

## **Marches LEP response to the Welsh Government's Call for Evidence and Projects, National Development Framework**

### **Background to the Marches and border with Wales**

The Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) is driving accelerated economic growth across the region. The LEP is a partnership of business, education and the local authorities of Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin, and it is investing in innovation, higher level skills, housing and business sites.

The LEP's vision for the Marches is of 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 LEP is developing a vibrant regional economy, putting business at the heart of our work and removing barriers to growth so that sustainable jobs can be created. By leading co-ordinated action to stimulate economic development, through programmes and projects focused on housing, transport, infrastructure, broadband availability, inward investment and skills, the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership is aiming to improve the economic prosperity of the region.

As well as the three councils, the LEP works with investment teams of Enterprise Telford, Invest in Shropshire and Invest Herefordshire, and the Government to bring in private sector investment, and it is talking to businesses from small high-tech firms in remote rural locations to internationally renowned companies in vibrant town centres and busy market towns to understand what needs to be done to tackle barriers to growth.

In recent months the Marches LEP has been creating a strong partnership with colleagues working in Wales. We hosted a high level workshop in November which resulted in the identification of a couple of work streams which would benefit from a joint approach. So far, the most productive work stream has been in relation to transport infrastructure. A representative from the Growing Mid-Wales Partnership attends the Marches LEP Transport Sub-Group, and an officer from the Welsh Government now also attends the meetings. Furthermore, the Welsh Government has recently confirmed its provision of funds to extend the development of the Marches LEP Freight Strategy to now include the mid-Wales area, so one joint Marches and Mid Wales Freight strategy will be published during the Spring of 2017. The strategy will include potential schemes and actions to improve freight journey times and improve business efficiency, based on consultation with businesses in the areas covered by the strategy.

### **Infrastructure improvements**

The LEP and its partners would like to see a number of infrastructure improvements across the Marches and Mid-Wales areas recognising the cross border links and issues which impact on both areas.

The Department for Transport has awarded Shropshire Council over £900k to refresh the Outline Business Case (OBC) for the Shrewsbury North West Relief Road; the refreshed OBC will be submitted to the DfT for appraisal late in 2017. This section of road would complete the ring road around Shrewsbury, reducing travel times around the outside of the town for local and long distance travel alike. The bid which the LEP submitted to DfT for this funding is attached for further information.

Other physical infrastructure improvements we would wish to be funded in future would include the Hereford Bypass, Leominster southern link road, dualling of the A5 into Wales, and the Shelwick junction/Gr Malvern rail scheme.

We would expect the framework to recognise the flow of people moving across our border to access health care, education, retail and other services, and the impact that this has on infrastructure, housing needs and service provision on both sides of the border.

We would wish to see the framework providing support to the key business sectors in the border area, such as agri-food.

#### **Evidence for consideration:**

The Marches LEP has evidence relevant to the development of the National Development Framework in the form of published documents which we would like to submit for consideration -

The 'Investing in Strategic Transport Corridors in the Marches' 2106 report: <http://www.marcheslep.org.uk/download/Reports/reports/The-Marches-Strategic-Transport-Corridors-Report-June-2016.pdf>

Following the publication of this report, the LEP Board approved the development of a Marches Freight Strategy. This work started late in 2016 and has recently been extended to include the Mid-Wales area.

The Marches Rail Study (2014): <http://www.marcheslep.org.uk/download/Reports/reports/140328-The-Marches-Rail-Study-Final-Report.pdf>

The Marches Strategic Economic Plan (2014): [http://www.marcheslep.org.uk/download/economic\\_plans/strategic\\_economic\\_plan/Marches%20LEP%20SEP%20FINAL310314-2.pdf](http://www.marcheslep.org.uk/download/economic_plans/strategic_economic_plan/Marches%20LEP%20SEP%20FINAL310314-2.pdf)

The Strategic Economic Plan evidence refresh (2016): [http://www.marcheslep.org.uk/download/economic\\_plans/strategic\\_economic\\_plan/Final-Marches-SEP-Evidence-Refresh-Report.pdf](http://www.marcheslep.org.uk/download/economic_plans/strategic_economic_plan/Final-Marches-SEP-Evidence-Refresh-Report.pdf)

The Agri-Tech West report (2016): [http://www.marcheslep.org.uk/download/economic\\_plans/strategic\\_economic\\_plan/Agri-Tech-West-Final-Report-November-2016-WITH-APPENDICES.pdf](http://www.marcheslep.org.uk/download/economic_plans/strategic_economic_plan/Agri-Tech-West-Final-Report-November-2016-WITH-APPENDICES.pdf)

and Executive

Summary: [http://www.marcheslep.org.uk/download/economic\\_plans/strategic\\_economic\\_plan/Exec-Summary-Agri-Tech-West-Final-Report-November-2016-.pdf](http://www.marcheslep.org.uk/download/economic_plans/strategic_economic_plan/Exec-Summary-Agri-Tech-West-Final-Report-November-2016-.pdf)

## **2.1 Large Local Major Transport Schemes**

### **Application for Scheme Development Costs**

<b>Scheme Name</b>	Shrewsbury North-West Relief Road
<b>Lead LEP</b>	Marches LEP
<b>Other supporting LEPs</b> <i>(if applicable - see 2.4 below)</i>	N/A
<b>Promoting Authority</b>	Shropshire Council

#### **1. Introduction**

##### **1.1 Description**

The Shrewsbury North-West Relief Road (NWRR) would provide a new single carriageway road in the north-west quadrant of Shrewsbury. The NWRR would connect to existing roads with new roundabouts at Holyhead Road and on Berwick Road. The NWRR would cross both the River Severn and its flood plain and the Shrewsbury to Chester railway line on new bridges. A map showing the location of the scheme is provided below:

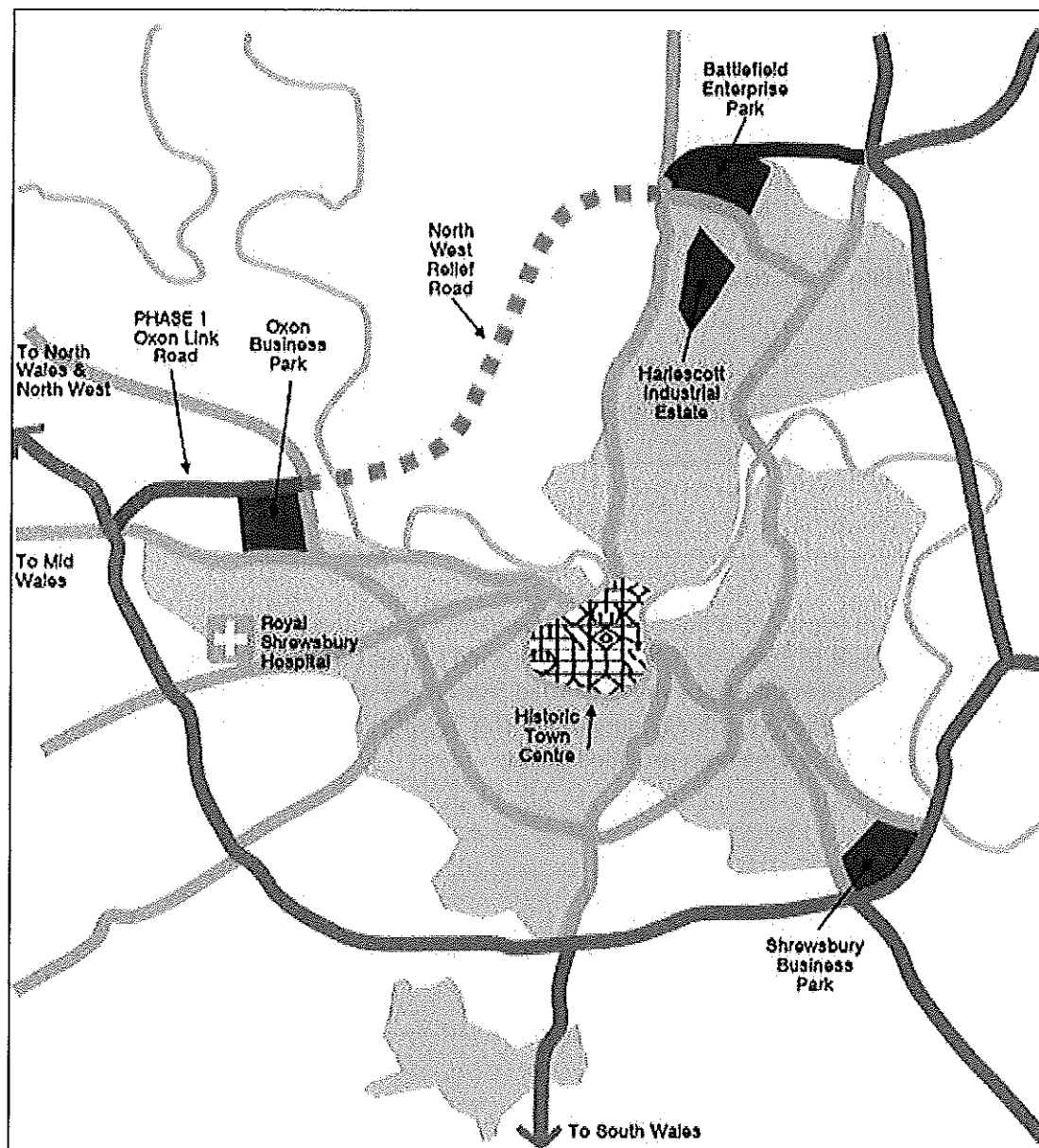


Figure 1: NWRR in the context of the Shrewsbury road network

The map also shows the existing Battlefield Link Road and the proposed Oxon Link Road. Oxon Link Road is a new road between the A5 Shrewsbury Bypass and the B4380 Holyhead Road. An outline business case for Oxon Link Road has already been produced and the scheme is within the Marches LEP £75m Growth Deal, to be delivered in 2016-2021, effectively forming Phase 1 of the NWRR. The Oxon Link Road scheme fits well with local policies and it is mentioned in the SEP. The SEP states that the relief road will bring significant economic benefits: "The Oxon Link Road within the Shrewsbury Sustainable Urban Extension will provide an incremental step towards the long term provision of the Shrewsbury North West Relief Road, which will have significant economic benefits for the town and town centre in particular. See Section 2.3 below for further details regarding the Oxon Link Road.

Another scheme planned for Shrewsbury, the Shrewsbury Integrated Transport Package, is described in section 2.2. Unlike the Oxon Link Road, this does not form part of the NWRR.

Links between the north and west of Shrewsbury are very poor; this affects local commuters and longer distance business and freight traffic, moving between northern business areas and the North West, and Wales. Together with the A5 and A49 bypasses, the Oxon Link Road and the Battlefield Link Road, the NWRR would provide the missing link to provide a complete outer bypass of Shrewsbury. All long distance through traffic would be able to avoid the town completely. In addition it would complete Shrewsbury's distributor ring road, which would aid the high volumes of orbital Shrewsbury traffic, travelling to or from different locations in the suburbs.

The main effect of providing a NWRR will be to allow some journeys to use a shorter, more direct route across the town, and other journeys to transfer to more appropriate routes within the town's road hierarchy, thus releasing highway capacity by freeing-up road space on the north and west approaches to the town centre.

With a new crossing of the River Severn, Shrewsbury's transport network will be more reliable, resilient and efficient for all modes of transport. The proposed road would cut the journey time between the north and the west by two thirds from 19.1 minutes to 6.6 minutes, leading to increased efficiency for the people of Shrewsbury and Shropshire.

The NWRR will help to reduce accidents and carbon emissions, and will improve air quality in areas where people shop, work and live. It will enable road space within the centre to be reallocated to create a more attractive riverside environment, to encourage more cycling and walking (which was an aim of the complementary Shrewsbury Integrated Transport Package) and encourage further regeneration of the town centre.

The NWRR will support a number of local policies, including the three main objectives of the Shropshire Local Transport Plan (2011-2026), economic growth, carbon reduction, and promoting healthy, safe and confident communities.

## **2. Strategic Case**

### **2.1 Problem Identification**

#### Route choice constraints and network resilience

In the absence of a direct link between the north and west of Shrewsbury the northern and western approaches to the town centre are congested. Orbital trips in the NE, SE and SW sectors of the town are carried mainly by the partial inner ring, or distributor, road. Some trips may use sections of the outer, trunk road bypasses. Similarly, longer distance through traffic travelling north-south, east-west and south-east is carried mainly by the outer, trunk road bypasses; this is their function within the network. None of the above types of journey needs to pass through the town centre, as both the origins and destinations of these trips lie outside the centre. However both "orbital" trips and "through" trips between the north and the west are forced either to pass through the town centre or travel the "long way round" via the outer bypass or partial ring road. Both of these options generate transport externalities (congestion, air quality deterioration, pollution and traffic vibration affecting the historic town centre) that could be reduced with the introduction of the NWRR. Freight and business traffic using the existing routes incur unnecessary time and fuel costs.

This limited route choice reduces resilience across the local network. The north - west route through the town centre, Smithfield Road, is susceptible to flooding near the Welsh Bridge, and when this occurs it further reduces route choice. Route resilience is not just about physical

resilience but also about how disruption can be managed and the speed of recovery. With limited route choice, in the event of a disruption or accident along the east-west routes or A5/A49 bypasses there are significant costs to road users through congestion and delay.

#### Shrewsbury Town Centre congestion

In the absence of a NWRR, the majority of through traffic uses the town centre A458 Smithfield Road and then either Whitchurch Road or Ellesmere Road to travel north-west across Shrewsbury. Congestion on this route affects journey times and reliability in the town centre. This is because a lot of the journeys have little alternative but to pass through the town.

Smithfield Road carries more buses than any other road in Shrewsbury – between 30 and 35 local town buses per hour. All three Park and Ride services have to use Smithfield Road where they are subject to the same delays as other buses. Congestion associated with north-west through traffic makes it harder for local buses to serve the bus station, the railway station and the west end of the town centre and contributes towards journey unreliability. There is little incentive for people not to use the car when buses are delayed by the same traffic congestion.

Pedestrians walking into town over the Welsh Bridge are confronted with the heavily trafficked Smithfield Road which forms a barrier between the historic core zone and the riverside due to the domination of vehicular movement.

In the absence of the NWRR, there are significant pressures on Whitchurch Road and Ellesmere Road, and on Smithfield Road in the town centre.

Figure 2 below shows the modelled average peak hour traffic speeds on all parts of Shrewsbury's road network. Smithfield Road is highlighted with a black box, to show the high levels of traffic using this link.

