



## Growth Hub EU Advisor Funding Uplift Report 2019-2020 (1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020)

<b>LEP Accountable Body:</b>	Shropshire Council
<b>Local Enterprise Partnership:</b>	Marches LEP
<b>Growth Hub name:</b>	Marches Growth Hub
<b>Date of Report:</b>	9 <sup>th</sup> June 2020
<b>Name of person completing report:</b>	Yasmin Sulaman
<b>Job Title:</b>	Business Support Officer (Growth Hub Lead)
<b>Contact phone number:</b>	
<b>Contact email address:</b>	
<b>Deadline for return to BEIS:</b>	<b>Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020</b>

This template has been produced by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to help aid the production of a report for 2019-2020 on funds allocated to Growth Hubs to support additional EU advisory resources.

The information requested is required to account for appropriate project spend and provide details on resources used, the number of additional advisors recruited.

BEIS therefore request that LEPs submit their Report to **BEIS in word format (not as a pdf)** and that each section should provide the details requested in a short, informative and concise way without losing the key information.

This specific Project Reports should be submitted to [Growth.Hubs@beis.gov.uk](mailto:Growth.Hubs@beis.gov.uk) at the same time as 2019-2020 Annual Reports so **no later than Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020** and copied to your Area Lead.

### Executive Summary

#### **A. Please set out the key EU Exit Advisor project objectives and priorities of your Growth Hub in respect of the 2019-2020 funding period.**

Each of the three physical hubs were allocated an equal share of the £31,578.94 funding. The physical hubs used the funding to increase their business advisory resource and delivered face-to-face EU Exit support through 1:1's, surgeries, workshops and events.

## EU Exit Project Uplift Funding Growth Hub 2019-2020 Grant Spend Position

### B. Please confirm details of the financial position in respect of your 2019-2020 grant.

#### Purpose of Grant

The salaries and direct costs associated with the recruitment/secondment/provision of additional face-to-face Business Support Advisors/Navigators or Specialists accessible to businesses via the LEP and Growth Hub with regard EU Exit Readiness.

Total BEIS grant for 2019-2020 awarded	<b>£31,578.94</b>
Details of any underspend of the 2019-2020 award (please provide reason for underspend)	<b>£266.75</b>

#### Any additional comments:

Underspend was due to the impact of COVID 19 in March 2020.

## Project Governance and Funding

1. Please detail the governance approach taken by the LEP and Accountable Body in 2019-20 to ensure that the additional funding provided falls under the direct leadership and governance of the LEP and under oversight of the Accountable Body.

The Marches LEP (MLEP) can confirm that all appropriate LEP governance, transparency and accountability arrangements were in place and that the MLEP was compliant with the national LEP Local Growth Assurance Framework.

Governance arrangements did not change since the submission of the EU Exit Project Uplift Funding Growth Hub 2019-2020 Schedule 3 submitted on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2019.

The MLEP Board oversees the setting of the strategic direction for the MGH and receives progress updates from the Chair of the MGH Steering Group. The last MGH update was provided to the LEP Board on 24 September 2019. Shropshire Council acts as the MLEP's Accountable Body.

The MGH Steering Group is a sub-group of the LEP Board and meet quarterly. On joining the MGH Steering Group, each member (excluding local authority partners) are asked to complete the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government template of the Register of Members' Interest Form and this is reviewed on an annual basis by the LEP Chief Executive Officer (CEO) in line with the LEP Conflicts of Interest Policy. In addition to this, members are asked to declare any interests at the start of all meetings for any relevant agenda items. The group has a very important role to play with regards to governance and provides guidance on key issues such as policy, objectives, budgetary control, marketing strategy and resource allocation.

The MGH governance is outlined in the Accountability & Assurance Framework including the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the group. The TOR is reviewed annually, and the election of the Chair takes place every two years. The Chair of the MGH Steering Group is also the Small Business Champion on the LEP Board. MGH Steering Group agendas and minutes are prepared in line with the TOR.

The MGH Operational Group is an officer level working group which meets every two months to ensure that activities are co-ordinated effectively across the LEP managed virtual hub and the partner-led three physical hubs in Shrewsbury, Telford & Wrekin and Hereford. The group reviews business support services from all partners in order to manage referrals, monitor outputs and share information.

