to individuals who progress to starting a new business/social enterprise. ▪ Supporting new businesses: Supporting new businesses to survive and grow through developing their business vision, personal skills, providing a customised service to address distinct needs, coaching and mentoring support. ▪ High growth potential: Supporting pre-qualified SMEs with growth potential with up to £2,000 of	▪ 171 businesses given support to grow ▪ 110 entrepreneurs supported to start a business ▪ Direct benefit to private sector training provider procured to deliver training across the LEP area.	▪ Private sector project leader/delivery partner to be identified through competitive tendering process ▪ Telford & Wrekin Council providing Accountable Body role ▪ Herefordshire Council, Shropshire Council HSBC and Telford Business Partnership delivery & funding partners ▪ Area Business Boards as delivery partners	▪ ERDF £186,892 ▪ Private sector (incl HSBC & Telford Business Partnership) £52,850 ▪ Public Sector £134,043	October 2012- March 2014	▪ 171 SME businesses to be supported (of these 110 SME businesses supported to start up) ▪ 88 supported to survive past 12 months ▪ 366 new SMEs aware of new Business Link online services ▪ Contributing £4m in GVA to WM economy

	valuable professional time/services to assist business expansion.					
●	Shropshire & Herefordshire Business Enterprise Fund Providing Capital Grant Scheme of £1,500- £5,000 available to SMEs businesses for capital works relating to starting up a business and growing existing businesses. <i>[Proposing to extend this successful programme to include Telford & Wrekin through 2014-2020 EU funding]</i>	▪ 130 individuals given a chance in self-employment. ▪ 89 new private sector businesses started up. ▪ 160 private businesses helped to be more successful. ▪ 39 local people obtain new jobs	▪ Shropshire Council providing Accountable Body ▪ Herefordshire Council delivery partner ▪ Area Business Boards as delivery partners	▪ ERDF £1,131,000 ▪ Private sector £1,157,000 ▪ Shropshire Council £69,300 ▪ Herefordshire Council £56,700	October 2011 – June 2014	▪ 160 SME businesses to be supported ▪ 4 social enterprises to be supported ▪ 130 individuals assisted to start up a business ▪ 39 individuals assisted to get a job ▪ 89 businesses started/moving into area
●	Start Up Telford and Shropshire Project The Start Up Telford and Shropshire Project is a two year programme that will support the creation of new enterprises operated by self-employed young people aged 16 to 24. The project will provide in depth business support, entrepreneurial development, sales and marketing support, support with access to finance and export assistance.	The project will not only tackle youth unemployment and give direct assistance to business start-ups operated by young people, it will also directly assist SME's to improve	▪ Project Lead: Shropshire Enterprise Partnership ▪ Partners: the TTC Group, Telford & Wrekin Council	Total budget £355,599 of which Shropshire Enterprise Partnership £131,555, TTC Group £21,300, Telford & Wrekin Council £25,000 and ERDF £177,744	2 year programme commencing March 2013	19 businesses assisted, 100 people assisted to start a business with a minimum of 50 new business start-ups within Telford & Wrekin

		performance and attract new businesses to the region.				
●	Marches Environmental Technologies Network Providing support to SME environmental businesses, including waste and recycling companies, across Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Telford and Wrekin and Shropshire. It also supports businesses looking to diversify into the env tech sector. Through its event programme, email bulletins and website, metnet encourages businesses to network, provides information, promotes collaborative working and innovation, helps businesses to promote themselves and keeps members up to date on funding, sector news and business opportunities. Through its contacts within higher education institutions, major agencies and the local Councils, metnet also provides a point of contact for businesses that have queries or question concerning the	▪ New tendering opportunities, signposting, information and promotion for businesses in the environmental technologies sector. ▪ New business opportunities provided in the environmental field to companies in the Marches that want to diversify.	▪ Shropshire Council providing Accountable Body ▪ Local authorities in Telford & Wrekin, Herefordshire, Shropshire & Worcestershire as delivery partners	▪ ERDF £117,107 ▪ Local authorities in Telford & Wrekin, Herefordshire, Shropshire & Worcestershire £117,107	April 2012-May 2014	30 SMEs to be supported

	sector in the Marches, want to access leading specialists or simply need to know who to speak to within its local Council. (In principle approval given by DCLG to extend project to June 2015 and to pilot a grant scheme in preparation for the development of a support bid for the new ERDF funding round in 2015)					
●	EnterpriseHere Pilot Initiative Providing web-based business support services that are both targeted and quality assured, to assist entrepreneurs, start-ups and established companies. Using web-meeting technologies, EnterpriseHere (www.enterprisehere.org.uk) is promoting the engagement of business support providers (who work to a managed code of practice) using live web video in collaboration with publicly sponsored business support partners (HMRC, IPO, Growth Accelerator, MAS etc.) and the private sector support providers who are members of professional	▪ Private sector provided with direct links with professional advice from gov't agencies. ▪ Provide growth coaching to high growth businesses.	▪ Private sector leading delivery through Herefordshire Business Board	▪ Private sector £70,000	October 2012 – October 2014	70 businesses supported to double the employee base and profit per employee

	institutes. 4,500 SMEs in England have accessed site to date (Dec 2012). This project has links with the CREATE and Optimising Business Broadband					
●	Stimulating Innovation and Growth across the Marches, Staffordshire & Worcestershire Providing a business network to encourage SMEs within specific sectors to innovate, to introduce new techniques, technologies, products and to find new markets. The proposal currently covers Shropshire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Staffordshire and will focus on the priority sectors which offer research and innovation opportunities on which to build: ▪ Advanced Manufacturing including specific sub-sectors i.e. ceramics, polymers, automotive etc. ▪ Defence and Security ▪ Environmental Technologies and Services ▪ Food & Drink Proposed project activities include: ▪ Customised business briefings for sectors and sub-sectors ▪ Tailored business briefings across	▪ 100 businesses supported through workshops and specialist audits. ▪ 30 Private companies obtain innovation grants to help with process and product development	▪ Shropshire Council providing Accountable Body ▪ Universities of Wolverhampton & Staffordshire, Local authorities in Telford & Wrekin, Herefordshire, Shropshire & Worcestershire as delivery partners	▪ ERDF £475,000 ▪ Universities of Wolverhampton & Staffordshire £28,000 ▪ Private partners £31,000 ▪ Private sector £300,000 ▪ Marches LEP £40,000 ▪ Stoke & Staffs, Worcestershire LEPs £80,000	March 2013-June 2015	110 SME businesses to be supported

	sectors ▪ Innovation clinics ▪ Local and sector network development opportunities ▪ Bespoke / Responsive Business support ▪ Direct grants for innovation, R&D and collaboration					
●	Optimising Business Broadband Across the Marches, Staffordshire and Worcestershire LEPs The project aims to ensure that the business benefits of NGA broadband in the LEP areas are understood to enable the economic gains anticipated by central and local government. Support provided to businesses to exploit improvements in broadband infrastructure to access the higher level applications. The project has 4 levels of support: ▪ Awareness raising through high profile and local events ▪ Non-accredited training courses on hardware, software and connectivity issues ▪ One to One diagnostics by specialist ICT consultants	▪ 70 local companies get one to one help to get increased productivity out of Broadband. ▪ 1,400 companies take part in Broadband courses. ▪ Local specialist digital consultancies benefit from new work.	LEAD: Shropshire Council PARTNERS: Herefordshire Council Worcestershire County Council Staffordshire County Council	Total Costs: £420,000 ERDF outline application submitted requesting £210,000 against a match of £201,250 from Local authorities and £8,750 private	June 2013 – June 2015	▪ Over 1,400 SMEs participating ▪ 70 SMEs assisted through one to one diagnostics and training

	▪ Follow-up and one to many specialist training					
●	CREATE (Connecting Rural Enterprise for A Transnational Economy). Trans-national project which aims to build on successful approaches to the stimulation of demand among rural SMEs for NGA Broadband. The Project will fund a range of activities including events and business diagnostics, a Digi-Lab and will provide opportunities for virtual clustering between local SMEs and other small rural businesses from across North West Europe.	▪ 100 local companies provided with 1-1 advice and action planning to enable the optimisation of NGA broadband ▪ Wider business community exposed to the benefits of broadband ▪ Clustering opportunities for local companies operating in distinct sectors	Herefordshire Council The other partner regions are as follows; Lowland Scotland Mid West Ireland West Flanders (Belgium) Nievre (France) ERNACT (Transnational) Highlands & Islands (Scotland)	€2.6m (50% ERDF) split between the Partners Herefordshire Council £40k + In Kind	2013-15	▪ 100 companies provided with advice