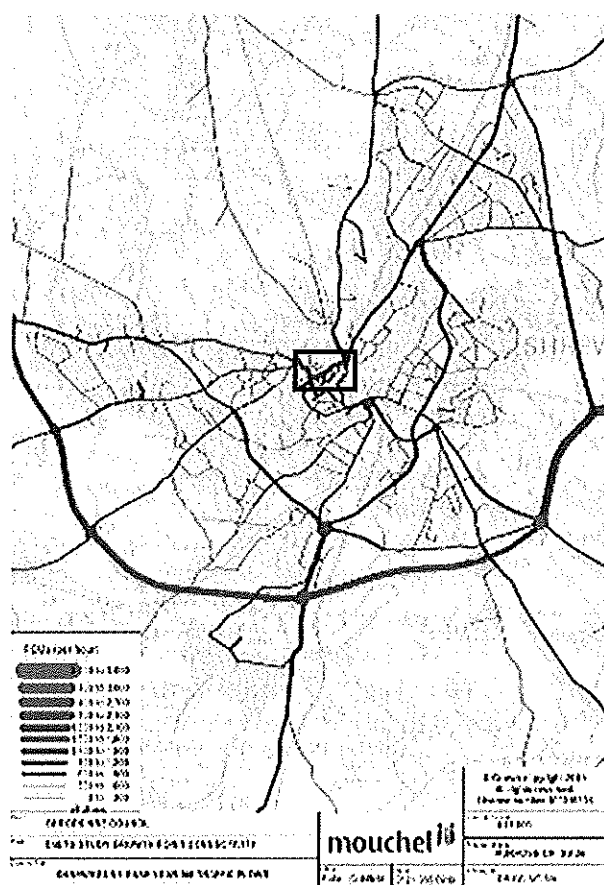


Figure 2: Traffic volumes (modelled)

As part of a previous Transport Innovation Fund (TIF) study, in 2006 a SATURN traffic model was developed. Traffic forecasts were produced for peak and off-peak traffic flows in 2012 and 2027. The traffic model was revalidated in 2013 and subsequently used to test the Oxon Link Road and Shrewsbury Integrated Transport Package schemes. Whilst the traffic model is now out of date, the model found that the NWRR would enable traffic to travel more directly and quickly between the west and north of Shrewsbury. This can be seen by comparing the modelled average journey times between Churncote roundabout and the Ellesmere Road/Harlescott Lane junction:

Journey time: A5 Churncote to Harlescote Lane	Via the town centre (no NWRR)	Via the town centre (NWRR open)	Via the NWRR
2006 a.m. peak hour	16.87 minutes	-	-
2012 a.m. peak hour	17.06 minutes	13.43 minutes	6.22 minutes

Table 1: Comparison of modelled average journey times

Traffic able to use the NWRR would benefit from very large journey time savings, as shown above. There would also be benefits for traffic using town centre roads which would be less congested. Because people generally choose the quickest route, the provision of a NWRR would lead to changes in traffic flow, and reduced journey times on roads throughout the local network.

Similarly the forecast changes in traffic flow on key links in the north-west corridor are set out below:

Traffic flow (2 way) 2012 a.m. peak hour on:	No NWRR	NWRR open	Change due to NWRR
Welshpool Road (Bicton end)	1,154	603	-48%
Welshpool Road (Shelton end)	1,620	1,160	-28%
The Mount (Shelton end)	937	700	-25%
The Mount (Frankwell end)	827	529	-36%
Welsh Bridge	1,933	1,474	-24%
Smithfield Road (Welsh Bridge end)	2,358	1,732	-27%
Smithfield Road (middle section)	2,085	1,340	-36%
Smithfield Road (north section)	1,993	1,377	-31%
Chester Street (one way)	974	699	-28%
Coton Hill	1,117	875	-22%
Ellesmere Road (N of Berwick road)	960	662	-31%
Ellesmere Road (S of Harlescott la)	953	731	-23%
Berwick Road (at Coton Hill)	214	463	+116%
St Michael's Street	1,027	793	-23%
Whitchurch Rd (N of Heathgates)	1,442	1,244	-14%
Battlefield Road	1,035	847	-18%
Battlefield Link Road (West)	772	1,104	+43%

Table 2: Comparison of traffic flow with and without NWRR

Overall the traffic forecasts confirm that a NWRR should lead to large reductions in traffic on those roads which presently form the northwest corridor through Shrewsbury. Without the NWRR, high traffic flows on roads such as Smithfield Road, Whitchurch Road and Ellesmere Road will continue to cause congestion and unreliable journey times. As part of the Outline Business Case, the model will need to be updated to include Oxon Link Road and the Integrated Transport Package within a new Do-Minimum and Do-Something scenarios, given that these schemes are to be confirmed independently .

#### Air Quality

Due to the absence of a NWRR, the majority of north – west through traffic uses the A458 Smithfield Road to travel north-west across Shrewsbury. This has knock-on air quality impacts for the town centre.

The area comprising Frankwell, part of Bridge Street and Smithfield Road, Castle Gates and adjacent land, extending to encompass most of the Town Centre including High Street, Wyle Cop, English Bridge and Coleham Head gyratory is designated as an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).





Figure 3: Shrewsbury AQMA Area 3 [https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/aqma/details?aqma\\_id=780](https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/aqma/details?aqma_id=780)

Poor air quality is injurious to health can reduce the attractiveness of the town centre to businesses, shoppers and tourists.

## 2.2 Option development

The idea of building a north-west relief road for Shrewsbury has been around for more than 25 years. It is, in many respects, an “obvious” missing link in the local road network. A large number of schemes have been investigated and a “preferred route” identified on more than one occasion, most recently in January 2007<sup>1</sup>, subject to minor modifications in December 2007<sup>2</sup>.

### Early option development

Various options for a relief road scheme were identified and evaluated according to the standards of the day. The earliest public consultations were held in 1989 and 1991. This early work provides an historic background to more recent studies, but has otherwise been completely superseded.

In the mid-1990s, Shropshire County Council, together with the Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Council, published the Integrated Transport Plan for Shrewsbury. This was accepted by the DETR as a package proposal in TPP settlements from 1994/1995 until 1999/2000. The Integrated Transport Plan included a NWRR as part of a longer term strategy for access and enhancement which also included cycling, walking, parking and public transport measures and public realm improvements. Most of the measures in the Integrated Transport Plan have been, or are being, delivered with the exception of the NWRR.

A corridor for a proposed route to the north west of Shrewsbury was identified and protected in the Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Local Plan which was adopted in 2001.

In its first Local Transport Plan, the County Council made a commitment to review the NWRR scheme during the plan period, 2001/02 – 2005/06. This review took as its starting point the corridor identified in the 2001 Local Plan, but also included other options. The options appraisal and consultation process is described below.

<sup>1</sup> Shrewsbury NWRR Preferred Route Report, Mouchel, January 2007

<sup>2</sup> Shropshire Council, Council Report 14 December 2007

From the start, there have been two complementary aspects to the options appraisal:

1. Appraisal of various possible alignments for a North West Relief Road.
2. Appraisal of a range of alternatives to constructing a new road.

In both cases, the various options have been tested objectively, by analysis of their likely impacts on traffic and the environment, and subjectively by means of extensive public and stakeholder consultation.

#### Review of options, 2002

In 2002, a review was undertaken of the engineering, transport and environmental issues of previous NWRR proposals. This included a desktop study of environmental and planning constraints.

The review took as its starting point the road corridor identified in the 2001 Local Plan – “the protected route” together with other routes previously considered.

As part of the review, consideration was also given to the “do minimum” approach, as well as to potential alternatives to new road construction. Alternative options considered at this stage included:

1. Light rail and guided bus services
2. Improvements to existing bus services, waiting facilities, information and new bus lanes
3. Improvements to rail services
4. Enhancements to the cycle network, pavements and footpaths
5. Increasing rail freight
6. Higher car parking charges

The overall conclusion at this stage was that the provision of non-car options alone would be unlikely to provide equivalent benefits to the NWRR proposals. However the implementation of the NWRR scheme could itself provide the opportunity for the delivery of improvements in non-car accessibility.

#### Option development, 2003 – 2005

Following on from the initial appraisal and consultation, six route options were developed. These were further refined after two workshops with local landowners and stakeholders in February 2004. The six routes are described briefly below:

Route	Description
Blue route	Connecting The Mount (near Richmond Drive) to Ellesmere Road (south of Hubert Way). Crosses the River Severn west of the West Mid Show ground. (2.2km)
Red route Option 1	Connecting the A5 Shrewsbury Bypass at the Churncote Roundabout to the Holyhead Road (north of the Shelton Water Tower) and then to the Battlefield Link Rd. Crosses the River Severn at Shelton Rough and follows Laundry Terrace between the river and Berwick Road. Follows an alignment to the south of Cross Hill between the Berwick Road and Battlefield Link Road. (6.5km)
Red route Option 2	Connecting Shelton Road at its junction with The Mount to Ellesmere Road at its junction with the Battlefield Link Road. Crosses the River Severn at Shelton Rough. (4.7km)

<b>Green route</b>	Connecting the A5 Shrewsbury Bypass at the Churncote Roundabout to the Holyhead Road (north of the Shelton Water Tower). Crosses the River Severn at Shelton Rough. Follows an alignment to the north of Cross Hill between the Berwick Road and Battlefield Link Road. (6.3km)
<b>Black route</b>	Connecting the A5 Shrewsbury Bypass at the Churncote Roundabout to the Holyhead Road (north of the Shelton Water Tower). Crosses the River Severn at Shelton Rough and then runs parallel to Laundry Terrace between the river and Berwick Road and links with Battlefield Link Road. (6.4km)
<b>Orange route</b>	Similar to red route Option 1 but with an additional connection to Ellesmere Road north of Hubert Way. (6.6km)

Table 4: Six NWRR route descriptions

Further investigation was also undertaken of the alternatives to building a NWRR. Whereas the earlier work was essentially qualitative, this further assessment made use of an updated traffic model and other available information to allow a more quantified assessment. A "non-road options" workshop was held in June 2004. The options considered were:

- Walking
- Cycling
- Public transport – Light rail transit or guided bus
- Public transport – Rail
- Public transport - Bus
- Public transport – Park and Ride
- Freight solutions
- Traffic management
- Demand Management

The traffic model was used to compare the likely traffic reduction effects of various non-road options compared with those of a new road. The four non-road options considered to offer the highest potential benefits were:

- Parkway station and bus based Park and Ride.
- Light Rail Transit (LRT) or guided bus.
- Road user charging (£2 per day).
- Package of investment in non-car options on the A5/A483 Shrewsbury-Chester corridor.

The results are summarised below:

Location	NWRR	Parkway, Park & Ride	L.R.T.	£2 toll	A5/A483 package
Welsh Bridge	39%	0%	-1%	-29%	0%
English Bridge	+2%	-5%	-1%	-39%	-1%
Kingsland Bridge	-11%	-2%	-2%	-51%	-1%
Castle Foregate	-31%	-2%	-3%	-43%	-1%
Smithfield Road	-38%	-1%	-1%	-37%	-1%
Castle Street	-19%	-4%	-4%	-17%	0%

Welshpool Road	-33%	0%	-2%	-18%	0%
The Mount	-45%	0%	-2%	-19%	-1%
Ellesmere Road	-20%	0%	-1%	-10%	0%
Whitchurch Road	-18%	+1%	-1%	-5%	-1%

*Table 5: Traffic changes (%) in 2011 with non-car options*

Of the non-road options tested, only road user charging was found likely to result in a level of traffic reduction comparable to that which could be achieved by constructing a new road. At that time (2004) road user charging had only been seriously considered in large cities and the only scheme of significance in the UK was in London. The potential effects on the economy of a small town such as Shrewsbury were not known.

None of the other non-road options would produce comparable traffic reductions, either singly or in combination. Most of these options formed part of the wider Integrated Transport Plan (summarised below) for Shrewsbury and, in combination with a NWRR, they could help maximise the benefits associated with the new road.

#### Narrowing down the options, 2006

The results of the 2003-2005 option development recommended reducing the six route options to a narrow corridor of three possible routes, but did not recommend a single preferred route.

The three possible routes were very similar in that:

- They all connected with the A5 Shrewsbury Bypass at Churncote Roundabout, thereby offering traffic relief to the Welshpool Road.
- They all connected directly to the western end of the Battlefield Link Road.

It was clear from the consultation that for a route to have the support of local people it would have to follow this general alignment. On 7 February 2006 Cabinet resolved:

- that a proposal for a NWRR should be included in the new Local Transport Plan
- that further design work should be undertaken to develop a single preferred route between the A5/A458 junction and the Battlefield Link Road, based upon:
  - the "Green Route" – A5 Churncote roundabout to Holyhead Road, north of Shelton Water Tower, crossing the river at Shelton Rough following an alignment north of Cross Hill and joining the eastern end of the Battlefield Link Road;
  - the "Black Route" – A5 Churncote roundabout to Holyhead Road, north of Shelton Water Tower, running parallel to Laundry Terrace between the river and Berwick Road and joining the eastern end of the Battlefield Link Road;

and

  - the "Red Route (Option 1)" – A5 Churncote Roundabout to Holyhead Road, north of Shelton Water Tower, crossing the river at Shelton Rough, running parallel to Laundry Terrace between the river and Berwick Road, then south of Cross Hill and

joining the eastern end of the Battlefield Link Road

- that a Stage 3 environmental assessment be undertaken, with the particular aim of mitigating the environmental concerns identified in the recent review and consultation;
- that the NWRR be included, together with alternative and/or complementary transport measures, as part of the ongoing Transport Innovation Fund (TIF) study;
- that options be investigated and arrangements made for the alternative use and/or disposal of land acquired in relation to the protected line of the NWRR once a preferred route has been confirmed.

It was emphasised at Cabinet that the Council would be transparent throughout the process and that there would be extensive consultation.

#### Preferred Route selection, 2007

During the TIF study (see below) a 2007 Cabinet Report identified and approved a preferred route, referred to as the "Modified Black Route"<sup>3</sup>. The current preferred route<sup>4</sup>, a slight variation on this, was adopted by the County Council in December 2007<sup>5</sup>.

#### Transport Innovation Fund study

A Transport Innovation Fund (TIF) study was undertaken in 2007. Shropshire Council considered an ambitious package of measures, including the provision of a new north-west relief road (NWRR), a first class public transport system and other improvements, together with flexible, low-cost road pricing. The study was done with support from the Department for Transport (DfT), with a view to securing future major investment from the Transport Innovation Fund (TIF).

The interim results indicated that a "TIF" package could work, but the report authors suggested it would require a toll on the NWRR as well as road pricing in the town centre. The Council did not support either a toll on the NWRR or road pricing. The TIF proposal was eventually withdrawn by the Council and a business case not submitted.

