

Minutes of Marches Growth Hub Steering Group 4th June 2020

Present		
Paul Hinkins	PH	Marches Growth Hub Chair, Marches LEP Board Deputy Chair
Frank Myers MBE	FM	LEP Board Member, Chair of Herefordshire Business Board – Director MCP Systems Consultants Ltd
Colin Preece	CP	Marches Skills Provider Network Executive Officer
Amy Bould	AB	Marches LEP PR & Marketing, Director Be Bold Media Ltd
Maisy Owen	MO	Chamber Member - Chair of Members Committee, Director MO Management Consultancy Ltd
Beth Heath	BH	Shropshire Business Board Representative, Director Shropshire Festivals, Director Shropshire Think Tank
Hollie Whittles	HW	Federation of Small Businesses - Area Lead Shropshire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire and Director FragglesWorks
Steve Havins	SH	Department for International Trade, Head of Business Development & Partnerships
Nick Webster	NW	Herefordshire Council - Economic Development Manager
Matt Potts	MP	Shropshire Council, Shropshire Council Business Growth and Inward Investment Manager
Kathy Mulholland	KM	Telford & Wrekin Council - Inward Investment & Business Support Service Delivery Manager
Yasmin Sulaman	YS	Marches LEP Business Support Project Officer
Kathryn Jones	KJ	Marches LEP Partnership Manager
Apologies: Oliver Hindle - Marches Are Lead – Cities and Local Growth Unit, BEIS		
Not Present: Katharine Clough, University of Wolverhampton, Director – External Relations		
ITEM		ACTION
1.	Welcome and Introductions PH welcomed Steering Group (SG) Members and guest speaker to the Team call meeting. YS confirmed apologies.	
2.	Declarations of Member Interest No declarations of interest were noted in relation to any agenda item.	
3.	Attendance update Members agreed the attendance reported.	
4.	Minutes of the last meeting and actions Members approved the draft minutes.	

5.	<p>Guest Speaker – Poppy Bramford, Policy and Public Affairs Manager, Herefordshire & Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce (H & W CC)</p> <p>The guest speaker provided an informative update on the Chamber Q1 Survey and findings from the two recent COVID 19 surveys.</p> <p>H & W Chamber COVID 19 reports to be shared with the group.</p>	YS
6.	<p>LEP Update KJ provided an update on the Marches LEP in the following areas: -</p> <p>COVID -19</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LEP are working with partners and gathering intelligence on Marches LEP economy impact. • Intelligence is being shared into the West Midlands Group of LEP Chairs which then informs the 2 weekly LEP network meetings held with Ministers and senior civil servants from MHCLG and BEIS. • The LEP Chair has been providing regular written reports on the issues impacting on the economy to the Marches MPs including the outcome of the LEP Survey. <p>LEP Board May Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was a facilitated Economic Recovery Planning discussion. • There will be a need to repurpose Marches LIS to become a recovery strategy. • The LEP are working with Midlands Engine who are carrying out research and data collection. The Observatory is commissioning work into the impact on supply chains. Links and further information to be shared with the group. <p>Marches Investment Fund (MIF) Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £1.58m of MIF agreed by the Marches LEP Board to support strategic tourism and other business initiatives affected by the floods and Covid-19 virus. <p>LEP Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment still in progress for the Corporate Director post. Interim Corporate Director in place to support Governance. <p>LEP Tender</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accounting and Auditing Services for the Marches LEP https://www.marcheslep.org.uk/about/tenders-vacancies/. Please share with your network. <p>Additional Support from DIT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DIT has been awarded additional funding through the Chancellor’s Budget Statement earlier this year to support more International Trade Adviser resources. Discussions are taking place between the LEP and DIT. • SH confirmed the new local ERDF project went live on the 1st April. The project is an export focussed support project designed to complement the core support offered from the DIT. The project includes the provision for a new Channel Manager role who will work directly with the Growth Hubs. Channel Manager will provide knowledge transfer and capacity building of growth hub staff. 	<p>KJ</p> <p>All</p>

7.

MGH Update

YS updated the group on the following areas: -

2019/20 Contract

£205k MGH Core Funding

- The full allocation has been spent. £4,381.96 underspend was paid to the LEP to cover the cost of the January 2020 business supplements (Shropshire Star and Herefordshire Times) and the balance towards KJ's time for supporting the MGH.