	Priority 2: Physical Infrastructure					
	We will provide a compelling business investment offer with a progressive planning framework and infrastructure fit for tomorrow's business needs					
	Digital					
●	Connecting Shropshire A £24.6M rural broadband project now contracted with work under-way. BT is the infrastructure contractor. It perfectly complements the current BT commercial roll-out. It will mean that 93% of premises in Shropshire that is 130,000 premises will obtain speeds of up to 80 mbps by Spring 2016..	Fibre will mean new business services and new business opportunities. Big business opportunities such as cloud computing will now be in reach of all businesses.	BT is the infrastructure delivery partner. A new body called "Connecting Shropshire" is being set up as a public/private sector partnership based in Shrewsbury to take the whole programme forward	£8.2m from Shropshire Council £7.84m from BDUK and £8.56M from BT.	Contract awarded March 2013 physical works start Autumn 2013 and completion is Spring 2016.	93% of premises in Shropshire obtain speeds up to 80 mbps
●	Fastershire A Central and Local government funded deployment of Broadband infrastructure by BT to areas of severe market failure in rural Herefordshire (& Gloucestershire). The deployment will deliver 2Mbps to 100% of premises and Fibre based solutions to c90% which will lead to an NGA capability of over 30Mbps to c88% of the premises in the county	- The project will provide the 21st communications infrastructure to enable local business to maximise their potential and increase their efficiency and resilience - The delivery of	Herefordshire Council Partners - Gloucestershire - County Council - BT - BDUK	BDUK £10.1m Herefordshire Council £9.75m BT £20.9m (inclusive of Gloucestershire)	2013-16	100% USC 88% NGA - Anticipated Net GVA Uplift over 10 years £115.5m (exclusive of revenue investment in demand stimulation)

		this project underpins the CREATE and / or Optimising Business Broadband Project's				
●	Passport to Fastershire Umbrella Scheme aligned to Fastershire to provide the opportunity to access NGA services by those not reached through either commercial or subsidised endeavours in Herefordshire. The Umbrella scheme includes the Herefordshire NGA bursary, Hereford City NGA project and Rural Community Broadband Fund	▪ The projects covered by the scheme will provide the 21st communications infrastructure to enable local business to maximise their potential and increase their efficiency and resilience ▪ The delivery of this project underpins the CREATE and / or Optimising Business Broadband Project's	Herefordshire Council Partners ▪ Bursary & RCBF ▪ BT ▪ Hereford City NGA ▪ TBC	Herefordshire Council £350k ERDF £600k RDPE £150k Private £600k	2013-2017	▪ ROI 10-1 (over 10 years) ▪ £10 of anticipated growth resulting from every £1 of public subsidy expended

	Broadband to stimulate growth (2014-2020) A project which complements current public investment in Next Generation Access Broadband Infrastructure by addressing the residual demand for infrastructure provision from businesses in the deeply rural areas of the Marches, as well as those served by infrastructure in the urban areas where connection proves to be too expensive to resolve through the current programmes in Herefordshire and Shropshire. This issue is estimated to affect c 10% of the business population, some 3,000 businesses. The project looks to satisfy the remaining demand following completion on current programmes on a case by case basis to support businesses that can prove need and where funding can be targeted at the beneficiaries who will deliver the greatest economic return for the Marches.	▪ Grant support of up to £15,000 per business will be made available, matched by the business to procure bespoke NGA broadband solutions where both the market has failed and recent public subsidy does not resolve	Herefordshire Council leading Partners: ▪ Shropshire ▪ Telford ▪ Worcester authorities	£1,950,000 ERDF £390,000 Private Sector Supplier Contributions £1,560,000 Beneficiary contributions	2015-2020	▪ 600 SME Businesses Supported ▪ 200 SMEs supported to improve performance
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	Town Centre Redevelopment					
●	Telford Town Centre Infrastructure/Southwater Development A £250m development providing high quality commercial, community, residential, hotel, cinema, leisure, bars and restaurants and retail space within a high quality environment. Southwater will play a key role in attracting other investors and businesses to Telford Town Centre and increasing the attraction of Telford as a destination of choice for visitors, investors and residents.	▪ 400 jobs safeguarded and 250 new jobs all as part of phase 1. ▪ Over £250m worth of construction tenders benefiting local contractors and sub-contractors. ▪ Local apprenticeship targets for contractors. ▪ Benefit to town centre businesses from increased footfall reflected an increase in spend in retail and business & leisure tourism ▪ Benefit to businesses across the Borough from	Telford & Wrekin Council with Citygrove and ASDA as developers for one part of the scheme and TWC delivering the remaining of phase 1.	£250m total Phase 1: £70m TWC, HCA, private sector (TWC £30m, private sector £70m, HCA £10m) Medium term: £20m Long term: £110m	Phase One completion in Spring 2014 Medium Term 2014-17 Long Term 2017-2025	▪ 1,500 jobs; ▪ 1,500 homes; ▪ 5,000 sq. m comparison retail floorspace; ▪ 10,500 sq. m convenience retail; ▪ 2 hotels, new cinema, new media & learning centre and community meeting facilities, bars and restaurants and 9,000m2 expansion of Telford International Centre (TIC) conference centre, new ASDA superstore – all in phase 1

		improved town centre offer, attracting inward investment and attracting/retaining skilled workers				
●	Shrewsbury Riverside Regeneration The scheme will create one new shopping centre by linking the existing 3 centres and creating one unified retail destination that provides better connection to and greater use of the riverside. UK Commercial Property Trust are investing £150 million in the scheme and are seeking to start on site in early 2014. Planning permission was granted in September 2012 and the New Riverside scheme, anchored by an already pre let 95,000 sq ft full line Debenhams department store will provide 50 more shops and restaurants to attract high quality retailers. Council resolution in December 2012 to make a CPO to	▪ Over £150m worth of construction tenders ▪ 50 new shops and restaurants opened leading to reclaimed retail spending and increased footfall ▪ 800 new local retail jobs created	▪ Project lead by UK Commercial Trust/Shearers ▪ Shropshire Council as delivery partner	UK Commerical Trust £150 million Full breakdown to be confirmed	2014 - 2016	▪ 800 private sector jobs ▪ Increase in the est. 414,000 primary retail catchment population

	assist the developer in assembly of necessary property interests. New Premier Inn opened in February 2013.					
 The Retail Quarter will see the construction of a new Waitrose, Debenhams, 6 Screen Odeon cinema, with accompanying restaurants and retail units.  The Urban Village element of the site will construct circa 800 units, requiring significant private sector investment and public investment to supply enabling infrastructure such as flood mitigation and a new Link Road, unlocking the land identified for housing.  The Link Road will require a budget	Edgar Street Grid, Hereford City Centre Development of a 100 acre city centre site, comprising of multiple elements including new retail, housing and HE provision with accompanying infrastructure.	▪ Construction of new retail lead development, leading to reclaimed retail spending and increased footfall ▪ Over £100m worth of construction tenders. ▪ Creation of new 800 home urban village in highly sustainable location. ▪ New retail and construction skills academies up-skilling local job seekers	▪ Private sector partner(s)/ Herefordshire Council	Retail element, Private sector £90m (Link Road £27m funds not yet identified) Full breakdown to be confirmed		▪ Phase 1: 800 new retail and service sector jobs & 800 new houses