Since the TIF study, further preparation work has been done on the preferred route of a NWRR, including:

- Further public consultation in 2010 (see section X below)
- Review of the road alignment
- Design of junctions.
- Preliminary design of bridges
- Landscaping works and drainage ponds
- Provision for cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians
- Updated cost estimate

#### Related Scheme: Integrated Transport Package

The Shrewsbury Integrated Transport Package (Shrewsbury ITP), was the subject of an Outline Business Case in 2015, and is currently earmarked for Marches LEP funding of £12.1m. It is a scheme that complements the delivery of a NWRR extremely well. As noted above, the 1990s Integrated Transport Plan included a NWRR as part of a longer term strategy for access and

<sup>3</sup> Shropshire County Council, Cabinet report 24 January 2007

<sup>4</sup> Drawing Number 755633-P-PM-036/037

<sup>5</sup> Shropshire County Council, Cabinet Report, 14 December 2007

enhancement which also included cycling, walking, parking and public transport measures and public realm improvements. Most of the measures in the Integrated Transport Plan have been delivered, and the 2015 ITP scheme updated these proposals and took them further. The only element of the original Integrated Transport Plan not delivered is the NWRR.

The ITP scheme aims to achieve the following principal objectives:

1. To reduce congestion on the inner relief road, on the main links to the town centre from this corridor, and within the historic and commercial town centre; and
2. To improve the transport mode share for sustainable transport modes in Shrewsbury.

The proposed package of measures is summarised below:

- **Key junction improvements** at Reabrook Roundabout, Meole Brace Roundabout, English Bridge Gyratory and Coleham Head would upgrade current highway infrastructure, such as capacity, traffic signals and facilities, with the aim of overcoming congestion issues affecting the highway network in Shrewsbury;
- **Implement further phases of the SCOOT network** to improve traffic sign operation and manage traffic flows on arterial routes. This would incorporate the deployment of VMS (Variable Message Signage), which would aim to re-distribute town centre through-traffic onto the inner relief road or alternatively, towards car parks and Park and Ride facilities. This would be enabled by upgrading the Urban Traffic Control (UTC) system;
- **Traffic management measures**, such as new pedestrian crossings and shared space implementation, would also be introduced within the town centre;
- **Enhancements to the commercial area**, such as Pride Hill, Shrewsbury Square and Mardol would improve the public realm and highlight pedestrian facilities. This closely links to the traffic management measures;
- **Enhancements to pedestrian and cycle links** would increase accessibility to the town centre for active and sustainable modes of transport and intensify awareness of link availability in Shrewsbury; and
- **Improved pedestrian wayfinding within and around the 'river loop'** would generate a highly accessible and connected town centre for pedestrians.

The locations of the main scheme elements are illustrated in Figure 4 below.

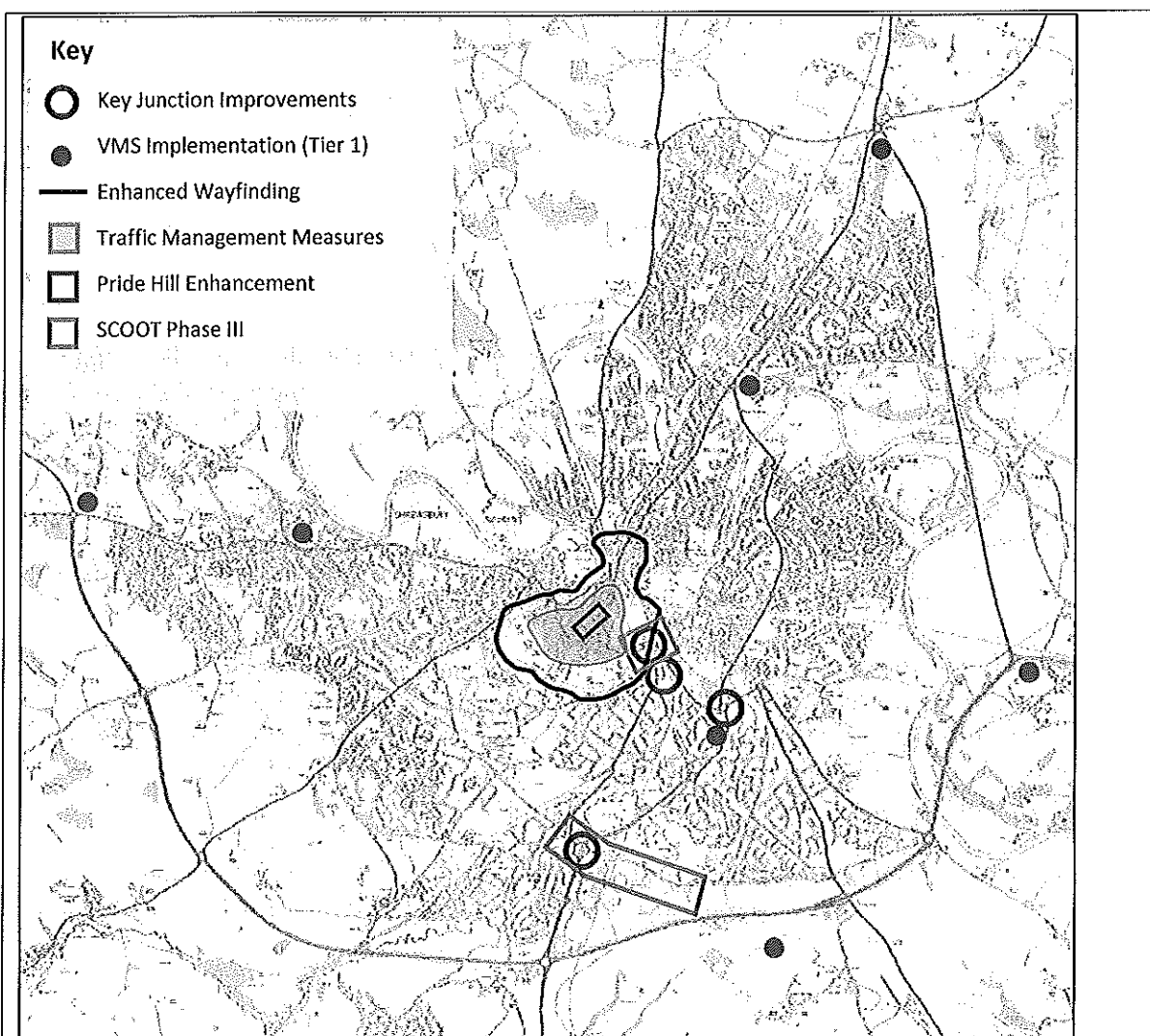


Figure 4: Location of the scheme elements within the Integrated Transport Package

Have any of the following documents been produced? (If Y please attach to this bid)

Option Appraisal Report (OAR)	N*
Appraisal Specification Report (ASR)	N
Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC)	N

\*Whilst a formal OAR does not currently exist, due to the extensive amount of optioneering work taken place, along with various reports and Cabinet papers an OAR could easily be provided, when required.

### 2.3 Alignment with LEP Strategic Economic Plan

Please illustrate how the proposal links with the aims of the SEP and the degree to which it would enhance the SEP. Please make any necessary cross reference to your bid for Growth Deal funding.

The NWRR is strongly aligned with the Marches LEP's SEP. The NWRR is identified in the Marches SEP as one of six long term infrastructure priorities which would serve the Marches, across both its urban and rural parts. The SEP classes the NWRR as one of its 'Year 2' projects ready to go in 2016/17. The SEP notes a £100,200,000 cost of the scheme. The SEP also notes that the NWRR will deliver 2,645 jobs and 2,900 homes.

#### NWRR supporting and enhancing the aims of the SEP

The Marches LEP Board has developed a set of strategic objectives/priorities which are:

- Supporting business
- Physical Infrastructure
- Skills Investment
- Low Carbon Economy
- Social Inclusion

The project supports business in Shrewsbury and Shropshire by reducing the journey times for two-thirds for those travelling between the North and the West regions. Long travel distances for businesses and employees who need to access jobs and markets by car currently hinder economic growth in the Marches region. The reduced journey times due to the NWRR address this issue and increases the size of the employee talent pool available to businesses in the area. Businesses that need to travel to gain access to certain markets also benefit from shorter journey times as it reduces their costs, allowing them to grow faster. Reduced congestion as the result of the NWRR will also increase the attractiveness of the town to investors.

The Marches LEP is stressing the importance of investment in transport and physical infrastructure as the area is rife with ageing infrastructure and strategic road networks, poor site access, public transport difficulties and high levels of congestion. The proposed NWRR will help to remove some of these constraints and allow the Marches to accelerate growth. The scheme would provide the missing link to complete the outer bypass for Shrewsbury.

As an important piece of new infrastructure, the NWRR will also help to support the wider priorities of skills investment via new construction jobs and social inclusion via enhanced accessibility across Shropshire.

#### Oxon Link Road

The proposed Oxon Link Road will be a single carriage way linking the A5 to the B4380 Holyhead Road. The SEP states that *"The Oxon Link Road ... will provide an incremental step towards the long term provision of the Shrewsbury NWRR, which will have significant economic benefits for the town and the town centre in particular"*.

The SEP also states that *"The scheme provides further long term benefits by serving as an enabler to the wider Shrewsbury aspirations of improving and enhancing access in and around this County Town, through the creation of the North West Relief Road (NWRR). This is an inherent part of the wider economic development of Shrewsbury"*. The role of the Oxon Link Road, in keeping open the possibility of a future NWRR, is also noted in the provisional Local Transport Plan.

#### Growth Deal Funding Application

The link to the current Growth Deal funding application is included below:

[http://www.marcheslep.org.uk/download/economic\\_plans/strategic\\_economic\\_plan/Marches%20LEP%20SEP%20FINAL310314-2.pdf](http://www.marcheslep.org.uk/download/economic_plans/strategic_economic_plan/Marches%20LEP%20SEP%20FINAL310314-2.pdf)

#### 2.4 Cross LEP support

If this bid has been endorsed by more than one LEP as an agreed priority over a multi-LEP area please confirm which LEPs (and any other bodies) support this bid and provide any further information on the strategic rationale.

N/A – as the scheme falls well within the Marches LEP boundary.



### 3. Economic Case

#### 3.1 Value for money

In 2006, the BCR was calculated to be between 4.71 (low growth) and 7.34 (high growth)<sup>6</sup>. The most up-to-date estimate<sup>7</sup> of the benefit-cost ratio (BCR) for the NWRR is 5.2. This indicates very high value for money. This figure was derived from predicted savings in driver time and vehicle operating costs; as the proposed road would reduce journey times between the west and north of Shrewsbury by two thirds (from 19.1 minutes to just 6.6 minutes).

The BCR calculation will be very sensitive to variations in the cost of a scheme, to forecasts of traffic growth, and to the date of construction. The 2007 TIF report suggested the scheme costs were £61.3m (leading to a BCR of 5.2). A report to the County Council's cabinet in 2008<sup>8</sup> gave the estimated cost of constructing the NWRR as £99.9m from 2008/09 onwards. A later report in 2009<sup>9</sup> gave the estimated cost as £102.1m. The BCR will therefore need to be recalculated for any new submission in order to take account of; inflation, latest construction costs, and the removal of costs for the Oxon Link Road, phase 1 of the NWRR (see Figure 1), which is subject to an existing, separate business case.

As noted in Section 2.3, the SEP notes that the NWRR will deliver 2,645 jobs and 2,900 homes. The scheme benefits will also need to be re-calculated and confirmed using the latest WebTAG benefit appraisal tools, which were not applied/available at the time of the initial NWRR BCR assessments. A series of scheme benefits assessments, including: Regeneration, Reliability, Active Mode Appraisal (walking and cycling), the Dependent Development Test and Wider Transport Impact Appraisal (WITA, to assess wider impacts such as agglomeration (WI1), output change in imperfectly competitive markets (WI2) and tax revenue from labour market impacts (WI3) could be applied to the scheme benefit calculations. It is anticipated that the application of these benefits could lead to a cumulative increase of 20-30% on top of the initial scheme transport benefits. These benefits will be assessed at outline business case stage.

In addition, the existing Shrewsbury transport model will need to be updated to calculate the economic benefits of the NWRR scheme. The timeframe for developing the existing model is summarised in Section 5.1 below.

The anticipated NWRR scheme outcomes are:

- Reduced congestion and monetised journey time savings – measured using the updated modelling work, and later through traffic surveys before and after the scheme implementation;
- Enhanced route choice and network resilience – measured through traffic surveys before and after the scheme implementation; and

<sup>6</sup> 2006 estimate of benefit – cost ratio between 4.71 and 7.34 (quoted in SC 'EAST' report to LTB, July 2013)

<sup>7</sup> Gross BCR, Transport Innovation Fund Final Report, Mouchel, November 2007

<sup>8</sup> Shropshire County Council, Cabinet Report, 15 July 2008

<sup>9</sup> Shropshire Council, Cabinet Report, 18 November 2009

- Improved air quality within Shrewsbury town centre – measured using standard air quality counters and analysed by Shropshire Council.

These outcomes will be tested, reviewed and refined at Outline Business Case stage.

#### 4. Financial Case

##### 4.1 Cost of producing OBC

The estimated costs for producing an Outline Business Case are broken down as follows:

Outline Business Case Recommendations	
<b>OBC Foundations</b>	<b>115,000</b>
Options Assessment Report (OAR)	25,000
Public consultation and key stakeholder engagement	25,000
Initial Land Referencing / Ownership	30,000
Environmental Surveys / Monitoring	35,000
<b>Modelling (and reports)</b>	<b>297,500</b>
Data collection and analysis (including mobile phone data)	150,000
Update model and create Variable Demand Model (VDM)	90,000
<b>Model reports and outputs</b>	
Appraisal Specification Report (ASR)	7,500
Data collection report	10,000
Local Model Validation Report (LMVR)	20,000
Modelling Uncertainty Report (and Uncertainty Log)	10,000
Forecasting Report	10,000
<b>Engineering Design</b>	<b>180,000</b>
Highway & structural design	85,000
Geotechnical review	75,000
Drawings and 3D visualisations	20,000
<b>Strategic Case</b>	<b>25,000</b>
<b>Economic Case</b>	<b>280,000</b>
<b>Scheme Costing (Calculating PVC)</b>	
Production of scheme risk register (live)	15,000
Whole life costs	25,000
Quantified Risk Assessment (QRA)	10,000
<b>Appraisal Benefits (Calculating PVB)</b>	
TUBA (user benefits) appraisal	20,000
COBA-LT (accidents) appraisal	12,500
Dependent Development (test) appraisal	15,000
Reliability appraisal	10,000
WITA (Wider Impacts Transport Appraisal) appraisal- Atkins software	10,000
Wider benefits (Regeneris) - GVA, jobs, growth	15,000
Regeneration appraisal (accessibility)	15,000
Social Impact Appraisal (SIA)	10,000
Distributional Impact Appraisal (DIA)	10,000
Environmental appraisal (WebTAG, not EIA)	85,000
Sensitivity testing	10,000
Discounting, TEE, AST tables, etc	7,500
Economic Case write up and VFM Statement	10,000
<b>Financial Case</b>	<b>10,000</b>
<b>Commercial Case</b>	<b>10,000</b>
<b>Management Case</b>	<b>15,000</b>
<b>Project Management</b>	<b>60,000</b>
<b>Disbursements</b>	<b>15,000</b>
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>992,500</b>

These costs have been estimated by Shropshire Council, with support from their consultants Mouchel, using their combined experience of delivering several outline business cases to time and budget. The costs do not include contingency or optimism bias.