The MLEP team meets with the Accountable Body (finance team) monthly to review spend against profile and to discuss any concerns. The information from this meeting is used to update the Performance Risk and Management Committee (PRMC) which meet every 2 months and is a sub-group of the LEP Board comprising 3 LEP Board members, three Section 151 Officers and the LEP CEO.

BEIS quarterly claim deadline dates are noted at the beginning of the financial year. Internal deadline dates are agreed with the finance team to ensure that quarterly claims are checked and submitted on time with the appropriate evidence.

The MGH Audit report is carried out by Shropshire Council and the audit team are given sufficient notice to carry out the work required. This helps ensure the year-end reporting deadline is met. The audit service provided by Shropshire Council is a **chargeable service**.

2. What approach did the LEP and Accountable Body take to ensure compliance with funding requirements (e.g. high level of scrutiny of spend; claim submitted to BEIS in a timely fashion alongside associated evidence of defrayal; timely notification to BEIS of potential underspend and provision of end of year audit report?)

The BSO (Growth Hub Lead) checks quarterly spend claims from the three physical hubs.

The MLEP team meets with the Accountable Body (finance team) monthly to review spend against profile and to discuss any concerns. The information from this meeting is used to update the Performance Risk and Management Committee (PRMC) which meet every 2 months and is a sub-group of the LEP Board comprising 3 LEP Board members, three Section 151 Officers and the LEP CEO.

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## Overview of Key Performance Outcomes

- What steps has the LEP taken to ensure that:
- All reasonable efforts were made by the LEP to spend/commit as much of this additional funding as possible on procuring and deploying direct face-to-face advisory support in advance of **31<sup>st</sup> March 2020**.

The BSO (Growth Hub Lead) worked with the three physical growth hubs to ensure spend was in line with activity detailed in Schedule 3 and that as much of the funding was allocated/spent within the given timeframe. Activity was also monitored/discussed at the 2-monthly MGH Operations Group meeting and quarterly MGH Steering Group meeting.

- The number of Growth Hub advisers / navigators on the ground to support businesses preparing for EU exit:
  - How many staff were deployed? Were these:
    - \* Full/Part Time (inc shared staff).
    - \* Newly recruited staff.
    - \* Staff re-deployed from within the LEP/Growth Hub or elsewhere.
    - \* Staff procured or seconded in from third parties (consultants, Chambers, etc).
- Give details of the numbers and types of face-to-face engagements these additional advisers undertook; numbers of events attended or specific activities undertaken to provide advice.

### MGH Shropshire

- 2.2 FTE Business Advisers commissioned to deliver a total of 21 hours EU Exit advice
- 69 face to face engagements took place in the following areas:

Types of engagement	Engagement Number
Access to Finance	49
Marketing and Sales	3
Digital Transformation	4
Recruitment/HR	6
Expansion re Premises	3
Leadership and Management	4

- 25 Numbers of events attended/specific activities undertaken to provide EU Exit advice.

### **MGH Telford & Wrekin**

- 2 FTE from Oct 19 to Dec 19 (Staff re-deployed from within Growth Hub or elsewhere)
- 3 FTE from Jan to Feb 2020 (increase of 1, Staff re-deployed from within Growth Hub or elsewhere.)

Number of Face to face meetings where Brexit support was given: -

- 27 appointments EU Exit specific support
- 118 face to face meetings where EU Exit was discussed

Number of events

- 2 BREXIT themed events supported

### **MGH Herefordshire**

- 4 FTE Business Consultants commissioned to deliver 144 hours business advice resulting in 30 business engagements each receiving a total of 12 hours support (12 hour support included consultant time to research business, face to face activity, consultant report and follow-up action with business)
- Wider Economic Development Team delivered 207 hours of support resulting in 304 engagements.
  
- Funding awarded was fully defrayed by the **31st March 2020**.

All invoices related to works prior to 31st March, the final invoice was defrayed on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2020

Funding was not full defrayed by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020. There was an underspend of £266.75 due to COVID 19.