●	of £27m to fund acquisitions and to undertake construction. Other elements of the scheme are at various stages of progression, including the HE provision, transport and parking improvements, as well as open space and public realm works.					
	Strategic Projects					
●	Agricultural Innovation Centre (National Centre for Precision Engineering), Harper Adams University To develop a national centre in support of advanced technology and manufacturing for the agri-food sector; providing an integrated engineering complex at the northern end of the College's campus, comprising teaching and research engineering laboratories in hydraulics, mechatronics and precision farming applications. The Centre will support large businesses and SMEs to adopt cutting edge practices, up-skill their workforce and significantly improve competitiveness in their business. The Centre will also promote long-	▪ A centre of excellence providing a local innovation and research resource for use by our business base, national/ international firms in increasing productivity. ▪ Initially 22 new local jobs ▪ A further 200 indirect jobs to be created within local beneficiary private	▪ Harper Adams University College as Project Lead ▪ HEFCE and private companies, ADCO, CLAAS, BASF, JCB and Douglas Bomford Trust, as project delivery partners ▪ Jaguar Land Rover, currently undertaking £355m development at i54 Enterprise Zone in Wolverhampton, providing support alongside other West Midlands firms.	▪ Harper Adams University College £275,000 ▪ Marches Growing Places Fund £750,000 ▪ Higher Education Funding Council for England £1.68m ▪ Private sector donations and Trust Funds £225,000	December 2012 – November 2013 <i>Now Completed and delivering against agri-tech strategy</i>	▪ 22 new local jobs ▪ A further 200 indirect jobs

	term links to an R&D and higher-level skills base in the university sector that will enable the network of companies to take a lead role (at least in Europe) on precision farming providing significant longer term prospects for job growth. The Centre will support further development of best practice within the food security agenda.	companies ▪ Providing opportunities for networking and potential contacts with new markets				
●	Marches Redundant Building Grant Scheme Providing capital grant support of between £3,000 and £50,000 to small job-creating businesses to refurbish underused and redundant buildings, bringing them back into commercial use. This initiative: ▪ provides a best practice model of effective sustainable private job creation and regeneration within a rural/peri-rural locality: ▪ provides an effective response to remove known barriers to growth in the LEP area, namely access to finance and availability of suitable, good quality workspace. ▪ supports wider LEP priorities including: regeneration of market towns; retention and reuse of historic buildings; improvement of	▪ 50 commercial buildings brought back into productive use. ▪ £3.5m of private sector finance levered into LEP. ▪ £5m of construction contracts let to Marches based companies. ▪ Associated supply chain benefits.	▪ Herefordshire Council as Accountable Body ▪ Shropshire Council, Telford & Wrekin Council, Area Business Boards as partners	▪ Regional Growth Fund £1.5 million ▪ Private Sector £3.5million	June 2012 – March 2014	▪ 320 new private sector jobs ▪ 165 indirect private sector jobs 50+ businesses to be supported

	commercial rate of return on conversion projects; and enabling business expansion.					
●	Ditherington Flaxmill, Shrewsbury Project provides comprehensive redevelopment and refurbishment of the former Flax Mill buildings and surrounding land for high quality mixed use development including housing, retail/commercial and offices. The project is fundamental to achieving the regeneration of the Shrewsbury Northern Corridor. The project will achieve the redevelopment of a highly important and prominent yet complex scheme within a deprived Ward in Shrewsbury. English Heritage own the historic Listed Buildings (4 of which are Grade 1, one Grade 2 and two Grade 2*), which includes the world's first sky-scraper.	- Producing state of the art business floorspace for rental for start-up and expanding businesses. - Creating local job opportunities. - Regenerating additional business and increased spend with local businesses.	Shropshire Council providing project lead Delivery Partners: English Heritage Friends of Flaxmill Maltings Homes and Communities Agency	Funding: Total Costs £21,559,167 – HLF £11,686,000, EU (2007-2013) £5,924,767, English Heritage £3,000,000, Shropshire Council £881,000, The Friends Volunteers £67,400. Approval of all funding anticipated June 2013	Up to December 2015 for the first phase	1,000 new private sector jobs 120 new houses
●	RAF Museum Cosford The RAF Museum is a national museum located in Shropshire which welcomed 275,000 visitors in 2011-12. The Museum has plans to extend the site at Cosford to accommodate new displays using its reserve	Increase in visitors to the Museum and The Marches LEP area. Raises museum	RAF Museum, Defence Infrastructure Organisation, Shropshire Council, Telford & Wrekin	Overall cost £15m including – ERDF £5m, HLF £3m, fundraising £1m	Initial plans underway, target completion date is April 2018 – RAF centenary.	200,000 additional visitors to Museum and Marches area. - Create 30 FTE

	collection, to conserve existing collections and improve the Museum as a visitor attraction and educational resource. To achieve its objectives the Museum intends to create a new landmark building to accommodate a new exhibition of Technology, Engineering and Innovation. Current accommodation will be improved. A footpath will be built linking the Museum to Cosford rail station. Existing collections will be rationalised and restructured. Modern interpretation with a broad appeal beyond the aircraft enthusiast will be introduced.	profile in UK and overseas. Focal point for RAF centenary celebrations in 2018. Employ more apprentices. Greater economic impact on region.	Council, English Heritage, RAF Cosford, RAF Shawbury, Chief of Air Force, Marches LEP, Boulton Paul Association, Assault Glider Trust, Aston University, Wolverhampton University, RAF Charitable Trust			jobs & 10 additional apprentice placements. ▪ £35,000 worth of additional education opportunities. ▪ Wider impact on area - £5.8m creating 116 new indirect jobs.
●	MOD Donnington MOD Donnington is an important component of Telford's economy – a major employer contributing to the economy & prosperity of Borough. Telford & Wrekin Council is working with the MOD to develop a central logistics operation at Telford – a defence gateway comprising key components of the defence supply chain within a centralised, convenient location. The key components are already in place in the form of BAE and GKN, a supply	▪ Direct benefits to existing and growing supply chain ▪ Opportunities for private sector investment in warehousing and housing growth	Telford & Wrekin working with MOD Logistics	To be confirmed	Major components in place subject to MOD timescales	▪ Protect 1,800 jobs ▪ Protect links with existing local supply chain ▪

	of immediately available, serviced, competitively priced land, access to Telford International Railfreight Terminal and a proactive and supportive Local Planning Policy. The project fits with the Marches Defence & Security sector work adding greater value to the cluster of expertise at RAFD Cosford, Hereford Enterprise Zone.					
●	RAF Cosford National Aeronautical Academy (NAA) Project to develop a reasoned, practical business case for retaining and developing the Defence College of Aeronautical Engineering (DCAE) and other technical training operational units at RAF Cosford. Aiming to secure a profitable future for DCAE in synergy with local educational and engineering sectors and aeronautical industry partners, to drive economic recovery in the West Midlands and support UK. PLC. The NAA proposition will significantly enhance the 'UK Security Brand,' developing a healthy export market from International Defence Training	▪ Numbers to be confirmed during development of the full Business Case. ▪ West Midlands businesses will benefit from training and enhanced ability to secure global contracts. ▪ Several hundred local private companies will benefit in the supply chain 1,000+ existing	▪ Marches LEP as Project Lead ▪ University of Wolverhampton as lead on academic alliance for aeronautical and engineering crossover training ▪ Aston University as lead on NAA power engineering distance/ blended work based training ▪ Other partners Black Country LEP, Stoke & Staffs LEP, Universities of Keele, Telford	To be confirmed	Business Model developed. Since July 2012, partners have been awaiting response from MOD to their request to proceed to develop full business case currently Awaiting response from MOD to progress full business	▪ To be confirmed however current Cosford training generates £36m/yr from international graduates from 16 different countries and an estimated minimum of £136m worth of aircraft maintenance training

	and related equipment and provides a strong and complementary addition to our Defence & Security based Hereford Enterprise Zone business offer. The direct economic benefits of the proposal for West Midlands business, including global players Rolls Royce and supply chain firms such as Wolverhampton – based firms, HS Marston, Goodrich, Moog & Timken, are significant as are the opportunities for the nearby Black Country i54 Enterprise Zone.	private sector jobs will be retained in the locality.	College of Arts & Technology, City of Wolverhampton College, Midlands Aerospace		case.	
●	Electricity Provision, Whitchurch, Shropshire The £4.5m project addresses severe constraints in the local electricity supply, removing current barriers to local company expansion in particular support the expansion of Grocontinental and growth and facilitating the development of 15ha essential employment land creating over 400 direct jobs and safeguarding over 30 others and 40ha residential land. This constraint has resulted in the loss of expanding companies to the local area as well as the loss of millions of pounds of new private sector	Unlocking good quality development land for commercial and housing use in a key market town for private business expansion	Grocontinental as project lead Shropshire Council as delivery partner	Subject to revision as part of project redesign	To be confirmed	400 new private jobs created 30+ jobs safeguarded