#### 4.2 Funding requirement

The total cost of producing the OBC broken down into financial years, as sought from DfT is shown below:

	2015/16 and before	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	TOTAL
Funding sought from DfT large local majors fund			£942,875		£942,875
Local funding			£49,625		£49,625
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>£992,500</b>		<b>£992,500</b>

These costs are based on the costs set out in Section 4.1. The costs do not include contingency or optimism bias.

Please confirm whether or not the funding sought from DfT can be capitalised (you may provide additional comments or qualifications as necessary)?

#### Y/N- s151 Officer to confirm

No, at this stage of the project funding sought from DfT for the OBC submission will not be capitalised by Shropshire Council and the match funding requirement will be met from revenue resources.

#### 4.3 Capital cost of scheme

The best estimate of the capital cost of the preferred NWRR scheme (excluding the costs of producing an OBC and optimism bias) is set out below:

	Preparation costs (between OBC and construction)	Land purchase	Construction costs	TOTAL
Base cost	£4,166,000	£11,369,000	£52,932,000	£68,467,000
Risk	£833,000	£2,274,000	£10,586,000	£13,693,000
Inflation	£490,000	£3,356,000	£19,055,000	£22,901,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£5,489,000</b>	<b>£16,999,000</b>	<b>£82,573,000</b>	<b>£105,061,000</b>

These costs have been estimated by Shropshire Council, with support from their consultants Mouchel. The costs have been calculated by updating existing 2010 NWWR scheme costs to 2016 levels. The following assumptions apply:

1. The Oxon Link Road scheme has been omitted from the 2009 base and risk costs (£14.1m @ Q2 16/17 prices) as this is subject to a separate business case
2. The Base construction costs estimate at Q1 10/11 prices has been inflated by 32.1% to current price levels (Q2 16/17) using the BCIS Tender Price Indices

3. As a secondary check the construction costs base estimate has been re-rated using current pricing data and found to be analogous to the Q2 16/17 indices update pricing level.
4. No information has been provided for the original land purchase allowance. For an accurate update, a new exercise would need to be carried out. For the purposes of this exercise the land purchase price has been uplifted by a similar percentage to the construction costs (32.1%)
5. The amount included for Risk at Q1 10/11 calculated as 9.8% of the base costs which we consider very low for this stage of design development. We have increased this to 20% which is more befitting.
6. Inflation from OBC to Construction taken to mid-point of period (Q3 18/19) using BCIS TPI (9.8%)
7. Inflation for land purchase taken to start of construction (Q1 21/22) using BCIS TPI (24.6 %)
8. Inflation for construction taken to mid-point of construction (Q2 22/23) using BCIS TPI as a basis (30%)

#### 4.4 Affordability

Is the likely total capital cost of the scheme (as detailed in 4.3 above) below the guideline threshold for your LEP at Annex A	<i>N</i>
Is the scheme in an area that has Devolution Deal/Gainshare funding?	<i>Y</i>
Is the scheme on the strategic road or rail network?	<i>N</i>
Is the scheme composed of elements that could be delivered independently of each other over a longer timescale?	<i>N</i>

- Both Shropshire Council and the Marches LEP are now Non Constituted Members of the West Midlands Combined Authority.

## 5. Management Case

### 5.1 Outline Business Case delivery

The following tasks need to be developed as part of the outline business case:

- Business case foundation tasks
- Modelling
- Engineering design
- Outline Business Case document:
  - Strategic Case
  - Economic Case
  - Commercial Case
  - Financial Case
  - Management Case

The timeline for the production of an OBC is as follows:

Outline Business Case Programme	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
OBC Foundations										
Options Assessment Report (OAR)										
Public consultation and key stakeholder engagement										
Initial Land Referencing / Ownership										
Environmental Surveys / Monitoring										
Modelling (and reports)										
Data collection and analysis (including mobile phone data)										
Update model and create Variable Demand Model (VDM)										
Model reports and outputs										
Appraisal Specification Report (ASR)										
Data collection report										
Local Model Validation Report (LMVR)										
Modelling Uncertainty Report (and Uncertainty Log)										
Forecasting Report										
Engineering Design										
Highway & structural design										
Geotechnical review										
Drawings and 3D visualizations										
Strategic Case										
Economic Case										
Scheme Costing (Calculating PVC)										
Production of scheme risk register (live)										
Whole life costs										
Quantified Risk Assessment (QRA)										
Appraisal Benefits (Calculating PVB)										
TUBA (user benefits) appraisal										
COBA-LT (accidents) appraisal										
Dependent Development (test) appraisal										
Reliability appraisal										
WITA (Wider Impacts Transport Appraisal) appraisal - Atkins software										
Wider benefits (Regeneris) - GVA, jobs, growth										
Regeneration appraisal (accessibility)										
Social Impact Appraisal (SIA)										
Distributional Impact Appraisal (DIA)										
Environmental appraisal (WebTAG, not EIA)										
Sensitivity testing										
Discounting, TEE, AST tables, etc										
Economic Case write up and VIM Statement										
Financial Case										
Commercial Case										
Management Case										
Project Management										
Management of OBC										
Disbursements										

## 5.2 Outline Business Case Governance

### Project Governance, Organisational Structure and Roles

Shropshire Council will establish a Programme Delivery Board aligned with best practice guidance on project management. The Programme Delivery Board's primary function is decision-making and review. The Board will effectively 'own' the Outline Business Case and be responsible for:

- Managing the scheme and ensuring its successful delivery;
- Keeping track of the overall project programme to ensure that the scheme is delivered within the constraints of time and budget;
- Facilitating communication to aid the decision-making process;
- Providing guidance and support to the Project Manager;
- Authorising necessary funds and spending;

- Ensuring a stakeholder management framework is in place and stakeholders are being managed; and
- Managing risks.

Figure 5 illustrates a high-level governance structure, depicting how the Programme Delivery Board fits within the overall delivery framework, and the inter-relationship between various entities and their strategic roles in the delivery of the scheme.

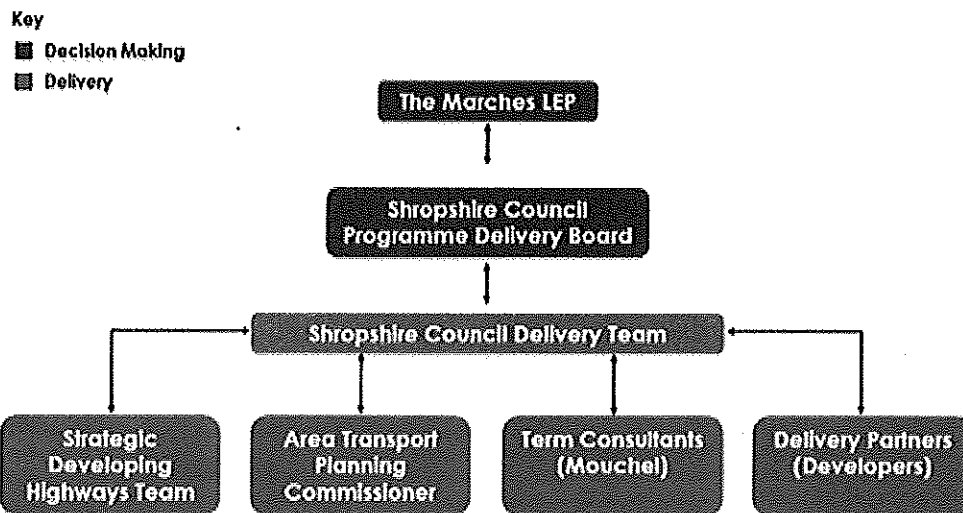


Figure 5: High level governance structure

#### Programme Delivery Board

The Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) will be George Candler, Director of Place and Enterprise. The SRO will be responsible for chairing meetings and providing guidance and support to the Project Manager as required. The SRO will ensure that the scheme is progressing in line with the originally envisaged project programme and that key deliverables and milestones agreed by the Programme Delivery Board are achieved. The Programme Delivery Board will consist of key Shropshire Council staff: the Project Director, Andrew Stirling and the Project Manager, Matt Johnson. The governance structure and roles are summarised in Table 5.

Programme Delivery Board	Key Roles & Responsibilities	Role within Shropshire Council
George Candler	Senior Responsible Officer representing the public interests within the Council	Director of Place and Enterprise
Andrew Stirling	Project Director. Responsible for delivery of the overall programme	Physical Regeneration Manager
Matt Johnson	Project Manager. Responsible for updating Programme Delivery Board on scheme progress. Will provide guidance and support to the Project Director	Strategic Transport and Contracts Manager

Table 5: The Programme Delivery Board

Profiles of those members on the Programme Delivery Board are described below.

- **George Candler**, Director of Place and Enterprise, will represent public interests during the delivery of the project;

- **Andrew Stirling**, Physical Regeneration Manager, will be the Project Director, responsible for strategic division making on behalf of Shropshire Council, and overall delivery of the project; and
- **Matt Johnson**, Strategic Transport and Contracts Manager will be the Project Manager responsible for updating the Programme Delivery Board on scheme progress (through the project programme), risks (through the risk register), cost management (including funding allocation and spend), procurement activities and stakeholder discussions and impacts (via the stakeholder management plan).

The Programme Delivery Board will meet on a regular basis, to review project progress against the programme, identifying if milestones have been met, make decisions at gateway review points, and to review project risks and opportunities.

#### **Project Delivery Team**

The Project Delivery Team will be tasked with delivering the Outline Business Case and the scheme to completion. This will involve negotiating with the key stakeholders and partners in the development and maintaining key lines of communication between the promoter, stakeholders and The Marches LEP / LTB. The Project Delivery Team responsible for the delivery of this project is set out in Table 6.

Project Delivery Team	Name	Role
Strategic Development Highways Team for Shropshire Council	Andrew Stirling	Representing Shropshire Council and providing strategic economic development input
	Matt Johnson	Representing Shropshire Council and providing strategic infrastructure development input
	Victoria Merrill	Representing Shropshire Council and providing transport planning and policy input
Term Consultants (Mouchel)	Frank Beech	Project Director
	Ian Baker	Project Manager
Engineering Design Team (Mouchel)	TBC	Highways engineers Drainage engineers Lighting engineers Quantity Surveys Traffic engineers Transport modelling consultants Air quality consultants Stakeholder management consultants

*Table 6: Project Delivery Team*

#### **5.3 Scheme delivery**

An outline timeline for the delivery of the scheme is included below in **Appendix A**.

#### **5.4 Stakeholder support**

Please provide evidence of support for this scheme prior to the development of this bid, referencing activity from businesses, campaign groups, MPs etc.

It would be helpful to include any relevant links to news stories, campaign websites etc.

#### Public and stakeholder consultation 2003

A public consultation exercise was undertaken in 2003. It was found that a NWRR would in principle be supported by a majority of the public and interested organisations, though a sizeable minority of people was strongly opposed to a NWRR in principle.

There were also objections which related to the protected route, rather than the scheme itself. Whilst there was a strong body of opinion wanting to see a NWRR provided on the protected route as soon as possible, this was outweighed by those who felt further investigation and development of options appropriate before making a firm decision.

There was also strong support for linking a NWRR to other measures contributing to an Integrated Transport Strategy, including public transport improvements, better access for pedestrians and cyclists, town centre enhancements and traffic reductions.

It was concluded that the Council should further investigate a range of route options for a NWRR, together with a complementary package of complementary measures to ensure an integrated approach. These would be subject to further public engagement before recommending a new preferred option (including complementary measures).

#### Public and stakeholder consultation (2005)

A further public exhibition was held in May 2005. Its aims were:

- To update people on work to date;
- To achieve a wide public involvement;
- To set the NWRR in the context of integrated transport issues;
- To determine the level of support and/or opposition to the possible route options and non-road options.

Six NWRR routes were illustrated and described, together with a summary of the impacts on the environment, traffic, economics and planning policies. People were invited to comment by means of a questionnaire which was available at the exhibition and distributed to 55,000 households via the local "Admag" free newspaper.

The exhibition was well attended. 1165 questionnaires were returned, together with 26 letters from members of the public and 23 from interested organisations.

People were asked to indicate up to three preferences, with the option to choose "no new road should be built" as well as the six road options.

A clear majority (77%) agreed that there are traffic problems in Shrewsbury that need to be addressed. A majority (58%) considered that the existing solution of minor improvements and ongoing maintenance was not as adequate solution. A majority (53%) considered that a NWRR should be promoted to address problems caused by traffic in the town centre.

When asked to consider what should be included in a future strategy if methods other than building a new road were to be pursued, people indicated support for improvements to cycling (66%), walking (60%), Park & Ride (61%) and bus services. (52%). Some 32% supported road charging, but 53% were opposed to this.

With regard to the NWRR route options, people were given the opportunity to select their first, second or third choice preferences, or to reject a particular route option. Combining first and second choices, the most popular route for a NWRR was the "Green Route" which was the first or



second choice of 43% of people. In general, people were more supportive of the “outer” route options (Green, Black and Red option 1), than the “inner” routes (Orange, Blue and Red option 2). The inner routes were also least acceptable in terms of the technical assessment.

Taking into account both the technical review and the results of public consultation, the Cabinet decided:

- to include a NWRR proposal in the Local Transport Plan for 2006-2011;
- to undertake further design work to develop a single preferred route based on the Green route, the Black Route and the Red Route (Option 1);
- to undertake a Stage 3 environmental assessment;
- to include the NWRR and complementary measures as part of an ongoing Transport Innovation Fund (TIF) study;
- to consider options for disposal or use of land acquired for the previously protected route.

#### Stakeholder consultation 2010

The most recent consultation was conducted during April-May 2010, comprising of exhibitions, questionnaires, a Citizens’ Panel survey, on-line surveys and stakeholder meetings. 1997 responses were received by the 17<sup>th</sup> May, comprising 1,119 responses from the general public via postal and online questionnaires and 878 responses from the Shropshire Citizens’ Panel.