Growth Hub Spend

- MGH Shropshire – claimed full £12,100 allocation
- MGH Herefordshire – claimed full £10,900 allocation
- MGH Telford & Wrekin – underclaimed £10,900 allocation/claimed £10,782.13

Additional Business Advisor Funding £31,578.93 to support EU Exit Business Advice

- This funding was split equally between the three physical growth hubs.
- Underspend of £266.74. MGH Telford & Wrekin was not able to claim the full allocation.

West Midlands Cluster Funding £33K to support BREXIT/EU Exit support

- The 3 growth hubs were allocated £7k each and worked with their local Chamber of Commerce to deliver resilience activity in March. The balance was allocated to Be Bold to support PR/Marketing activity, boosted social media and advertorials.
- Underspend of £7,097.50. This was due to the impact of COVID 19 and the need to cancel a scheduled resilience event (MGH Telford & Wrekin in partnership with Shropshire Chamber of Commerce). At the time, Coventry LEP asked the growth hubs not to worry about underspend as they were making a case to BEIS and the accountable body to extend the spend and final claim date. The final claim date was extended to 4th May, but we have no further EU Exit costs to claim. Unfortunately, we were not able to use this funding towards COVID 19 support activity.

KPI Data

- February – March 2020 data in line with flooding and COVID 19 impact. Events shifted from physical to on-line which are being well received.

2019/20 Year-end Report

- Report in progress and will be shared with the group in due course.

2020/21 Contract

- Schedule 1 and 3 for £205k has been authorised by BEIS.
- Awaiting guidance and Schedule 1 & 3 template for Additional £257k growth hub funding. KJ informed the group that paperwork was received at 5pm.
- Coventry LEP have been allocated £80k to support 2020/21 cluster activity. Activity cannot be planned until Coventry receive spend guidance from BEIS.
- YS confirmed the loose spend proposal for the additional growth hub funding and that an e-mail was sent to 3 growth hubs on 13th May confirming this and seeking feedback. Shropshire feedback received to date who agree with the draft proposal.
- YS stressed that careful growth hub planning is required, so that we do not duplicate business support already available through partners, our ERDF projects, via the cluster moving forward, support that will be delivered using the LA discretionary grant allocations and support that will be delivered using the recently announced MIF funding. The 3 growth hubs have been asked to work collaboratively and with partners where possible.

COVID 19 weekly reporting to BEIS

- The report included in the papers summarised previous weekly reports to BEIS. Group was asked to note % increase of engagement in March 2020 compared to March 2019.

	<p>PR/Marketing Benchmarking information from BEIS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No benchmarking information has been received from BEIS. • YS will try and get some insight from similar funded growth hubs for discussion at the next meeting. • AB shared a benchmarking document for discussion at the next meeting. 	<p>YS YS</p>
8.	<p>MGH Steering Group Review Update</p> <p>YS confirmed the following: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marches LEP have now received legal advice on general agreements. Draft Data Sharing Agreement (DSA) and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between BEIS, NBSH and the Marches LEP can now be picked up and reworked with the support of the interim Corporate Director. • Local Partner Service Level Agreement/DSA will be reworked once the above has been finalised. • PH confirmed that at the May LEP Board meeting, the board agreed to the alignment of Business Board and LEP terms of reference. PH's position as MLEP deputy chair has now been extended until May 2021. It would therefore make sense for PH to extend MGH Steering Group and MGH Operations Group Chair position until May 2021. PH asked the group for their feedback/agreement. PH left the room and YS asked each member to confirm feedback. At the time, MP had left the meeting to take a call. The group agreed to PH's remaining as Chair until May 2021. 	
9.	<p>Marketing and Social Media / Google Analytics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AB updated the group on February and March 2020 activity and stats including the Marches LEP COVID 19 Impact Survey. • HW requested a copy of the Marches LEP Digital Strategy. • AB made a request for working safely case studies. • AB talked the group through the MGH draft Comms plan. The group requested business support measurable objectives to be added to the plan for approval at the next meeting. 	<p>YS All KJ/YS/AB</p>
10	<p>Reflections & Improvements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agenda and papers to be shared on Teams call • AB asked if the MGH could consider allocating funding to support boosted/sponsored social media. 	<p>YS</p>

	Future Meeting Dates (quarterly 4.30 – 6.30) Venue or virtual TBC depending on COVID 19 Status Thursday 3 September Thursday 10 December	
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