	investment on the identified expansion sites. In the light of limited support from approaches to public funding streams and lobbying of Government Departments, the project is currently subject a further redesign by the leading private company, with regard to full consideration of renewable energy options.					
	Priority 3: Skills Enhancement					
	We will support employers to develop themselves and their workforce and to provide employment opportunities for young people					
	Projects & Programmes are being developed through the detailed Marches Skills Plan 2013-2015 around the following priorities: ▪ Developing the skills required for business growth ▪ Supporting enterprise and access to employment ▪ Realising the potential of young people ▪ Supporting those furthest from the job market					
	Priority 4: Low Carbon Economy					
	We will drive the transition to a high value. Low carbon economy, maximising the opportunity in new technologies, reducing environmental costs to business and recognising our environment as an economic asset					
	Having recognised a gap in good quality, data intelligence, early work was commissioned jointly by Marches, Stoke & Staffs and Worcestershire LEPs to develop a sound evidence base for the sub-region against which projects could be developed with need and demand clearly evidenced. This work was led by Sustainability West Midlands to address gaps in data and identifying LEP priorities that					

	will provide the greatest opportunity for business growth and job creation. Additional work has also been undertaken for the Marches to identify potential projects. Emerging projects fall under the following priorities: ▪ New technologies ▪ Reducing environmental costs ▪ Environment as a key economic asset e.g. addressing water quality and ammonia issues
	Priority 5: Social Inclusion
	We will support socially excluded and marginalised groups by removing barriers to their participation in activities that will improve their economic well-being
	Although social inclusion is shown as a priority in its own right, it fits within the other strategic priorities of the LEP. The LEP priority in this area will focus upon supporting those furthers from the job market into employment, providing a sustainable route away from poverty.

This table provides extract details of some example LEP projects which are currently either in delivery, awaiting completion of the funding package or under development through our Marches strategy for growth. A full list with early prioritised scheme details, including project partners, funding packages and measureable outcomes and achievements, will be provided in the Final SEP

Appendix D

HE evidence, the Marches

Existing HE Trends for Marches Residents

A high-level analysis indicates that there are 13,240 university students from the Marches LEP area studying (both full and part-time modes) across the country. The table below sets out the top ten subjects which are currently followed by students from the Marches.

Subject area	Student Numbers
(3) Biological sciences	1,560
(H) Creative arts & design	1,445
(D) Business & administrative	1,200
(2) Subjects allied to medicine	1,185
(B) Social studies	1,090
(F) Languages	965
(6) Physical sciences	810
(G) Historical & philosophical	745
(9) Engineering & technology	710
(I) Education	705
Other	2,825
Total	13,240

Source: Higher Education Statistic Agency, October 2013 (latest available data 2011/12)

There is strong current demand for sciences, with biological sciences the leading subject area for students from Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin. Subjects allied to medicine, physical sciences and engineering and technology are also strong sources of demand for Marches students.

The table below sets out the top ten institutions where students from the Marches study their degrees. This data indicates that almost 11% of the students are following Open University courses, the OU being amongst the leading institutions locally is not unusual and highlights the demand for remote study to fit with lifestyles and the need to minimise residential costs. This trend is likely to accelerate in the future, especially with increasing connection speeds, knowledge sharing and communication technologies and the phenomenon of massive, online, open courses (moocs⁴).

There are a further 1,865 students studying in the immediate vicinity to the Marches, with two of the top four intuitions being the closest proximity to the area. This is another 14% of the student population from the Marches, with the remainder of the leading 10 institutions the closest cities or largest universities near to the Marches.

⁴ <http://www.mooc-list.com/>

This fact reinforces the notion that it is more practical to study locally. Any new institution would need to establish itself within a defined niche to grow its expertise and reputation, and to seek to achieve this in collaboration rather than direct competition with the existing local higher education provision.

Institution	Student numbers
0001 The Open University	1,455
0085 The University of Wolverhampton	765
0077 Staffordshire University	560
0046 The University of Worcester	540
0177 Aberystwyth University	400
0179 Cardiff University	350
0081 University of the West of England,	345
0110 The University of Birmingham	315
0066 The Manchester Metropolitan	300
0204 The University of Manchester	295
Other	7910
Total	13,240

Source: Higher Education Statistic Agency⁵, October 2013 (latest available data 2011/12)

⁵ Please note that the figures supplied have been subjected to the HESA standard rounding methodology - <http://www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php/content/view/1902/>

Appendix E

Transport Strategy

Each of these packages, described in more detail below, will deliver this wider economic programme, through meeting the key objectives set out in Table 1.

Table 1: Key Objectives for Integrated Investment Packages

Investment Package	Key Objectives
1.0 Housing Growth and Strategic Economic sites	• Removing financially prohibitive infrastructure access barriers and therefore unlocking housing and employment sites for development. • Providing sector-specific transport, communication and logistics services, through bespoke packages.
2.0 Urban Powerhouses and Opportunity Towns	• Improving the efficient functioning of the whole urban transport network – in particular reducing congestion and increasing network safety / resilience – thereby reducing transport costs to businesses, attracting inward investment and making overall levels of development economically viable and environmentally sustainable. • Improving access to town centres, employment areas and education facilities by non-car modes – as a means on encouraging behaviour change.
3.0 Rural Area Connectivity	• Provision of transport services which enable young people to access educational opportunities, a wider range of jobs and retail / leisure activities.
4.0 Growth Corridors	• Improving the efficient functioning of the whole inter-urban road and rail network – in particular improving journey speeds and reliability – thereby reducing transport costs to businesses, fostering cross-boundary economic relationship and driving export-led growth. • Improving safety, public transport access and network resilience.

For all four integrated investment packages, there is also an overarching objective of managing demand for road-based travel and thereby protecting the one asset that cannot be replaced if it is damaged beyond repair – the natural environment of both the Marches and the wider planet.

As outlined below, each of the four spatial levels has its own package of **key strategic interventions** and a series of **specific potential investments**.

1 Housing Growth and Strategic Economic Sites Investment Packages

1.1 Key Strategic Interventions

For this package, the key strategy interventions will be:

- **Provision of additional highway capacity** - In the form of junction improvements and new access / link roads - where required to facilitate development.
- **Public transport priority infrastructure** – Including Park & Ride, bus lanes / gates and enhanced access / facilities at adjacent railway stations.
- **Smarter choices measures** – Including walking / cycling links, improved bus services and travel planning to provide genuine choice for a range of journeys and thereby encourage behaviour change.
- **Joined up services provision** – Working with key service providers such as Job Centre Plus in order to raise awareness of potential travel options, including by walking and cycling, and to identify where there may be safety and accessibility issues that can be addressed by lower cost measures.
- **Awareness raising and marketing of opportunities for non-car travel** – for example through initiatives such as walking and cycling “champions”.
- **Rail freight hubs** – Providing opportunities for goods to be transferred between the road and rail network.

The site specific packages are outlined below (and are not currently in priority order).

1.2 Investment in Hereford Enterprise Zone

The barrier to delivery of additional jobs at the Enterprise Zone is the current and forecast congestion on the A49 through the centre of Hereford, as a result of high motor vehicle demand, inadequate highway infrastructure and a single main road river crossing.

The transport infrastructure and services required to unlock the 4,200 jobs at the Hereford Enterprise Zone is based on a scalable series of investments:

- **Hereford Enterprise Zone Short Term schemes (£2.4 million):** A short term package of junction improvements on the A49 Ross Road, local cycle routes, work place travel planning and improved bus services from residential areas of Hereford.
- **South Wye Transport Package (£16 million):** Measures include a new road between the A465, A49 and B4349 Rotherwas link road, bus priority, cycle route extensions, traffic calming and pedestrian improvements on radial routes into the city centre.

- **Hereford Western Relief Road and Transport Strategy (£102 million):**

- Western relief road which bypasses the exiting A49 Trunk Road through the centre of Hereford and provides a new crossing of the River Wye.
- Park and Ride sites at Three Elms, Rotherwas and Holmer West.
- Smarter choices on key travel corridors across the city – improving priority facilities for walking, cycling and bus services.
- New cycle route linking the Enterprise Zone at Rotherwas with the SAS facility.
- Parking tariff increases to discourage short distance car trips.