Responses showed that there was an overwhelming agreement that traffic is a big problem in Shrewsbury and that something needs to be done. Overall, 59% thought that the NWRR should be built compared to 33% who were against it, 3% did not know and 5% neither agreed nor disagreed. This represents a slight increase in the proportion of local people who support the building of the NWRR when compared to the 2005 consultation.

#### MP support

Daniel Kawczynski MP for Shrewsbury & Atcham has been vocal in his support of the NWRR. During the Prime minister’s question (4<sup>th</sup> September 2013) he asked David Cameron whether the then country’s improving economic situation would allow funds to be set aside for the project: <http://www.shropshirestar.com/news/2013/09/05/david-cameron-pledges-fresh-look-at-shrewsbury-relief-road-bid/>.

Mr Kawczynski posted on his own personal website stating his support for the project as it “would be a huge benefit for the people of Shrewsbury”: <http://www.daniel4shrewsbury.co.uk/news/north-west-relief-road>.

It is reported that Mr Kawczynski held a meeting with the Chancellor George Osborne during November 2014 to discuss the scheme and attempt to get funding for it: <http://www.shropshirestar.com/news/2014/11/15/duty-of-mp-to-secure-shrewsbury-relief-road/>.

Mr Kawczynski sent a letter to the editor of the Shrewsbury Chronicle stating that he believed the NWRR was needed as it will bring about “significant social and economic benefits”. While he also stated that concerns about the possible impacts of the road need to be considered he was convinced by the conversations he had with local constituents and businesses who support the scheme as current journeys in the north of Shrewsbury cost both businesses and individuals significant time and money. Mr Kawczynski highlights some of the other reasons his constituents support the project and some of funding matters for the project.

**Parish Council support**

Bomere Heath Parish Council told the MP that NWRR is very much needed to prevent 'rat running' in the area and he has vowed to keep pushing the government to fund the project:

<http://www.shropshirestar.com/news/2015/02/27/relief-road-near-shrewsbury-would-be-godsend-to-village/>.

**Local Organisations support**

The Shrewsbury Town Centre Residents' Association (STCRA) in response to 2005 consultation stated its support for NWRR despite reservations on environmental costs. On the organisations website an article was posted (26<sup>th</sup> November 2015) in which MP Daniel Kawczynski stated that around 95% of the members of the STCRA he had spoken to were supportive of the project.

<http://www.stcra.org.uk/2015/11/nw-relief-road/>

**Shrewsbury Business Chamber**

In the same article as above Mr Kawczynski, claims that the Shrewsbury Business Chamber, the local chamber of commerce support the project.

<http://www.stcra.org.uk/2015/11/nw-relief-road/>

**6. Optional**

**6.1 RIS2 funding**

Would you like to flag this scheme for potential RIS2 funding if it is close to, and could possibly help the Strategic Road network? **No**

If Y, please briefly describe, with any evidence, the scheme's potential to help the Strategic Road Network.

**7. Declarations**

**7.1 Lead LEP officer**

I confirm that this bid has the full support of The Marches LEP and hereby submit it to DfT on the LEPs behalf for consideration.

Name:

Position:

Phone:

Email:

Signed:

**7.2 Section 151 Officer declaration**

As Section 151 Officer for Shropshire Council I declare that the scheme cost estimates quoted in this bid are accurate to the best of my knowledge and that Shropshire Council

- has allocated sufficient budget to produce the Outline Business Case on the basis of its proposed funding contribution
- accepts responsibility for meeting any costs of producing an Outline Business Case over and above the DfT contribution requested, including potential cost overruns
- accepts that no further increase in DfT funding will be considered beyond the maximum contribution requested

Name:



Signed:



Please email this completed form to:

[I.T.plans@dft.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:I.T.plans@dft.gsi.gov.uk)

**by midday 28th July 2016**

*Please note that the size limit for attachments to a single incoming email to DfT is 20MB. If your bid is larger than this please submit separate emails, use a zip folder, or convert large files to alternative format.*



# Appendix A – Scheme Delivery Timeline

ID	Task Name	Duration	Start
1	Production of Outline Business Case	286 days	Mon 04/07/16
2	Stakeholder engagement	50 days	Mon 12/12/16
3	Public consultation	31 days	Mon 20/02/17
4	Council review of consultation and approval of OBC	20 days	Tue 04/04/17
5	Submission of Outline Business Case	28 days	Tue 02/05/17
6	DfT review of OBC	70 days	Fri 09/06/17
7	DfT approval of Outline Business Case	0 days	Thu 24/09/17
8	Contractor appointment	200 days	Fri 15/08/17
9	Planning application	200 days	Fri 14/09/18
10	Publication of Statutory Orders	60 days	Mon 06/05/19
11	Public inquiry	300 days	Mon 29/07/19
12	Public inquiry decision	0 days	Fri 28/12/20
13	SC approval to proceed to construction	0 days	Fri 28/12/20
14	Construction start	650 days	Mon 22/12/20
15	NWR opening	0 days	Fri 16/06/23

Task

Split

Milestone

Summary

Project Summary

Internal Tasks

External Milestone

Inactive Task

Inactive Milestone

Inactive Summary

Manual Task

Duration only

Manual Summary/Setup

Manual Summary

Start only

Next only

Deadline

Progress





## **The Marches Skills Action Plan**

**2017 – 2020**

## ANNEX 2- SKILLS ACTION PLAN 2017 – 2020

A1 - ATTRACT AND RETAIN TALENT					
Action	Lead/Partners	Named Lead	Key Tasks	Timescale	Funding
<p>Higher Education summit to understand the Higher education offer available to people in the Marches.</p> <p>Develop bids for Higher Education to grow the Higher Education offer in the Marches region.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marches LOCAL Enterprise Partnership</li> <li>• Higher Education providers</li> <li>• Harper Adams – Agri-tech</li> <li>• University of Wolverhampton – KEEN and Advanced Manufacturing</li> <li>• University Centre Shrewsbury</li> <li>• New Model in Technology and Engineering</li> </ul>	A Caesar-Homden, Marches LEP	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Meetings with the Universities on their offer and ensure details and links on the skills Portal to ensure local people are aware of local Higher Education offer.</li> <li>2. Summit of Higher Education providers</li> <li>3. Promote KEEN and Higher Level Apprenticeships to employers</li> </ol>	<p>December 2016 – March 2017</p> <p>June 2017</p>	Growth Deal 3 ERDF



## ANNEX 2- SKILLS ACTION PLAN 2017 – 2020

Action	Lead/Partners	Named Lead	Key Tasks	Timescale	Funding
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engineering (New Model in Technology &amp; Engineering , Hereford )</li> <li>Keele University</li> <li>Staffordshire University</li> <li>Shrewsbury Colleges Group</li> <li>Hospitals</li> <li>University of Worcester</li> </ul>				
Further develop the Skills Portal to showcase the skills provision to young people, parents, teachers, advisors and community groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marches LEP</li> <li>Marches Growth Hub</li> <li>Providers – Marches Skills Provider Network</li> <li>Further Education</li> </ul>	A Caesar-Homden, Marches LEP	Fact finding meeting with Clair Schafer 16th June re refresh	December 2016	

## ANNEX 2- SKILLS ACTION PLAN 2017 – 2020

Action	Lead/Partners	Named Lead	Key Tasks	Timescale	Funding
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Higher Education Institutes</li> <li>Web Developer</li> </ul>		<p>Address MSPN meeting to ask for feedback on the current layout</p> <p>Discussion with Caroline Cattle and Tracey Flint re Growth Hub</p> <p>Meeting with Web Developer to discuss layout options</p> <p>Design approval agreed</p> <p>MSPN collating data</p> <p>Upgrade Software</p> <p>Complete Upgrade</p> <p>Launch of new Skills Portal site</p>	<p>14<sup>th</sup> July 2016</p> <p>June 2016 Ongoing</p> <p>15<sup>th</sup> August 2016</p> <p>September 2016</p> <p>August – September 2016</p> <p>September 2016</p> <p>November 2016</p> <p>December 2016</p>	Allocated budget

## ANNEX 2- SKILLS ACTION PLAN 2017 – 2020

### A2 - CAREERS ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

Action	Lead/Partners	Named Lead	Key Tasks	Timescale	Funding
Facilitate the comprehensive provision of Enterprise Advisors across the Marches to enhance school-business engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marches LEP</li> <li>Local Authorities</li> <li>Schools and Post 16 providers</li> <li>The Careers and Enterprise Company</li> <li>Local Authority Skills Leads</li> </ul>	A Caesar-Homden, Marches Local Enterprise Partnership	Raise awareness of the Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) Programme	Implementation by March 2017 to allocate funds	£50k CEC match funding for 'Start up' activities across the Marches LEP Region
		S Marston, Telford and Wrekin Council	CEC Enterprise Co-ordinator in place in Telford and Wrekin to include CEC Launch event	11 <sup>th</sup> October 2015	£25k CEC match funding per Enterprise Co-ordinator
		J Vernon, Shropshire Council	CEC Joining the Dots National Conference and meetings with successful tender applicants	11 <sup>th</sup> May 2016	
		A Heath – Herefordshire Council	Careers and Enterprise Advisors launch event in Telford and Wrekin	11 <sup>th</sup> October 2016	£50k 'Start up' fund plus match funding
			Additional Enterprise Advisor posts in Herefordshire and Shropshire. Herefordshire and Shropshire Skills Leads asked for a plan at the Skills Operations Group meeting on	By 31 <sup>st</sup> August 2017	£25k funding per post plus £25k non-match funded

## ANNEX 2- SKILLS ACTION PLAN 2017 – 2020

Action	• Lead/Partners	Named Lead	Key Tasks	Timescale	Funding
	•		11 <sup>th</sup> October to feedback at the next meeting.  <b>Outputs listed in Annex B</b>  £50k 'Start up' fund plan from Local Authority Skills Leads received 16 – 22 <sup>nd</sup> November. To be checked against criteria	7 <sup>th</sup> November   31 <sup>st</sup> August 2017	
CEC Mentoring Programme to work with Young People most at risk of disengagement pre GCSE to encourage progression into employment or training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marches LEP</li> <li>• CEC</li> <li>• Local Authorities</li> <li>• Successful bidders</li> </ul>	A Caesar-Homden, Marches Local Enterprise Partnership	Marches LEP active role in the assessment process.       Contract Award Notification  <b>Outputs listed in Annex B</b>	Proposed timetable August – November 2016 with awarding of contracts and launch in early November 2016 (subject to change by CEC)  Week beginning 21 <sup>st</sup> November (Subject to change by CEC)	£10m nationally to be awarded by the CEC
Roll out of 'Life Ready Work Ready Programme' brokering links between schools and employers to create work experience, enhance access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Telford and Wrekin Council</li> </ul>	S Marston, Telford and Wrekin Council	Letters to be sent each term to parents advising on what careers support young people are getting and how to help. Actioned letter sent to parents of new year 11's	Ongoing until 2018   Termly, commencing September 2016	£50k 'Start-up' fund plus match funding  Telford and Wrekin Council

## ANNEX 2- SKILLS ACTION PLAN 2017 – 2020

Action	Lead/Partners	Named Lead	Key Tasks	Timescale	Funding
to employment, and grow apprenticeships. This should include pre-15 activities with a focus on parental engagement to improve parental involvement in education and raise awareness of career choices.			Launch of business school connector site to improve joint working. Developed and tested, sign off.	November 2016 (Subject to change)	
			Production of Virtual reality video for young people to promote apprenticeships. Filming at several employer's locations.	Nov 2016	
			Development of standards to improve work experience.	Work started October 2016	
			Improved attendance of employers at school careers evenings.	Starting Nov 2016 in one school	
			Links built for in school working with Work Pays advisor. First meeting scheduled.	Commencing October 2016	
			Joint working in schools with JCP advisor assigned to schools. Advisor appointed.	October 2016,	
			Initial meeting Nov 2016.	November 2016	
			Start Date.	January 2017	

## ANNEX 2- SKILLS ACTION PLAN 2017 – 2020

Action	Lead/Partners	Named Lead	Key Tasks	Timescale	Funding
STEM programme with schools aimed at facilitating career progression into priority sectors such as advanced manufacturing, agri-tech and defence and securities. Include STEM ambassadors and business mentors, industrial visits, parental awareness programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marches LEP</li> <li>Schools</li> <li>Post 16 Providers</li> <li>Employers</li> </ul>	<p>S Marston, Telford and Wrekin Council</p> <p>J Vernon, Shropshire Council</p> <p>A Heath – Herefordshire Council</p>	<p>Telford – TEENTech event briefing</p> <p>First TEENTech event held at Enginuity, Ironbridge for schools and businesses. Over 250 young people attended with their teachers and over 28 national and local businesses presented tasks and challenges to promote STEM careers</p>	<p>6<sup>th</sup> April 2016</p> <p>11<sup>th</sup> October 2016</p>	
<b>A3 Priority Sector Skills Plans</b>					
<p>Strategic Economic Plan data refresh.</p> <p>Marches LEP Skills Plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marches Local Enterprise Partnership Skills Board</li> </ul>	Marches Local Enterprise Partnership Team	<p>Sign off by the Marches LEP Skills Operations Group</p> <p>Distribution to the Marches LEP Skills Board</p> <p>Sign off by the Marches LEP Skills Board</p> <p>Sign off by the Marches LEP Board</p>	<p>Completed March 2016</p> <p>7<sup>th</sup> November 2016</p> <p>8<sup>th</sup> November 2016</p> <p>16<sup>th</sup> November 2016</p> <p>30<sup>th</sup> November 2016</p>	£53k research funding

## ANNEX 2- SKILLS ACTION PLAN 2017 – 2020

Action	Lead/Partners	Named Lead	Key Tasks	Timescale	Funding
Sector data for strategy on skills needs to inform response to Industrial Strategy.	•		To further develop research on sectors, can be broken down into the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Defence/Cyber Security</li> <li>– Agri-Tech/Food and Drink</li> <li>– Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering</li> <li>– Enviro Tech</li> <li>– Digital and Creative</li> <li>– Construction</li> <li>– Tourism</li> <li>– Professional Services</li> <li>– Health and Social Care</li> </ul>		Enterprise Zone Skills Fund
Advanced Manufacturing Hubs – Skills Capital investment <b>See A5 apprenticeship Strategy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marches Local Enterprise Partnership</li> <li>• Successful Bidders</li> </ul>	A Caesar-Homden, Marches Local Enterprise Partnership	Procurement Process  Contract negotiation process	Award notifications sent July 2016  July – September 2016 (ongoing) Project Expenditure deadline 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2017 Outputs deadline 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2021	£2.8m Skills Capital fund
Invite Post-16 and HE providers to reflect in their Strategic Plans how their provision meets LEP priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marches LEP</li> <li>• Providers</li> </ul>	A Caesar-Homden, Marches Local Enterprise Partnership	HEI summit	December 2016?	

