

Minutes of Marches Growth Hub Steering Group 19 March 2020

Present		
Paul Hinkins	PH	Marches Growth Hub Chair, Marches LEP Board Deputy Chair
Oliver Hindle	OH	Marches Are Lead – Cities and Local Growth Unit, BEIS
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
Richard Nicklin	PB	University of Wolverhampton, External Relations Deputy Director – Business Engagement
Steve Havins	SH	Department for International Trade, Head of Business Development & Partnerships
Nick Webster	NW	Herefordshire Council - Economic Development Manager
Delia Yapp	DY	Shropshire Council, Key Accounts and Investment Manager
Yasmin Sulaman	YS	Marches LEP Business Support Project Officer
Kathryn Jones	LP	Marches LEP Partnership Manager
Apologies: Matt Potts - Shropshire Council Business Growth and Inward Investment Manager Katharine Clough – University of Wolverhampton, Director – External Relations Colin Thaw - Marches Skills Provider Network Chair, Director SBC Training		
Not Present: Kathy Mulholland - Telford & Wrekin Council - Inward Investment & Business Support Service Delivery Manager		

ITEM		ACTION
1.	<p>Welcome and Introductions PH welcomed Steering Group (SG) Members to the telephone call meeting and highlighted new members to the group. Roundtable introductions were followed by YS confirming apologies.</p>	
2.	<p>Declarations of Member Interest No declarations of interest were noted in relation to any agenda item.</p>	
3.	<p>Attendance update PH explained the reason for the report. Members agreed the attendance reported and agreed that the report was useful. HW requested that SBB and FSB attendance to be reported separately.</p>	YS
4.	<p>Minutes of the last meeting and actions Members approved the draft minutes. PR/Marketing benchmarking information request from BEIS to remain on agenda until the action is complete.</p>	YS
5.	<p>Guest Speaker – Hugo Russell, University of Wolverhampton - Digital Projects Manager</p> <p>The guest speaker provided an informative update on Hereford Centre for Cyber and Security and Digital Enterprise Project.</p> <p>Following several questions from Members, a discussion took place around partnership working and SME involvement.</p> <p>Cyber information from speaker and KJ to be circulated to the group.</p>	YS
6.	<p>LEP Update KJ provided an update on the Marches LEP in the following areas: -</p> <p>LEP Board Recruitment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Catherine Baxter will represent Higher Education and Christine Snell will represent the Food & Drink Sector. Both will join the March virtual LEP Board meeting. New member biographies: https://www.marcheslep.org.uk/board-member/catherine-baxter/ https://www.marcheslep.org.uk/board-member/christine-snell/ <p>LEP Board meeting – KJ talked through the March meeting agenda which includes shortlisted projects for Growth Deal funding and VAT and corporation tax payable by the Marches LEP since it became a private company limited by guarantee.</p> <p>LEP Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Support Officer – Stephanie Jones from European Structural Investment Funds team will support the LEP Wednesday to Friday. 	

Hereford Enterprise Zone

- Karen Amos has joined the team as Coordinator.

LIS Development

- Draft LIS was submitted to Government before Christmas. The LEP are working through the initial feedback received before resubmitting.

Funding

- Budget announced £10m to increase Growth Hub capacity and provide high-quality, core business advice and guidance across all 38 Growth Hubs. Not sure at this stage when and how this funding will be allocated.
- Still awaiting details of UK Shared Prosperity Fund.
- COVID 19 Business Support & Innovation Support - Finer details are yet to be received from Government. Latest information is on MGH website Coronavirus Advice for Businesses page <https://www.marchesgrowthhub.co.uk/advice-and-support/coronavirus-information-for-businesses/>.

There was a discussion around COVID 19 business impact information led by NW. YS confirmed that this information along with flooding and EU Exit impact is currently being collated by the growth hubs and reported back to BEIS weekly by the LEP. It was agreed that this matter will remain on the agenda and reviewed at the next meeting. BH to share Visit Shropshire feedback received from Tourism sector in Shropshire.

Marches LEP Access to Finance Strategy

YS updated the group on progress to date. A telephone call took place with the Access to Finance Group on 6th March. The next step is to set up a face to face meeting with the group and the growth hub leads late May/early June. The aim of the meeting is for the group to understand how they can best support the MGH. This meeting may have to take place virtually due to the current climate.

YS

BH

7.	<p>MGH Update YS updated the group on the following areas: -</p> <p>2018/19 Contract</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth Hub year-end report and audit report has been signed off by BEIS without any queries. <p>2019/20 Contract</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth Hub Bi-Annual Report has been signed off by BEIS without any queries. • Spend – core budget is on track and now includes payroll costs and expenses. No concerns reported. • £33k Cluster funding to support EU Exit Business Readiness Campaign - £5,200 has been spent to date. Cluster events have been cancelled due to COVID 19. There is flexibility to reschedule these events. Coventry City County is working with BEIS to extend spend and claim period. • £31,578.94 Business Advisor funding - £3k spend to date by MGH Shropshire. The other two growth hubs are busy delivering activity. • November 2019 to January 2020 KPI data was reported to be in line with £10m Growth Challenge activity and holiday period. High customer satisfaction rates were highlighted by PH. The group agreed to keep the event attendance data the same following the request from HW to show this as a percentage. • Data Intelligence report detailing all business impact will be submitted to BEIS on a weekly basis until further notice. • West Midlands Cluster BREXIT report was launched on 2 March and promoted locally. Marches findings were highlighted and the group encouraged to read if they had not already done so. • YS to follow-up PR/Marketing benchmarking information with BEIS. <p>2020/21 Contract</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule 1 and 3 - Recent queries from BEIS have been satisfied around UoW restructuring. Awaiting a Grant offer letter as the next step. The focus on funding is giving business advice and this has been reflected in the allocation to Local Authority partners. 	
8.	<p>Steering Group Review Update YS confirmed the following: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marches LEP are still seeking legal advice on general agreements therefore no progress to report on the draft Data Sharing Agreement (DSA) and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between BEIS, NBSH and the Marches LEP. • Local Partner Service Level Agreement/DSA are parked until the above is finalised. • PH updated the group on the MGH Steering Group Chair position. That a discussion was to take place with LEP CEO and LEP Chair in due course regarding the possible alignment of Business Board and LEP TOR. This matter will be taken to the May LEP Board meeting. Any questions from the group to be directed to LEP CEO, Gill Hamer. 	PH
9.	<p>Marketing and Social Media / Google Analytics AB updated the group on activity and confirmed that the data within the report is used to report to BEIS and drive forward planning of campaigns. AB confirmed that there is a need to understand growth hub referral success relating to ERDF funding spend. Gary Spence, Marches EU ERDF Technical Assistance Officer is working with local authority partners to help set this up. The current focus of the team is COVID 19 support and messaging has been changed in response to this.</p>	

10	<p>Reflections & Improvements</p> <p>NW asked for an update on Flooding support for businesses using Marches Investment Fund. KJ confirmed that this matter was being discussed at the LEP Board meeting this month and that a case will be made to the Accountable Body using examples of support from other LEP areas.</p>	
11	<p>AOB</p> <p>No requests were forthcoming from the group.</p>	
	<p>Future Meeting Dates (quarterly 4.30 – 6.30) Venue or virtual TBC depending on COVID 19 Status</p> <p>Thursday 4 June</p> <p>Thursday 3 September</p> <p>Thursday 10 December</p>	