1.3 Investment in Hereford and Leominster Sustainable Urban Extensions and Employment Sites

The creation of jobs at the Enterprise Zone will be accompanied by SUEs on the edges of Hereford and 10 miles to the north at Leominster, and further employment growth⁶:

- **Lower Bullingham, Hereford:** 1,000 new homes, 5 hectares of employment land and a primary school.
- **Three Elms, Hereford:** 1,000 dwellings, 10 hectares of employment land and a primary school.
- **Holmer West, Hereford:** 500 dwellings.
- **Leominster Enterprise Park:** 10 hectares of employment land supporting 870 jobs.
- **Leominster Sustainable Urban Extension:** 2,300 dwellings.

Safe and efficient transport access via the A49 corridor – from south of Hereford through to Leominster – is essential for delivery of all of these sites as part of the council's Core Strategy. As with the Enterprise Zone, delivery of these sites is dependent on meeting the Highways Agency requirement for construction of a western relief road for Hereford and the complementary transport strategy for the city.

1.4 Investment in Shrewsbury Sustainable Urban Extensions

Major mixed use Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUEs) are intended to meet demand for new housing and jobs growth, with sites at:

- Shrewsbury West (750 dwellings and 15 hectares of employment land).
- Shrewsbury South (900 dwellings and 26 hectares of employment land).

⁶ An SUE is the planned expansion of a city or town and can contribute to creating more sustainable patterns of development when located in the right place, with well-planned infrastructure including access to a range of facilities, and when developed at appropriate densities."

The transport barriers to delivering SUEs are based on the forecast increase in traffic congestion on the A5 Shrewsbury Southern Bypass, and within the town itself. As a Trunk Road that is intended for strategic traffic, the A5 can only accommodate development-based travel demand if there are improvements to key junctions with the various radial routes. The Highways Agency is already delivering a number of “pinch point” schemes to assist with delivering growth.

There are two additional schemes that will be required address transport infrastructure barriers to the SUEs:

- **A5 / A49 / A5112 Dobbies Roundabout (£5.5 million):** Increasing the entry and circulatory capacity of the roundabout where the A5 and A49 Trunk Roads meet, and adjacent to the Shrewsbury South SUE.
- **Oxon Link Road (£12 million):** Remodelling of the A5 Churncote Roundabout and a new link road, providing access to the Shrewsbury West SUE and relieving the congested A458 Welshpool Road.

1.5 Investment in Hortonwood and Donnington, Telford

The existing Telford International Railfreight Terminal is not being used to its full potential as a result of a lack of supporting infrastructure adjacent to the site and at other locations on the local road and rail network. Therefore a package of measures to improve road and rail freight connectivity, supporting the delivery of potential 2,000 jobs at the MOD site at Donnington, will include:

- Improvements to the existing Telford International Rail Freight Terminal and the adjacent MOD site.
- A potential freight terminal at RAF Cosford to provide air and rail freight linkages into Telford International Freight Terminal for the MOD.
- Improvement to road freight corridors.
- Removal of weight gauge issues on the Wolverhampton – Shrewsbury line (in particular Oakengates Tunnel and Bilbrook Bridge).

1.6 Investment in Telford 54

Telford 54 offers 32 hectares of development land providing 2,000 jobs. The main transport barrier to developing the site is a lack of traffic capacity at M54 Junction 4. A modest initial investment of £1.2 million will provide a segregated left turn from Priorslee Road to the A464 heading south, full signalisation of the roundabout along with widening of the circulatory and improvements to signing and road markings.

In the medium to longer term the LTA is developing an Urban Connectivity Package to support accelerated development at key sites across the Borough, including sustainable transport improvements to reduce forecast travel demand from an additional 22,000 houses and 14,358 jobs. The LTA is working up a potential

package of interventions based on corridors and to address forecast pinch points adjacent to specific development sites, including Telford 54.

1.7 Investment in Telford Sustainable Urban Extensions

Telford is forecast to see the largest increase in housing growth in the Marches, with large SUEs at:

- **Lawley Village:** 3,500 dwellings and up to £75 million of investment for the delivery of a new school, play areas and leisure facilities.
- **Lightmoor Village:** 800 dwellings, a primary school, shops and community facilities.
- **Telford Millennium Community, Ketley:** 600 dwellings, community facilities and public spaces.

The transport infrastructure and services required to deliver these SUEs will also be part of the Urban Connectivity Package outlined above.

1.8 Investment in Oswestry Innovation Park

Major housing (2,600 new dwellings) and an additional 35ha of employment land development are planned in Oswestry, which is Shropshire's second largest town. These plans include a major new 23ha Innovation Park on the south-west of the town. The Park will attract inward investment and innovative companies in key sectors such as Food and Drink Manufacture and Agri-technology. In excess of 3000 jobs will be created.

Initial capacity improvements at the A5 Mile End roundabout are being provided through the Highways Agency pinch point programme. There is also a need for further access road construction, and improved routes for walking and cycling to the new site, dealing with the severance issues caused by the A5/A483 bypass. Enhanced connections to the railway station, three miles away at Gobowen, will also be required.

The upgrade of the A5/A483 Trunk Road, that connects Oswestry to other key centres as set out in the Growth Corridor section below, is also a key part of the growth strategy for the town.

2 Investment in Urban Powerhouses and Opportunity Towns Investment Packages

2.1 Key Strategic Interventions

The key interventions, in addition to those which deliver the Housing Growth and Strategic Economic Sites Investment Package, will be:

- Addressing identified gaps in the provision of public transport services and links to education and job opportunities created by the SEP investment.
- Significantly improving priority infrastructure for bus services, pedestrians and cyclists with the aim of reducing forecast traffic growth and congestion.
- Significantly enhancing initiatives for promoting walking and cycling – through “champions” who could work within particular areas.
- Improving the environment and economic vitality of Urban Powerhouses by delivering new retail and housing development and removing or slowing traffic, in order to reduce the effects of severance on local communities.

2.2 Investment in Hereford City Centre

The Old Market retail development (due to be completed by Easter 2014) will be supported by further housing and employment growth on the Edgar Street Grid, adjacent to the city centre and the railway station. The proposals include an 800 dwelling urban village and creation of 1,000 new jobs on a number of brownfield employment sites. The barriers to delivering this additional development are inadequate highway access from the A49 and A465, along with poor conditions for walking, cycling and public transport.

The Hereford City Link Road (£27 million) will unlock the city centre development sites through provision of a new single carriageway access road between two key radial routes – A49 Trunk Road (Edgar Street) and A465 Commercial Road – thereby also providing traffic relief for a key section of the city ring road and allowing for improved facilities for sustainable modes of travel, via an £8 million City Centre Transport Package.

2.3 Investment in Shrewsbury Urban Area and Town Centre

Shrewsbury has traffic congestion problems due to its historic street pattern and limited river crossings. The lack of suitable direct alternative routes means that over 60% of all vehicles entering the town centre are non-stopping through trips. These problems present a barrier to further tourism, retail, employment and housing development within the town. A £14 million package of transport measures is being developed to include:

- Upgrades of key junctions and implementation of further phases of Urban Traffic Management and Control (UTMC) system for traffic signals, vehicle routing, car park availability and bus priority measures.
- Increasing capacity on alternative routes to enable through traffic to be diverted away from the main town centre streets including High Street.
- Upgrading of Pride Hill, the main pedestrianised street to significantly enhance the shopping environment.
- Improving gateway signing and wayfinding in the town centre.
- Improved pedestrian links into the town centre, including the opening up of a significant short cut from the Abbey area to the rail station and Riverside area.
- Completing missing links in the town's cycle network.

The £100 million Shrewsbury North Western Relief Road will provide a shorter and more direct route between the north and west of the town, linking the A5 Trunk Road at Churncote to the A528 / A5124 junction at Battlefield (providing a much needed river crossing on the west of the town). This will relief the town centre of north -west through traffic and enable the enhancement of the Riverside area of the town .