## ANNEX 2- SKILLS ACTION PLAN 2017 – 2020

A4 – Innovation					
Action	Lead/Partners	Named Lead	Key Tasks	Timescale	Funding
Enhance the capacity of the Growth Hub to support businesses to innovate and take up the latest ideas and technologies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marches LEP</li> <li>• Growth Hub Operations Group</li> <li>• Higher Education Institutes</li> <li>• Businesses</li> </ul>	C Cattle, T Flint Marches Local Enterprise Partnership	Workshops	December 2016	
Encourage participation in Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP) between HEIs, graduates and businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marches LEP</li> <li>• Higher Education Institutes</li> <li>• Innovate UK</li> <li>• ERDF</li> </ul>	The University of Wolverhampton	Workshops, seminars and dissemination events. Plus targeted marketing to raise profile and awareness.	Activity will take place across the region every month commencing Oct 2016, through to Dec 2018	ERDF and ESIF
Facilitate take-up of the Innovate UK Innovation Voucher scheme to help SMEs grow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marches LEP</li> <li>• Higher Education Institutes</li> <li>• Innovate UK</li> <li>• European Regional Development Fund</li> </ul>				



## ANNEX 2- SKILLS ACTION PLAN 2017 – 2020

A5 - Apprenticeship Strategy					
Action	Lead/Partners	Named Lead	Key Tasks	Timescale	Funding
Develop a Communication and Marketing Plan for apprenticeships aimed at both learners and employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marches LEP</li> <li>• BeBold</li> <li>• CEC</li> <li>• National Apprenticeship Service</li> <li>• Providers</li> <li>• Businesses</li> <li>• Schools</li> <li>• National Citizen Service</li> <li>• Midlands Engine Skills Group</li> <li>• Shropshire Ladder</li> <li>• Marches Skills Provider Network</li> </ul>	<p>A Caesar-Homden, Marches Local Enterprise Partnership</p> <p>S Marston, Telford and Wrekin Council</p> <p>J Vernon, Shropshire Council</p> <p>A Heath – Herefordshire Council</p>	National Apprenticeship Week 10 <sup>th</sup> anniversary events.	March 6-10 <sup>th</sup> 2017	SFA (To be confirmed)

## ANNEX 2- SKILLS ACTION PLAN 2017 – 2020

Action	Lead/Partners	Named Lead	Key Tasks	Timescale	Funding
Increase uptake of Apprenticeships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marches LEP</li> <li>Local Authorities</li> <li>Successful bidders</li> </ul> <p><b>Lot 1:</b> <b>Shrewsbury Colleges Group</b></p> <p>Key Partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shrewsbury College</li> <li>Shrewsbury Sixth Form College</li> <li>Staffordshire University</li> <li>Caterpillar Remanufacturing</li> <li>FESTO</li> <li><b>Marches Centre of Manufacturing and Technology Community Interest Company (CIC),</b></li> </ul>	A Caesar-Homden, Marches Local Enterprise Partnership	<p>Skills Infrastructure Capital Programme – x3 contracts awarded plus x4 GD1 projects</p> <p>Development of x3 Advanced Manufacturing hubs in the Marches LEP Region</p> <p><b>Outputs listed in Annex B</b></p>	<p>Commencing June 2016 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 for spend. Outputs measured until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.</p> <p>Contracting stage - 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 for spend deadline. Outputs measured until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.</p>	Skills Capital Fund £3.3m

## ANNEX 2- SKILLS ACTION PLAN 2017 – 2020

Action	Lead/Partners	Named Lead	Key Tasks	Timescale	Funding
	<p>Grainger &amp; Worrall Limited, Classic Motor Cars Limited, Salop Design &amp; Engineering Limited, In-Comm Training and Business Services Limited</p> <p><b>Lot 2:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Herefordshire and Ludlow College with Herefordshire Group Training Association</li> </ul> <p>Key Partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>University of Wolverhampton</li> <li>Harper Adams University</li> <li>Hereford Group Training Association</li> <li>Hereford &amp; Ludlow College</li> <li>Shrewsbury College</li> </ul>			.	

## ANNEX 2- SKILLS ACTION PLAN 2017 – 2020

Action	Lead/Partners	Named Lead	Key Tasks	Timescale	Funding
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In-Comm Training</li> <li>Matrix Training</li> <li>North Shropshire College</li> <li>SBC Training</li> <li>Telford College</li> <li>Total People</li> <li>The Marches School</li> </ul>				
Skills Support for the Workforce programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marches Local Enterprise Partnership</li> <li>Local Authorities</li> <li>Skills Funding Agency</li> <li>Riverside Training</li> </ul>		<p>Tripartite meetings with SFA, Marches LEP and Riverside Training monthly to monitor contract negotiations.</p> <p><b>Outputs listed in Annex B</b></p>	<p>22<sup>nd</sup> November 2016</p> <p>24<sup>th</sup> January 2017</p>	Marches LEP, Local Authorities, Skills Funding Agency, Riverside Training
Apprentice Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Authorities</li> <li>Providers</li> <li>Businesses</li> <li>Shropshire Ladder</li> </ul>	<p>A Caesar-Homden</p> <p>S Marston, Telford and Wrekin Council</p>	Marketing activity	National Apprenticeship Week	Allocated marketing budget

## ANNEX 2- SKILLS ACTION PLAN 2017 – 2020

Action	Lead/Partners	Named Lead	Key Tasks	Timescale	Funding
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marches Skills Provider Network</li> </ul>	<p>J Vernon, Shropshire Council</p> <p>A Heath – Herefordshire Council</p>			
National Apprenticeship Week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marches LEP</li> <li>Local Authority Skills Leads</li> </ul>	<p>A Caesar-Homden, Marches Local Enterprise Partnership</p> <p>S Marston, Telford and Wrekin Council</p> <p>J Vernon, Shropshire Council</p> <p>A Heath – Herefordshire Council</p>	Apprenticeship events	6 <sup>th</sup> -10 <sup>th</sup> March 2017	

## ANNEX 2- SKILLS ACTION PLAN 2017 – 2020

Action	Lead/Partners	Named Lead	Key Tasks	Timescale	Funding
<p>Post 16 Area Review – FE College provision</p> <p>Engaging employers with FE Colleges</p> <p>Employers to be involved in curriculum development to address the skills gaps and supporting Governing Bodies</p> <p>Consultation with Business Boards</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marches LEP</li> <li>• Local Authorities</li> <li>• Department for Education</li> <li>• Colleges</li> <li>• Businesses</li> <li>• Marches LEP Skills Ops Group</li> </ul>	<p>A Caesar-Homden, Marches Local Enterprise Partnership</p> <p>S Marston, Telford and Wrekin Council</p> <p>J Vernon, Shropshire Council</p> <p>A Heath – Herefordshire Council</p>	<p>Refresh of Telford College of Art and Technology/New College Telford</p> <p>Merger of North Shropshire College/Reaseheath</p> <p>Shrewsbury merger – monitoring and building relationships</p> <p>Development of x3 sub-groups – Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin - to build relationships with colleges and employers. To be discussed at the Marches LEP Skills Operations Group meeting</p> <p>To be discussed as an agenda item at the Marches LEP Board meeting</p> <p>Growth Deal 3 Skills bid – ‘Investing in our Future Workforce’ to develop IT Skills offering in the Marches LEP Region</p>	<p>From September 2016 onwards.</p> <p>7<sup>th</sup> November 2016</p> <p>30<sup>th</sup> November 2016</p> <p>Submission June 2016 – decision announcement Autumn Statement</p>	<p>Growth Deal 3 Funding</p>

## ANNEX 2- SKILLS ACTION PLAN 2017 – 2020

A6 - Widening Participation and Access to Employment					
Action	Lead/Partners	Named Lead	Key Tasks	Timescale	Funding
Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) Support Contract – delivering activity to support young people who are NEET or in danger of becoming NEET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SFA</li> <li>Local Authorities</li> <li>Providers</li> <li>Schools</li> <li>Job Centre Plus</li> <li>Interserve</li> </ul>	<p>A Caesar-Homden, Marches Local Enterprise Partnership</p> <p>S Marston, Telford and Wrekin Council</p> <p>J Vernon, Shropshire Council</p> <p>A Heath – Herefordshire Council</p>	<p>Contract awarded to Interserve.</p> <p>Tripartite meetings with Skills Funding Agency, Marches LEP and Interserve monthly to monitor contract negotiations.</p> <p>Ongoing monthly Tripartite meetings to monitor delivery against contract criteria. <b>Outputs listed in Annex B</b></p>	<p>Commenced 4<sup>th</sup> July 2016</p> <p>5<sup>th</sup> July</p> <p>13<sup>th</sup> September</p> <p>7<sup>th</sup> November</p> <p>31<sup>st</sup> March 2018</p>	ESF Funding
Delivery of Activity 1.1 and 1.2 ESF Health and Work Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marches Local Enterprise Partnership</li> <li>Local Authorities</li> <li>Department for Work and Pensions</li> </ul>	<p>A Caesar-Homden, Marches Local Enterprise Partnership</p> <p>S Marston, Telford and Wrekin Council</p>	Special ESF Group formed under the remit of the Skills Ops Group	Regular meetings to progress programme	ESF Funding

## ANNEX 2- SKILLS ACTION PLAN 2017 – 2020

Action	Lead/Partners	Named Lead	Key Tasks	Timescale	Funding
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partners</li> </ul>	<p>J Vernon, Shropshire Council</p> <p>A Heath – Herefordshire Council</p>			





## **The Marches Three Year Skills Plan**

**2017 – 2020**

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# 1. Introduction

## Context

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### Why do we need a Skills Plan?

- 1.1 A competitive skills base is critical to raising productivity and achieving economic growth in the Marches. The Skills Action Plan is a key component in the Marches Strategic Economic Plan to ensure a skilled and flexible workforce is in place to support the growth agenda. The LEP has an important role to play in facilitating a demand-led skills infrastructure system given their ability to bring partners together in support of local economic growth.
- 1.2 LEPs have been given responsibility for skills capital funding and the 2014-20 European Structural Funds. Further devolution of skills funding is also anticipated. The Skills Action Plan will play an important role in guiding the investment of funding to meet identified LEP priorities.
- 1.3 The Skills Action Plan is set in the context of the prevailing national policy environment which includes areas of major reform in the post-16 education sector aimed at raising productivity and achieving economic growth. These include:
  - Expansion of the Apprenticeship programme with a target of 3 million Apprenticeship starts in 2020 and the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy in April 2017 to facilitate the achievement of this target.
  - More responsiveness to local employer needs and economic priorities through local commissioning of adult skills and skills capital and a major reform of post-16 education and training through a programme of area-based reviews aimed at enhancing collaboration, greater specialisation and supporting progression to higher levels. It is also anticipated that a new network of Institutes of Technology (IoT) will provide the higher level skills that employers demand, primarily at levels 3-5, and it is anticipated that there will be one IoT per LEP area.
- 1.4 The introduction of policies aimed at addressing barriers to work and making work pay such as the introduction of the National Living Wage from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 and the introduction of Universal Credit have a role to play in supporting more Marches residents into sustained employment.

### Purpose

- 1.5 The Skills Action Plan establishes the rationale for intervention and provides a strategic framework to focus resources and strategic decision-making. Broad action areas are identified where the Marches LEP has a lead role to play in partnership with key stakeholders including employers, local authorities and providers of education and training.
- 1.6 The Skills Action Plan will be a live document that is reviewed and updated regularly to ensure it remains relevant to the local context and that resources are deployed where there is the greatest need for intervention and to maximise opportunities for growth.

## The Marches Skills Challenge

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- 1.7 Analysis of the Marches Labour Market and Skills Position was undertaken in Spring 2016. It identified the challenges facing the Marches economy and provides the rationale for intervention in the Skills Action Plan. (See separate Data document)

### Attracting and Retaining the Economically Active

- 1.8 The demographic changes expected across the Marches over the coming decades present clear challenges for the LEP area. A contraction in the working age population, combined with large increases to the retired population, threaten the economic and social sustainability of the Marches.
- 1.9 To attenuate these pressures, the LEP should focus on attracting working age residents by providing suitable employment opportunities across the Marches. These are likely to be created in, but should not be limited to, the LEP's priority sectors. Strategies including inward investment, enterprise and innovation, and skills have a role to play. There is a need to develop the proposition of the Marches as a place to live, work, study and invest.

### Demand for Higher Level Skills

- 1.10 The Marches is currently under-represented on higher skilled occupations such as managers, professionals and associate professionals and a below average proportion of workers employed in the sub-region have Level 4+ qualifications. This has an impact on earnings, with residents and workers in the Marches earning below the England average. These limitations play a part in contributing to the productivity gap which the Marches suffers from. This relative skills shortage is a concern as skills forecast data suggest that demand for higher skilled occupations will increase substantially in the LEP area over the next decade.
- 1.11 It is vital that skills infrastructure in the sub-region is responsive to these needs to combat skill shortages and gaps and the corresponding impact these have on productivity and competitiveness. Recent and proposed investment in Higher Education in the sub-region is a positive but this offer needs to continue to be strengthened to ensure alignment with the skills needs of both priority sectors such as advanced manufacturing, food manufacturing and processing, and defence and securities; the aspirational sectors of environmental technologies and digital and creative; and enabling sectors such as health and social care, construction, and professional services.

### Boosting Vocational Pathways

- 1.12 The Government agenda is focused on boosting vocational skills through traineeships, apprenticeships and work experience and providing pathways to higher level technical skills. To date the Marches has only participated to a modest degree in traineeships although there has been growth over time and it is considered that there is scope to enhance this position. There is an improving picture of participation in Apprenticeships but participation in higher level apprenticeships is slightly below the national average. Apprenticeships play a valuable role in meeting the needs of priority sectors such as advanced manufacturing, and enabling sectors such as professional services and health and social care. Driving up participation and ensuring the infrastructure is in place to facilitate progression will help to meet the forecast skills demand in these key sectors.

## Addressing Barriers to Participation

- 1.13 The Marches has a strong sub-regional labour market as illustrated by performance on indicators such as economic activity, employment and unemployment. However, whilst the area has a relatively low economic inactivity rate there is a high proportion (28.5%) who want a job. There are pockets of need within the Marches where an over-representation of issues such as the incidence of those Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET) or unemployed can be found such as within Telford & Wrekin.
- 1.14 There is a need to address barriers to effective participation to maximise the economic contribution of those who can work and want to work. Target groups include those young people who are NEET and the unemployed. Furthermore, there is a need to enhance the productivity of those who are in work through providing opportunities for career progression through upskilling, for example, or reskilling into occupations in demand.

## Enhancing Education-Industry Interaction

- 1.15 The Marches performs well on indicators of entrepreneurship such as self-employment, business start-ups and survival rates. However, indicators of innovation are less favourable, with low patent activity and a weak performance on the ERC analysis of innovation performance by LEP area in areas such as process innovation, product and service innovation, and engagement in R&D.
- 1.16 The growth potential of businesses could be furthered by strengthening links between industry and education to encourage spin-outs, research and development and graduate placement.

## Improving FE Provision

- 1.17 The Marches is part of the second wave of post-16 Area Reviews and completed its review in May 2016. The review assessed the economic and educational needs of the area and the implications for post-16 education and training provision including sixth form colleges and further education colleges.
- 1.18 The formal report identified the need for the colleges to respond more effectively to local employer/key sector employment needs to create strong education and training institutions which have high status and are genuine centres of expertise able to offer high quality provision based on the current and future needs of learners and employers within the local area.

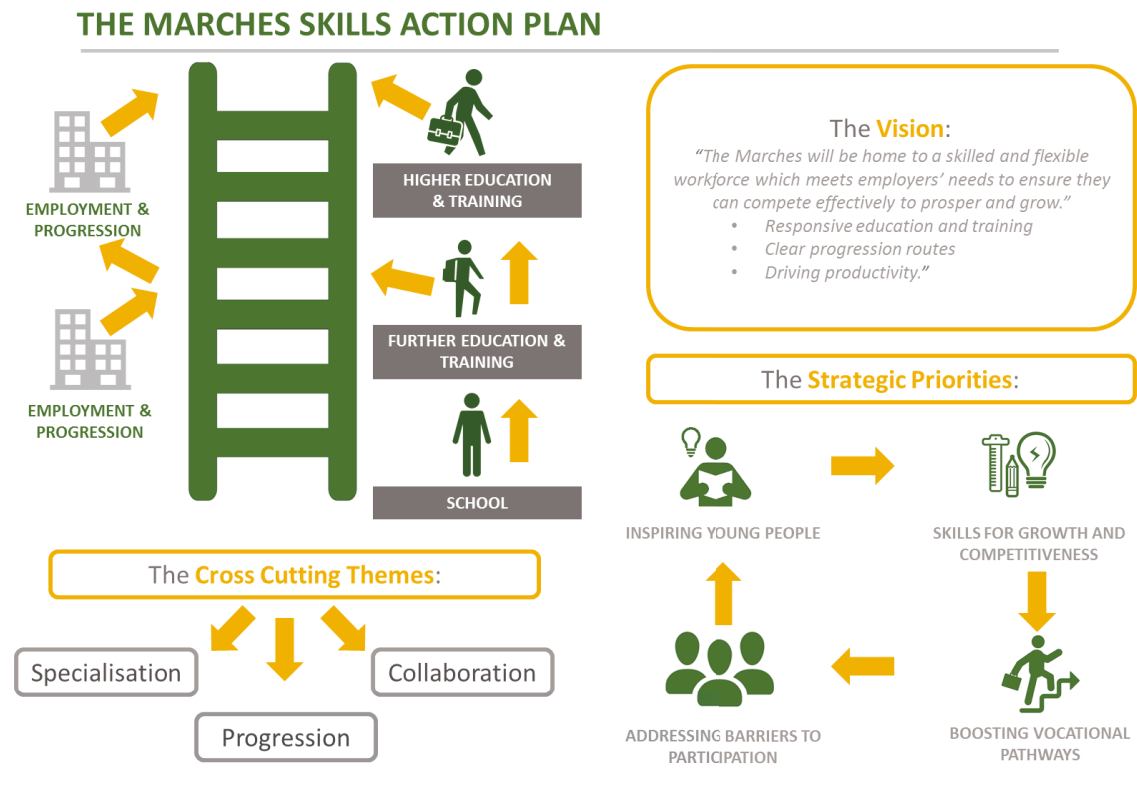
## Improving HE Provision

- 1.19 Participation in higher education historically has been relatively low across the Marches, particularly throughout Herefordshire and Telford & Wrekin, where there are pockets of extremely low participation. Participation in higher education is vital to provide the workforce with the necessary skills to meet businesses' needs and increase the availability of highly skilled labour to meet demands. Analysis of HESA data suggests that some of the LEP priority sectors are not well covered by HEIs in the Marches. There is a strong level of alignment between agri-tech and Harper Adams, and emerging strengths between the University of Wolverhampton (Telford campus) and the advanced manufacturing sector, and between the University Centre Shrewsbury and health and social care and professional services.
- 1.20 Growth in the key sectors could be stymied if there is a shortage of suitably qualified workers to take up employment opportunities. If HE provision does not play a role in providing the workforce with the skills required, the demand for higher level occupations will be unmet.

## 2. Strategic Framework

2.1 Figure 2.1 illustrates the Strategic Framework for the Marches Skills Action Plan.

Figure 2.1 Strategic Framework



Source: Regeneris Consulting

### Vision

2.2 Our vision is one where:

*"The Marches will be home to a skilled and flexible workforce which meets employers' needs to ensure they can compete effectively to prosper and grow"*

2.3 This requires education and training provision to be responsive to the needs of both employers and individuals and provide a clear progression route to enable the improvement and enhancement of skills to help drive productivity and growth.

## Strategic Objectives

- 2.4 There are four Strategic Objectives around which the Skills Action Plan is framed.

### SO1 - Inspiring young people

- 2.5 Demographic changes expected across the Marches over the coming decades identify that the Marches has a shrinking supply of labour which will impact upon hard-to-fill vacancies, suppress business growth and deter investment. Interventions aimed at attracting and retaining individuals of working age are therefore vital. The young resident population of the Marches is the labour force of the future and provides an audience to engage with, to inspire to participate and to progress in education, training and employment to meet the needs of the local economy.

### SO2 - Skills for growth and competitiveness

- 2.6 The productivity gap in the Marches can be explained by a number of factors, including skills, enterprise, innovation, investment and competition. The role of skills in facilitating economic growth and competitiveness cannot be understated. The Marches is currently under-represented on the proportion of workers with higher level skills and employers are reporting skill shortage vacancies and that skill gaps are now a barrier to growth. The incidence of these skill shortage vacancies were noted amongst key sectors in the Marches. Looking forward, changes in the occupational and qualification profile of employment shift further towards higher level occupations and skills.
- 2.7 This strategic objective establishes the importance of skills for growth and competitiveness and the need to ensure a responsive demand-led approach to ensuring provision is in place to meet these needs. There is a need to support upskilling and retraining of the existing workforce as well as attracting new entrants into the workforce to meet demand.

### SO3 - Boosting vocational pathways

- 2.8 Apprenticeships provide a mechanism for delivering economic growth aspirations. They have a role to play in providing a skilled workforce, meeting skill shortages and gaps, and encouraging growth in higher level skills. They also support social mobility through the pathways in place to facilitate progression from craft to technician, to professional and managerial job roles. The Marches has a role to play in contributing to the national 2020 Apprenticeship target of 3 million starts. This strategic objective highlights the importance of boosting apprenticeship participation by employers and learners alike to meet the skills needs of the economy.

### SO4 - Addressing barriers to participation

- 2.9 The Skills Action Plan seeks to ensure that the benefits of economic growth are equitable and that all residents in the Marches have the opportunity to realise their aspirations. This Strategic Objective seeks to ensure that support is in place to enable residents to enhance their skills and access to employment.

## Cross Cutting Themes

- 2.10 There are three cross cutting themes which form core principles to the implementation of the Skills Action Plan.

### Collaboration

- 2.11 Partnership and collaboration between providers and employers is key to enhancing education-industry interaction and ensuring that provision is demand-led and responsive to economic priorities in the Marches.

### Specialisation

- 2.12 There is a need to develop specialist skills which are aligned to employer demand, particularly in identified sectors and to meet specific training needs. The development of specialist skills provision and Centres of Excellence will respond to the skills needs of identified sectors and facilitate the achievement of growth aspirations. The clear identity of specialist provision will support employer and learner understanding of the skills offer and facilitate take-up and progression to higher level skills.

### Progression

- 2.13 Progression is a key principle of the Skills Action Plan, whether this is vertical or horizontal progression up or across learning levels or career advancement. It applies to new entrants to the labour market, those in employment seeking to reskill or enhance their position, and those progressing from economic inactivity into education, training or employment.



### 3. Action Plan

- 3.1 Six broad action areas have been identified as a focal point for the LEP to play a role in facilitating investment and activity in over the next three years. These broad action areas will be developed by the LEP Skills Board and key stakeholders. These broad actions are outlined in this section of the Plan. See Annex 2 for the more detailed Action Plan.

#### A1 – Attract and Retain Talent

##### Rationale

- 3.2 The working age population accounts for 61% of the total population in the Marches. Population change in the future is anticipated to be driven by changes in the retired population with an anticipated growth of 30% in the 65+ cohort by 2022. By contrast, the working age population is projected to fall by around 4,700 or 2%. This compares with a 3% growth in working age residents in England as a whole. A decreasing pool of working age residents poses a substantial threat to the economic performance of the Marches which could widen the productivity gap as businesses struggle to recruit. Employment forecasts identify that demand for workers will rise between 2012 and 2022.
- 3.3 The main urban centres of the Marches need to fulfil their potential as nodes of economic and cultural activity. These centres have a key role to play in attracting and retaining higher skilled individuals and their families to the sub-region.

##### Overview

- 3.4 The Marches is an attractive and varied sub-region offering a range of opportunities to live, work and invest in urban and rural contexts. This action establishes the potential to develop a live, work, study and invest proposition for Marches to help maintain the working age population. This includes:
- **Place marketing** – the promotion of the Marches including its location and lifestyle attributes, supportive business environment, recreation and housing offer.
  - **Inward investment** – a focused strategy on key sectors and enterprise to stimulate jobs and business growth.
  - **Education** – ensuring a high quality school offer to attract families to the Marches with a clear progression route to Further and Higher Education. There is a need to continue to develop higher education in the sub-region as a mechanism for retaining and attracting young people to the sub-region.
  - **Lifestyle** – building on the locational attributes of the Marches to develop a recreation and culture offer which meets the needs of young working age individuals and families.

## Measures of Progress

Table 3.1 Baseline Position and Measures of Progress

Indicator	Marches Baseline Position	Source	Frequency of Update
WAP as a % of total population	61%	ONS Mid-Year Estimates (2014)	Annual
% with Level 4+ Qualifications	35%	Annual Population Survey (Dec. 2014)	Annual
% of workers in higher skilled occupations	39%	Annual Population Survey (Dec. 2014)	Annual

## A2 - Careers advice and guidance

### Rationale

- 3.7 The Careers & Enterprise Company has identified the areas of greatest need in order to prioritise geographic areas. Analysis of employer engagement from the UKCES Employer Perceptions Survey (EPS) identifies 'cold spots' which exist. The Marches is in the bottom third of LEPs on the proportion of employer establishments who have had anyone in on work experience which stands at 28% (UKCES EPS 2014) although it is in the top third of LEPs on the proportion of employer establishments who offered any work inspiration (16%). This may partly reflect the business size characteristics of the Marches as employer engagement is shown to be lower amongst micro and small sized companies (UKCES EPS).
- 3.8 Consultation with employers highlighted the importance of young people being 'life ready/work ready'. Young people need to be well rounded both in terms of having the academic skills and employability skills which take into account the personal, social and transferable skills seen as relevant to all jobs. The UKCES EPS 2013 identifies the proportion of employers in the Marches answering 16-year-old school leavers as 'poorly' or 'very poorly' prepared for work at 27%, and 23% of Marches employers answered that 17-18 year olds recruited to first time job from school are 'poorly' or 'very poorly' prepared for work.
- 3.9 Consultation with stakeholders identified 'confusion' and 'inconsistencies' in the quality of provision and volume of advice and guidance available. There is a need to co-ordinate and focus provision to provide a coherent offer.

### Overview

#### Young People

- 3.10 This action emphasises the need to raise aspirations amongst young people to encourage progression into an education, training or employment destination and to raise awareness of the career options presented by local employment opportunities. Initiatives such as ambassadors, role models and skills champions have a role to play here.
- 3.11 This action seeks to ensure that schools and colleges in the Marches provide a comprehensive and high quality careers advice and guidance service which provides clear guidance on the routes to education, training and employment. Models of good practice from elsewhere which provide standards for schools and colleges to aspire to in providing information advice and guidance such as gold, silver and bronze standards should be considered.
- 3.12 A key aspect of this action is to enhance school-business engagement to ensure routes to local employment opportunities are promoted. Opportunities to maximise participation of the Marches LEP in the new Careers and Enterprise Company should be sought including a focus on 'cold spots' where school-business engagement is currently limited and in schools in areas of deprivation.
- 3.13 Innovative ways for inspiring young people to consider careers in the Marches key sectors should be considered. For example, in the advanced manufacturing sector, schemes such as 'Fab Labs', 'Making it', industrial cadets, Primary Engineer and science festivals could be considered.

## Adults

- 3.14 This action also recognises the need for adult information advice and guidance to support re-employment, re-skilling and upskilling. This is particularly relevant for middle and older aged workers to maximise their economic contribution.
- 3.15 This action proposes the development of resources and capability to deliver a targeted and bespoke careers guidance package on pathways to key sectors of growth and skills need. This will raise awareness of local opportunities as a mechanism for retaining the economically active and for encouraging the reskilling and upskilling of adults to meet the changing shape of demand.

## Measures of Progress

Table 3.2 Baseline Position and Measures of Progress

Indicator	Marches Baseline Position	Source	Frequency of Update
% of employers stating 16-year old school leavers very well prepared or well prepared	76%	UKCES Employers Skills Survey (2013)	Bi-Annual
% KS4 leavers progressing into education, training or employment	91.7%*	DfE (2013/14)	Annual
% KS5 leavers progressing into education, training or employment	72.7%*	DfE (2013/14)	Annual

\* The Marches position is the average of the 3 local authority figures

## A3 - Priority Sector Skill Plans

### Rationale

- 3.16 The SEP Evidence Base Refresh report identifies those sectors which have the capacity to grow employment, enhance productivity and enable economic growth. These are categorised as:
- **Priority sectors:** the sectors that differentiate the Marches from other locations and are driving employment and productivity growth. These include established sectors such as advanced manufacturing, food manufacturing and processing, and defence and securities.
  - **Aspirational sectors:** with potential for growth and to enhance productivity but are currently under-represented in the Marches. These include environmental technologies, and digital and creative.
  - **Enabling sectors:** the sectors that underpin employment and business base of the Marches and meet population needs. These sectors include health and social care, construction and professional services.
- 3.17 A proactive response to meeting the skill needs of these sectors is required in order to support the potential of these sectors and ensure that growth is not constrained by skill shortages and gaps.