2.4 Investment in Telford Town Centre

Telford town centre is currently the subject of a major redevelopment project to increase the size and variety of the retail facilities, to develop a night time leisure-based economy and to expand the highly successful Telford International Conference Centre. This first phase of the Central Telford Area Action Plan (CTAAP) features the £250 million Southwater development of shops, restaurants and a new cinema. Annex C below provides more details.

The LTA has already secured investment of £11.8 million of developer contributions, Local Sustainable Transport Large Project Fund (LSTF) and Highway Agency and Local Pinch Point funding to reduce the severance effect on the 1970s designed "box road" and to significantly improve the whole journey experience for pedestrians and cyclists including provision of shared space along Coach Central. The proposed £4.4 million Telford Town Centre bus hub scheme aims to further enhance the quality of the Coach Central shared space scheme as well as facilitating the submission of a new planning application for the ongoing regeneration of Telford Shopping Centre.

The second phase of the Telford Town Centre Connectivity Package seeks to support the £200m masterplan and bring forward the remaining CTAAP allocations. The remaining elements of the potential Telford Town Centre Connectivity Package are still being assessed and prioritised by the LTA for their contribution to the wider economic development of the town centre – including creation of 2,000 additional jobs and location of the first housing units in the town centre. These elements are likely to include:

- Pedestrian route improvements including bridge replacements between the town centre and Telford Central Railway Station.

- Hall Park Way, Rampart Way and Hall Park Roundabout widening and improvements.
- Park & Ride site at Telford Central Railway Station.
- Extension of the Coach Central Shared Space scheme to Woodhouse Central.
- New road link between the A442 and M54 Junction 4.

2.5 Investment in Craven Arms Opportunity Town

Craven Arms is a small market town and important employment / service centre for southern Shropshire and north Herefordshire. There are plans to create further job opportunities in the food and drink sector through a re-located state of the art abattoir and the expansion of the Long Lane Business Park to provide 7.7 hectares of new employment land. Currently, this proposed employment land is not viable because the level crossing over the Marches railway line means that the road is closed up to four times each hour, with tailbacks on to the A49 Trunk Road causing delays to general traffic.

A proposed £4 million scheme will improve access to both the existing employment site and the additional development land through a new roundabout junction on the A49 Trunk Road and new access road (replacing the existing level crossing with a new bridge).

3 Rural Area Connectivity

3.1 Key Strategic Interventions

The area between the three Urban powerhouses and the Opportunity Towns is rural in nature with a large number of small villages, many located a significant distance from the main road and rail corridors. With the decline in the number of jobs located directly on the land, people in rural areas often have to travel much further to access jobs and (for young people in particular) education opportunities to prepare them for new employment opportunities. For people who do not drive or have access to a car, transport is a huge barrier to becoming educationally and economically active.

The key strategy interventions of a Rural Connectivity Package current being developed, will include:

- Provision of targeted community transport / car sharing where there are gaps in the conventional bus network.
- Development of rural Park and Cycle / Park and Share hubs, located at local community facilities such as pubs or village halls.
- “Wheels to Work” schemes whereby cycles or motor scooters may be hired to access education or employment opportunities.
- Co-ordinated information on available travel opportunities.

4 Growth Corridors

4.1 Key Strategic Interventions

The **M6/M6Toll / M54 / A5 / A483** and **A49 Growth Corridors** and are the main strategic Trunk Roads and parallel railway lines that run broadly north-south and east-west respectively (converging on Shrewsbury), and perform a number of functions:

- Improve connectivity to national and regional markets and airports;
- Linking the three Urban Powerhouses and a number of the Opportunity Towns, thereby strengthening the Marches as a single economic entity.
- Moving goods made or required by manufacturing businesses in the Marches.
- Moving goods for retail sale (both into and out of the Marches area).
- Linking related businesses closer together in economic clusters and therefore fostering more trade and co-operation (agglomeration).
- Accessing education, employment and retail opportunities – by a range of travel modes and therefore encouraging travel behaviour change.
-

The “Growth Corridors” are therefore vital transport arteries which businesses of all shapes and sizes rely on to trade cost effectively in a competitive market place.

Therefore any unnecessary and avoidable time delays are potentially very costly, especially to SME companies who are often located away from the more accessible and higher cost sites in the Urban Powerhouses.

These transport arteries are strategic priorities, which have national significance (influencing investment in the strategic rail network, public transport network and highways) which will benefit UK plc, and which no one LEP could deliver on its own. Clearly nationally important motorway, Trunk Roads and rail infrastructure gives our economy a competitive edge and is a critical element to the wider West Midlands area, including the Marches, being able to maintain a position of international competitiveness. Most of these schemes are “big ticket” items and funding and delivery needs to be considered at a national and cross LEP level.

For this package, the key strategy interventions will be:

- Improvements to linkages between key motorways and Trunk Roads;
- Improvements to the rail network through line speed improvements and electrification – based on a rail strategy that is currently being undertaken on behalf of the Marches LTB.
- Localised widening of single carriageway sections of the Trunk Road routes, especially where slow vehicles currently hold up general traffic.

- Safety and localised capacity improvements at key junctions to reduce the economic cost of crashes and to keep traffic moving through the reduction in the number of incidents.
- Provision of basic public transport infrastructure – in particular bus stops and shelters – where this is currently missing.

4.2 Investment in Shrewsbury to Wolverhampton Rail Line Electrification and Line Speed Improvements

Electrification of, and line speed improvements along, the 30 mile line between Shrewsbury – Telford – Wolverhampton will help stimulate economic growth across the region by reducing journey times, providing more frequent services and improving connections to the West Midlands, London and the South East. Increased train capacity would improve links for people to jobs and services and help open up new opportunities for businesses. Electrification of the route could help to promote tourism visitors using sustainable modes of transport through improved public transport connections and reduce the accessibility problems within the Marches, whilst increasing tourism revenue.

Analysis undertaken by KPMG in 2012 showed that the electrification of the line could provide a West Midlands regional GVA benefit of £262m per annum as well as creating 3,320 jobs across the West Midlands area, with the majority of these being in Shrewsbury and Telford. A study commissioned by the Shropshire Chamber of Commerce in 2006 looked at the benefits of electrifying the line and the potential economic growth and employment opportunities these works could provide, including:

- An additional 37% of revenue to the train operating companies.
- Increased turnover of more than £14million for existing businesses.
- Scope to redress past lost investment worth in excess of £100 million.
- Securing new investments valued at in excess of £1 billion.
- Almost 12,000 new jobs, created by entrepreneurial in-migrants.
- The equivalent of £2.6 million (per annum) savings in road de-congestion.

4.3 Investment in M54 to M6 / M6 (Toll) Link Road

The lack of direct access from the M54 motorway to the northbound M6 Motorway and the southbound M6 Toll Road is a major constraint for the Shrewsbury and Telford corridor, which adds unnecessary time to the journey of those seeking to access the M6 northbound and increases traffic congestion on the A449 and A454 in Staffordshire. This lack of connectivity also impacts on freight operations which can also impact on business decisions to invest in the Marches' local economy.

The proposed M54 / M6 / M6 Toll Road Link will provide access in all directions and is therefore essential for the economic development of the Marches and improving access to markets in the rest of the UK and Europe. The scheme will expand the catchment area for employers in the area, providing a boost to the regional economy, creating jobs and making the Wolverhampton-Telford-Shrewsbury corridor a more attractive place for inward investment.

The future economic development of the Wolverhampton to Telford Technology Corridor will also be significantly boosted by the scheme. The i54 Technology Business Park is situated directly off the M54, and in March 2011 became an Enterprise Zone. In September 2011 Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) announced a decision to build their new engine plant at i54 creating around 750 additional jobs within the company and more within the supply chain. The decision for JLR to invest in the area may also allow other businesses, particularly those in the supply chain, to invest in the Telford / Shrewsbury area. Access to M6 northbound and M6 Toll Road will help to facilitate this supply chain growth through delivering fast and reliable motorway links.

4.4 Investment in M54 / A5 / A483 Corridor Improvements

West of the M54 motorway and A5 dual carriageway, a single-carriageway route, running between the A5 Shrewsbury bypass and the A483 at Ruabon, south of Wrexham, forms part of the Trans European Network (TEN-T) from Felixstowe and Holyhead. This final western section of the TEN-T, which facilitates national and European freight movements from southern and eastern English sea-ports into Wales and Ireland, is the only one which still contains sections of single carriageway. The route is therefore totally inadequate for the volume of traffic travelling from Ireland and the industrial areas of North East Wales and there is frequent congestion and accidents on this route.