## Overview

- 3.18 This action proposes the development of a skills investment plan for each of the Marches priority sectors to include advanced manufacturing, food manufacturing and processing, and defence and securities. Where resources permit, this model should be rolled out to the aspirational sectors of environmental technologies, digital and creative, and professional services, as well as the enabling sectors of health and social care and construction. The Skills Investment Plans could be part of a wider sector Investment Plan aimed at stimulating jobs growth and the GVA contribution of the sector, including not only skills but inward investment, innovation and enterprise, and business support.
- 3.19 The Sector Skills Plans will provide an overview of the trends and drivers shaping skill needs in each sector and identify the demand and supply situation for skills in the sector. A gap analysis will reveal where workforce gaps exist by qualification level and occupation type and identify the adequacy of skills infrastructure to meet identified need. Obtaining employer views will be an important part of the plan to ensure that recommendations are responsive to their needs. It is recommended that the Marches Growth Hub identifies skill needs and skills support as part of its core service to inform this action.
- 3.20 The Sector Skill Plan will provide a strategy for addressing skill gaps and shortages and opportunities to enhance the competitiveness and contribution of the sector to the Marches economy. This will include recommendations for aligning skills capital investment with the needs of priority sectors, and opportunities to influence skills budgets to ensure a responsive curriculum offer. The development of specialist provision with a clear identity and progression route to higher level skills will be sought. The potential of specialist provision such as University Technical Colleges, Institutes of Technology, and HEI Centres of Excellence should be explored in line with identified sector specific needs.

## Measures of Progress

Table 3.3 Baseline Position and Measures of Progress

Indicator	Marches Baseline Position	Source	Frequency of Update
% of establishments that have skill gaps	13%	UKCES Employers Skills Survey (2013)	Bi-Annual
% of employers with one or more SSVs	3%	UKCES Employers Skills Survey (2013)	Bi-Annual

## A4 - Entrepreneurship and Innovation

### Rationale

- 3.21 The Marches economy need to become more resilient and growth of the private sector is a central objective to make this happen. Stimulating entrepreneurship and innovation are key mechanisms which can drive growth in employment and added value. The Marches performs well in business start-ups and has good survival rates. Performance has been particularly strong in professional services, agri-tech, digital and creative and construction. This provides a strong foundation to build upon.
- 3.22 The Marches does not perform as well when it comes to innovation. Marches businesses generate a relatively small share of UK patents (less than 1% in 2012) and a ERC report on innovation levels in LEPs in 2013 ranks the Marches at 36 out of 39 and highlighted relatively

weak performance in terms of businesses engaging in product and service innovation, process innovation, strategic and marketing innovation and R&D.

- 3.23 Six Key Enabling Technologies (KETs) have been identified by the EU which have wide range of applications and these include developing low carbon energy technologies, improving energy and resource efficiency, and creating new medical products. They drive innovation in a wide range of industries such as automotive, food, chemicals, electronics, energy and pharmaceuticals and have significant potential to drive economic growth and provide jobs. They have particular relevance to the Marches key sectors of advanced manufacturing, agri-tech and environmental technologies. There is a general shortage of entrepreneurs and skilled labour capable of handling the multi-disciplinary nature of KETs. Skill requirements include technical skills, quality, risk and safety, management and entrepreneurship, communication, innovation and intelligence. In meeting the specific needs of key sectors in the Marches there may be a need to forge links with national initiatives in order to gain the critical mass required.
- 3.24 Digital technologies are a key theme across sectors as companies seek to exploit the advantages offered by ICT. This requires a workforce with the knowledge and skills to use these technologies efficiently with key attributes including creativity, innovation and higher-level conceptual skills. A national shortage of medium and higher level digital skills is identified and addressing this is key to future productivity. Initiatives to boost ICT skills in the workforce are therefore critical.

### Overview

- 3.25 This action seeks to stimulate entrepreneurship and innovation as a mechanism for growing employment and productivity. Opportunities to enhance activity, particularly within the Marches priority and enabling sectors, should be sought. Areas of focus include:
- Developing enterprise skills amongst young people through initiatives with schools, colleges and universities to develop a feedstock of young entrepreneurs.
  - Developing leadership and management skills to foster innovation, unlock the potential of the workforce and ensure businesses have the right strategies in place to drive productivity and growth. The Marches needs to raise the quality of leadership and to promote a strong culture of ambition. Business support structures such as the Marches Growth Hub will facilitate industry-education linkages to fulfil this need.
  - Enhancing digital technology skills to enable individuals and businesses to compete effectively in technologically driven markets. This could include for example encouraging the provision of bite size CPD and training solutions targeted at smaller businesses. These could provide increased flexibility and agility for the existing workforce, maximising the potential of technology transfer and innovation. They will also help employers to realise the potential of digital technologies in product design, process and sales.
  - University-industry engagement including:
    - Encourage HEIs to engage with employers to embed skills needs in course content, provide targeted careers advice, provide internship and placements to develop practical skills, engage students in live workplace projects and offer mentoring schemes.
    - Facilitating graduate placement in Marches firms as a mechanism for retaining and attracting graduates to the sub-region and embedding them in the local business base.

- Developing R&D collaborations between industry and HEIs such as the Harper Adams Agri Engineering Centre for Innovation.
- Providing a supportive business environment to encourage start-ups including links to employment and training infrastructure.

## Measures of Progress

Table 3.4 Baseline Position and Measures of Progress

Indicator	Marches Baseline Position	Source	Frequency of Update
Business enterprise rate per 1,000 population	45	UK Business Counts 2015; ONS Population Estimates 2015	Annual
Self-employment rate	17%	ONS, Annual Population Survey 2015	Monthly
Business survival rate (at least 2 years)	78%	ONS, Business Demography 2014	Annual
No. of patents	26	OECD Patents 2012	Annual
% of firms engaging in R&D	14%	UK Innovation Survey 2013	Every two years

## A5 - Apprenticeship Strategy

### Rationale

- 3.26 There is strong policy support for growth in apprenticeships with a national target set for 3 million apprenticeship starts by 2020. The Marches has a role to play in contributing to this target. In 2014/15 (Q4) the Marches had 7,600 starts indicating that the sub-region's contribution to this target is currently low.
- 3.27 Learner participation in apprenticeships in the Marches has improved in the past two years although the scope for improvement may be held back by below average employer participation in providing apprenticeships. The introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy is anticipated to facilitate employer investment in apprenticeships but there are concerns that it may leave out and disengage smaller employers.
- 3.28 The majority of apprenticeships are intermediate and advanced level, with only a minority of starts at higher levels, which reflects the national picture. Policy interventions are underway to stimulate the supply of higher level apprenticeships and the Marches needs to embrace these opportunities in key sectors for growth. The opportunity for growth in apprenticeships is particularly strong in the Marches key sectors of advanced manufacturing, health and social care, and professional services where the model of apprenticeships is well established.
- 3.29 The number of traineeships is relatively small scale in the Marches and with a low success rate suggesting there is scope for improvement.

### Overview

- 3.30 This action proposes the development of a Marches Apprenticeship Strategy aimed at increasing the number of apprenticeship starts as part of the national policy drive. This should be targeted at the Marches key sectors to meet growth aspirations and skill shortages. There are a number of strands for consideration:
- Promoting the parity of vocational courses to learners as a viable alternative to academic routes.
  - Developing provider capacity to deliver apprenticeships, particularly the provision of apprenticeships at advanced and higher levels.



- Provide clear progression routes through the apprenticeship framework to encourage progression to higher skill levels.
- Encouraging participation by Marches businesses, particularly SMEs, to provide places and addressing barriers to business participation.
- Promote the uptake of relevant trailblazer standards to enable employers to tailor elements to their needs.
- Identify where Higher Apprenticeships can play a role in workforce development, facilitate provision to support this and promote these opportunities to employers.
- Promote the apprenticeship route to education, training and employment to learners e.g. National Apprenticeship Week, Apprenticeship Ambassador schemes.

3.31 Traineeships have a role to play in providing a route to apprenticeships and opportunities to enhance the provision of traineeships should be sought.

## Year 1 Actions

### Measures of Progress

**Table 3.5 Baseline Position and Measures of Progress**

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Marches Baseline Position</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Frequency of Update</b>
No. of traineeship starts	119	SFA (2014/15)	Annual
No. of apprenticeship starts	7,600	SFA (Q4 2014/15)	Quarterly
No & % of apprenticeship starts – advanced	22,300 43%	SFA (Q4 2014/15)	Quarterly
No & % of apprenticeship starts – higher	900 3%	SFA (Q4 2014/15)	Quarterly
% of employers providing formal apprenticeships	9%	UKCES Employer Perspectives Survey (2013)	Bi-annual

## A6 – Widening Participation and Access to Employment

### Rationale

- 3.34 The Marches Skills Action Plan seeks to ensure that the benefits of economic growth are equitable in impact and that all residents have the opportunity to realise their aspirations. There are pockets of multiple deprivation in the Marches which can be attributed to relatively low levels of income, employment, and education and skills in these areas. There are also areas of low participation in higher education where deprivation is concentrated. Accessibility to employment and training is a key consideration given the large geography and rurality of the Marches.
- 3.35 Mobility and flexibility need to be encouraged in the workforce to enable people to change jobs and careers in response to changing circumstances. The ageing of the workforce in the Marches and the scale of replacement demands highlights the importance of reskilling older workers to ensure they have the skills to meet expansion opportunities and the changing shape of skills demand.

### Overview

- 3.36 This action recognises the support needed to enable residents and workers to realise their skills potential and access employment. Target groups include NEET individuals, unemployed, under-employed, those with disabilities, those with English as a Second Language, and older workers.
- 3.37 From a supply perspective, the Marches need to ensure education and training offer matches the local labour market to provide residents with the opportunity to enhance their skills.
- 3.38 Clear progression pathways need to be in place to enable low skilled/low paid workers to progress to attain higher skills/higher pay. This includes ensuring that effective information advice and guidance is in place, for young people as well as adults, to facilitate upskilling, reskilling and support for lifelong learning to help provide a more flexible workforce.
- 3.39 This action recognises the important role played by the Voluntary and Community Education (VCE) sector in delivering learning provision that meets the needs of individuals. These organisations offer targeted support and are particularly effective at engaging with hard-to-reach learners. These organisations make an important contribution to learning and skills development and supporting community cohesion and sustainable community agendas. There is a need to support the VCE sector to maximise the contribution it can make.

### Measures of Progress

Table 3.6 Baseline Position and Measures of Progress

Indicator	Marches Baseline Position	Source	Frequency of Update
Unemployment rate	4%	APS (2015)	Annual
Economic activity rate	81%	APS (2015)	Annual
% NEET	5.7%*	DfE (2015)	Annual
% of JSA claimants aged 16-24	16.7%	ONS (2015)	Quarterly
% KS5 leavers continuing into education, employment or training	72.7%*	DfE (2013/14)	Annual
% of residents qualified to L2 or above	76.1%	APS (2015)	Annual

\* Marches figure is an average of the three LAD's

## 4. Monitoring and Delivery

### Delivery Structures

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- 4.1 Implementation of the Skills Action Plan will be driven forward by the Marches LEP. The LEP Skills Board will be responsible for ensuring the Skills Action Plan is taken forward, agreeing priorities for action, developing the operational detail, and monitoring implementation. The Skills Board is responsible for overseeing the selection process and making recommendations to the LEP Board on the projects to be funded with Growth Deal Skills Capital Funding and also identifying the activities to be funded under the ESIF programme in partnership with the Skills Funding Agency and making recommendations to the LEP Board and ESIF Committee on the allocation of ESIF funds.

### Monitoring

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- 4.2 The Marches Skills Board meets quarterly and progress against the Skills Action Plan will be reported upon. Each broad action area has identified tracking indicators against which progress can be measured. The Skills Board will agree targets to be set.

### Funding

- 4.3 There are a number of funding sources which the Skills Action Plan can draw upon. The details of these are being drawn up into a summary document for use by partners and will be maintained by the Skills Lead in the LEP Team .

# Appendix A - List of Stakeholders Consulted

## Workshop Attendees

Table A.1 List of Attendees to Marches LEP Skills Workshop on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2016

Name	Role	Organisation
Alexia Heath	Local Authority Representative	Herefordshire Council
Andy Jones	Director	Harper Adams University
Chris Scott	Principal	TCAT
Claire Smout	Workforce Development Manager	The Care Workforce Development
David Williams	Deputy Principal	Herefordshire and Ludlow College
Janine Vernon	Local Authority Representative	Shropshire Council
Michael Burke	JARDU	SFA
Paul Hinkins	Deputy Chair	Marches LEP Board
Paul Kirkbright	Deputy Provost	University Centre Shrewsbury
Paul O'Neill	Director	The Marches Skills Provider Network
Rob Gready	Chairman	Herefordshire Care Provider Group
Sonia Roberts	Charity Manager	Landau Ltd
Sue Marston	Local Authority Representative	Telford and Wrekin Council

- A.2 Presentations were also made each of the three Business Boards: Telford & Wrekin, Herefordshire, and Shropshire.

## Other Stakeholders Consulted

Table A.2 Other Stakeholders Consulted

Name	Role	Organisation
Alexia Heath	Senior Advisor Post 16 Learning and Skills	Herefordshire Council
Nick Webster	Economic Development Manager	Herefordshire Council
Frank Myers MBE	Chair	Herefordshire Business Board MD, MCP Systems Consultants Ltd
Mark Pearce	Hereford EZ	Hereford EZ
Kathy Mulholland	Inward Investment & Business Support Service Delivery Manager	Telford & Wrekin Council
Katherine Kynaston	Business & Development Planning Manager	Telford & Wrekin Council
Paul Hinkins	Chair/ Deputy Chair	Telford Business Board / Marches LEP Board MD, Business Watch Guarding Ltd
Clare Cox	Business Relationship Manager for Economic Growth	Shropshire Council
George Candler	Director of Commissioning	Shropshire Council
Mandy Thorn MBE	Chair/ Deputy Chair	Shropshire Business Board / Marches LEP Board MD, Marches Care
Prof. Ian Oakes	Chair	Marches LEP Skills Board Deputy Vice Chancellor, Wolverhampton University

Graham Wynn OBE	Chair	Marches LEP Board / Chairman, The TTC Group
Dr David Llewellyn	Chairman	Marches Agri-Food Working Group Vice Chancellor, Harper Adams University
Sonia Roberts	Social Enterprise & Third Sector Champion	Marches LEP Board / Charity Manager, Landau Ltd
Peter Brown	Chair	Marches Housing & Planning Sub-Group Chief Executive, Herefordshire Housing Group