Dualling or partial dualling of the A5 / A483 north of Shrewsbury, and improved junction capacity at junctions on the A5 Shrewsbury and Oswestry bypasses, would significantly improve journey times for freight movements on the TEN-T network. These interventions would also enable development-led growth in towns such as Shrewsbury, Oswestry and Wrexham, both in the long and short term.

4.5 Investment in A49 Corridor Improvements

The A49 through the spine of the Marches is mostly rural single carriageway with frequent side roads and farm accesses, not to mention the congested urban sections through Hereford and around Shrewsbury. A number of major east-west routes – such as the A44, A456 and A5 – also intersect with the A49 at major roundabout junctions. As a result journey times can be very slow and often unpredictable, with larger Heavy Goods Vehicles and agricultural machinery causing delays for the majority of traffic (especially cars). Driver frustration leads to potentially dangerous over-taking manoeuvres.

The provision of safe passing places and junction capacity / safety improvements on the A49 between Ross-on-Wye to Whitchurch (a distance of around 140 kilometres), would significantly improve the problems experienced by drivers on these routes, reducing delays to businesses and enabling local growth in employment and housing. A corridor-based approach would tackle localised congestion and reduce travel to work times, and would improve passenger safety by constructing short lengths of passing places where slower moving vehicles can be overtaken.

The Marches Rail Strategy is looking at possible improvements to the Marches railway line, although passenger journey times between Hereford, Shrewsbury and Whitchurch are competitive compared with the parallel A49.

Case Study: Southwater Development and Box Road Project, Telford – A track record of delivery

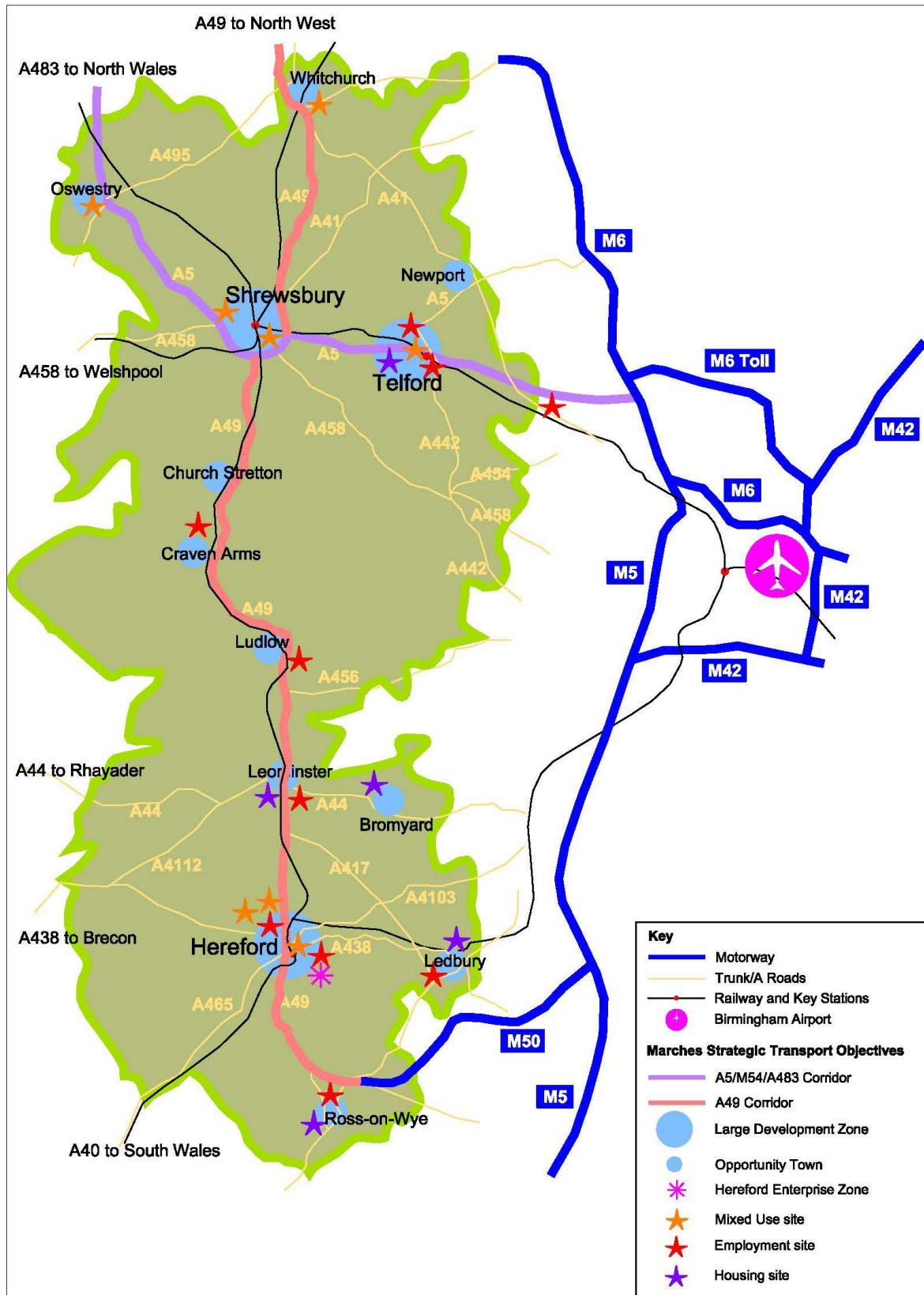
The £250m Southwater development is currently being delivered on site and will see a new IMAX cinema, hotel, bars / restaurants, an energy centre and associated multi-storey car parking implemented by Spring 2014, and will alone create 260 private sector jobs as well as creating a thriving night time economy. The Council has worked closely with the Homes and Communities Agency with regards to CTAAP and the associated Town Centre Regeneration Project. The HCA made an investment of £9.5m with the Council to support the Southwater development. The Southwater development is situated just south of the existing Shopping Centre, adjacent to the Town Park, Ice Rink and Bowling Alley.

In support of the Southwater project and through CTAAP the Council developed a transport mitigation strategy aimed at removing the existing barriers to growth and supporting the increased traffic arising from new developments. The existing one way circulatory Box Road acted as a collar to the sustainable expansion of the Shopping Centre and created significant difficulties for pedestrians and cyclists particularly when the shopping centre is closed. The Council has developed a £11.8m Box Road scheme which has successfully secured £6.1m of LSTF funding, £3.3m of Pinch Point funding, and £750,000 of ERDF funding along with developer contributions and Council contributions. The scheme will:

- A Shared Space on Coach Central – removing traffic control measures, and introducing a 20mph speed limit with shared space design principles to provide a better pedestrian environment.
- Making all four arms of Telford's 'box road' two-way.
- Junction improvements at Forge and Malinslee roundabouts.
- Pedestrian and Cycle improvements.

The scheme has now started on site and is due for completion in March 2015.

Marches Transport Map



Transport SWOT 1 - Between The Marches and Other Regions in the UK

Strengths	Opportunities
Location: A central geographic location and some good connections to the motorway and rail network, plus reasonable access to international air connections. West Midlands: There are close and economically important transport links between the Marches and the West Midlands region, where the most significant centres of population and commercial activity are located.	M54 corridor: The M54 transport corridor is a potential catalyst for economic growth through clustering of related activities, between the i54 Enterprise Zone and Telford in particular. Gateway: The position of The Marches between the West Midlands, South & West Wales and North Wales regions provides an opportunity to make the case for improved transport links for freight movements to international gateways in particular Visitor economy: There is an excellent tourism offer and resulting opportunity to improve transport access from the rest of the UK as a means on encouraging more short / weekend breaks.
Weaknesses	Threats
Rail: Commuting and business travel rail links between The Marches, the West Midlands and London are inadequate, which limits the development of labour markets and restricts wider job opportunities and inward investment. Peripherality: Compared to adjacent urban areas with a higher population and GVA, there may be a misconception that The Marches cannot make a significant contribution to economic growth.	Brain drain: A lack of employment opportunities and other lifestyle factors, such as night time entertainment, mean that young people in particular may leave the area for other parts of the UK which are perceived to which greater attractions. Out-commuting: An imbalance between levels of housing and job creation may force people to commute longer distances to find work, thereby making areas of The Marches “dormitories” for larger settlements in the West Midlands in particular.

Transport SWOT 2 - Within The Marches LEP Area

Strengths	Opportunities
Shrewsbury – Telford axis: There are strong transport / travel links between the major urban centres of Shrewsbury and Telford, which have enabled a mutually beneficial economic relationship to be established. Opportunity Towns: The large number of smaller market towns provides a different and potentially very attractive “sustainable lifestyle offer” for the location of houses and jobs which can be accessed by non-car modes within compact urban areas.	Diversity: The relatively rural nature of The Marches provides an opportunity to develop a distinct package of “accessibility to jobs” projects which may provide a welcome contrast to the urban focus of many SEP projects. Development land: A large supply of development land provides the opportunity to make the case within the Growth Deal for early investment in transport / communications to “unlock” sites for growth – both by improving local access and strategic connections to enhance links adjacent areas and international gateways. Economic sectors: The development of specific business sectors, “Centres of Excellence” and research institutions in multiple locations will strengthen economic agglomeration links between different parts of The Marches area and potentially lead to a stronger case for improving transport links between Hereford and Shrewsbury / Telford.
Weaknesses	Threats
Single economic entity: The distance and poor road links between Hereford and Shrewsbury / Telford means that, in transport terms, it is a challenge to promote The Marches as a single economic entity (as opposed to a series of separate urban centres). Rural public transport: Low population density and dispersed settlement patterns make public transport access to education and employment opportunities commercially unviable in many instances, and therefore provision using public subsidy is necessary.	Rural public transport: Rural public transport provision is becoming more of a challenge as a result of budget cuts in the public sector.

Transport SWOT 3 – Telford Urban Area

Strengths	Opportunities
Connectivity: Strong transport and economic linkages with markets and companies in the West Midlands. Delivery: Track record of inward investment as well as major and sustainable transport scheme delivery. Development: High level of committed housing and employment development which could support further transport infrastructure investment. Free flow traffic: The high capacity and non-radial, road network that was constructed as part of the New Town development, means that levels of traffic congestion are not large for a town of its size (and in comparison to traditional urban centres). Bus services: The urban area of Telford is relatively well served by a frequent bus network which has a strong “Wrekin Connect” brand based on a successful Quality Partnership.	Town centre: The re-development of the town centre provides a significant opportunity for Telford to become a more attractive place in which to live, work and spend leisure time – with benefits to the local economy, by reviewing and re-designing the transport infrastructure within the town centre, improving the access to the M54 motorway and sustainable transport within the wider urban area. Urban form: New residential development could provide an opportunity to re-shape the urban form of the town, and increase development density, in order to significantly improve the use of existing walking / cycling infrastructure (which is already extensive) and overall environment for use of these modes. Freight: Telford could become a significant hub for the rail / road freight and logistics industry, building on the recent opening of the International Freight Terminal and the potential usage by organisations such as the Ministry of Defence.
Weaknesses	Threats
Sustainability: The high capacity and congestion-free highway network does not encourage travel behaviour that is environmentally and ultimately economically sustainable, which may work against policies on “low carbon” development in the Marches Growth Plan and the Core Strategy.	Scale of funding: Investment in transport infrastructure may not be adequate to meet the very large scale of potential employment and housing development in the town (up to 26,500 units) and in neighbouring settlements (e.g. Shifnal and Shrewsbury).

Transport SWOT 4 – Hereford Urban Area

Strengths	Opportunities
Walking and cycling: The city is relatively flat, compact and therefore potentially very attractive for use of sustainable modes by a large section of the population, with recent infrastructure investment (e.g. new crossing of the River Wye) providing a new route between the urban area and the Enterprise Zone.	City Centre: Development at the Edgar Street Grid provides an opportunity for housing and employment development that has excellent access by sustainable travel modes, as well as providing a greater level of population within very close proximity of the city centre retail areas (both existing and new). Enterprise Zone: The designation of Rotherwas as 'The Marches' only Enterprise Zone provides an opportunity for a step change in the provision of high quality jobs in key sectors such as defence, with transport infrastructure and service provision being an important part of the overall mix.
Weaknesses	Threats
Traffic levels: The main radial routes and city ring road – A49, A438 and A465, – are subject to high traffic levels and frequent congestion, which results in a poor built environment, severance of communities and unattractive conditions for pedestrians and cyclists. River Crossing: The single major crossing of the River Wye on the A49 is both a significant pinch point and a potential weak spot in terms of network resilience (for example if the bridge has to be closed as a result of an incident or bad weather).	Development levels: The Highways Agency, which operates the A49 Trunk Road through the centre of Hereford, will not accept the proposed level of housing development, and the number of jobs at various locations (including the Enterprise Zone), without the construction of a new relief road (around the western side of the city). Relief Road: The proposed Western Relief Road may not deliverable / affordable in its entirety, which could compromise the ability to deliver the proposed level and location of development as set out in the draft Core Strategy.

Transport SWOT 5 – Shrewsbury Urban Area

Strengths	Opportunities
Park & Ride: The town has a well-established network of sites, with frequent services using high quality vehicles, which offer an out of centre alternative to driving into the historic core of the town. Walking and cycling: As a relatively flat and compact urban area with some direct and relatively traffic-free routes, the town is attractive for walking and cycling in particular, with a good record of recent investment and promotional activity through the Cycle Town and Local Sustainable Transport Fund.	River front: The area of the town centre alongside the River Severn is very attractive for leisure use in particular, but faces away from the main retail / commercial zones and is cut off by a busy road. Road and rail links: As the place where a number of major north-south and east-west road and rail links meet, the town has a particularly good “transport network position” with which to encourage further inward investment.
Weaknesses	Threats
River Loop: The lack of a direct route along the A5 bypass, between the west and north of the town, results in high levels of through traffic passing through the historic centre and via the river loop, with resulting congestion, poor environment and severance for pedestrians crossing between different retail zones.	Development levels: The Highways Agency, which operates the A5 Trunk Road around the southern and eastern fringes of the town, is unlikely to support the proposed Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUEs) unless there is significant investment in new highway infrastructure. Relief Road: The proposed North West Relief Road may not deliverable / affordable in its entirety, which could compromise the ability to deliver aspirations to remove through traffic from the town centre and bring forward further development.

Appendix F

Synergising Funding

	FUNDING AVAILABLE WITHIN THE MARCHES LEP															
	LA Funding	CIL and S.106	Growing Places Fund	DfT Local Major Transport Schemes	Single Local Growth Fund	European Structural and Investment Fund	UKTI and MAS	SFA	BIG Lottery	HLF	BIDUK	Universities/F.E. Colleges	Housing Assocs/ Regist Soc Landlords	HCA	Private Sector	Marches Investment Fund
MARCHES LEP PRIORITIES																
Supporting Business																
Business Sectors	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓			✓					✓	✓
Business Trade	✓					✓	✓								✓	
Business Investment	✓					✓	✓								✓	✓
Improvements to Infrastructure																
Strategic Sites	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Transport	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓										✓	✓
Housing	✓	✓	✓		✓								✓	✓	✓	✓
Broadband	✓		✓			✓					✓				✓	✓
Skills Investment																
Developing the Skills Required for Business Growth	✓					✓	✓	✓				✓			✓	
Supporting Enterprise and Access to Employment	✓					✓		✓				✓			✓	
Realising the Potential for Young People	✓					✓		✓				✓			✓	
Low Carbon Economy																
New Technologies	✓					✓	✓					✓			✓	✓
Reducing Environmental Costs	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓					✓			✓	✓
Environment as a Key Economic Asset e.g. Water Quality	✓					✓	✓								✓	✓
Social Inclusion																
Removing Barriers to Improve Economic Well Being	✓					✓			✓						✓	

This report takes into account the particular instructions and requirements of our client.

It is not intended for and should not be relied upon by any third party and no responsibility is undertaken to any third party.

Job number 232882

Ove Arup & Partners Ltd
13 Fitzroy Street
London
W1T 4BQ
United Kingdom
www.arup.com

ARUP