

Minutes of Marches Growth Hub (MGH) Steering Group 3rd September 2020

Present		
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
Emma Chapman	EC	Marches Growth Hub - Shropshire, Growth Hub Manager
Richard Sheehan	RS	Shropshire Chamber of Commerce - Chief Executive Officer
Richard Nicklin	RN	University of Wolverhampton, Deputy Director – Business Engagement
Yasmin Sulaman	YS	Marches LEP Business Support Lead
Kathryn Jones	KJ	Marches LEP Partnership Manager
Ollie Sydenham	OS	Marches LEP Partnership Administrator
<p>Apologies: Oliver Hindle - Cities and Local Growth Unit, BEIS - Marches Area Lead Kathy Mulholland - Telford & Wrekin Council - Inward Investment & Business Support Service Delivery Manager Sharon Smith – Hereford & Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce, Chief Executive Officer Matt Potts - Shropshire Council, Shropshire Council Business Growth and Inward Investment Manager</p>		
Not Present:		

ITEM		ACTION
1.	<p>Welcome and Introductions</p> <p>YS recorded her personal sincere thanks to Paul Hinkins for his hard work, commitment and the constant support he provided the MGH.</p> <p>YS welcomed Steering Group (SG) Members, guest speakers to the virtual meeting and confirmed apologies.</p>	
2.	<p>Declarations of Member Interest</p> <p>YS confirmed that 1 Marches LEP Register of Interests Form is outstanding and is due to be received. YS confirmed receipt of conflicts confirmed by HW relating to agenda Item 7.</p>	RN
3.	<p>Guest Speaker:</p> <p>Source – MGH Website Re-design Update. Glenn Millar, Business Development Manager, Gareth Griffiths - Technical Director and Rob Bramhill - Digital Marketing Manager.</p> <p>The guest speakers provided an informative presentation on the proposed visuals for the new MGH Website. The presentation was followed by Q & A session around website targets, CRM reporting/associated costs and training for staff. AB confirmed that website stats (year on year comparison) are reported to BEIS in Bi-Annual and Annual reports and website stats are included in Be Bold reports shared with the group.</p> <p>Continue monitoring and reporting on website engagement at meetings Live Chat stats from Business Support Helpline (BSH)</p>	AB YS
4.	<p>Attendance update</p> <p>Members agreed the attendance reported.</p>	
5.	<p>Minutes of the last meeting and actions</p> <p>Members approved the draft minutes. Actioned were reported as being complete.</p>	

<p>6.</p>	<p>LEP Update</p> <p>KJ provided an update on the Marches LEP in the following areas: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MGH Chair position - It has been agreed with Chair of Marches LEP that we will go out to open advert for a new Chair of MGH Steering Group. We are expecting an increasing focus on (and hopefully funding) for business support from Government and will appoint a new private sector person as Chair to champion business support/entrepreneurship/new ways of doing business. This role will also be a progression opportunity to build a more diverse membership of the LEP's sub-groups and Board. May suit someone who wishes to 'give something back' as part of their social value work and/or build non-executive director experience. An advert for the un-remunerated role is being drafted and we would look to partners to encourage people to apply. There will be the time commitment to prepare for and chair these meetings, attend some national meetings and act in a representational role. Advert to be shared with group in due course. • £14m Getting Building Fund allocation secured for the Marches. Details to be circulated to the group. • Ministerial announcement re £20m grant funding - Within the Marches, we have put forward a proposal on how to deliver and manage this grant funding. This has been approved in principle and the details of how it will be delivered are being worked up by Telford & Wrekin Council who will be delivering this across the Marches. Details to be shared with the group. • Ministerial announcement re Peer Networks - The LEP will be outsourcing this activity and is currently developing a procurement brief. Details to be circulated to the group including the link to register interest. • LEP CEO is representing the Marches on a national rural economic recovery group which is feeding back to government on the points including green recovery, broadening economic bases/labour markets and vulnerable rural sectors. • Meeting with DIT next week for an update on new DIT posts – opportunity to build on successes and increase resources to support our business base. • The new funding programmes and resources are welcomed but the short term nature of the funding does present challenges. We are looking forward to the Comprehensive Spending Review in autumn to hopefully hear about longer term funding settlements. • Ilia Bowles has been appointed as the new Director of Corporate Services for the LEP and is due to start in October 2020. Ilia will be leading on corporate governance, including the role of the LEP's sub-groups, our accountability and assurance framework and meeting government requirements on transparency. 	<p>KJ</p> <p>KJ</p> <p>KJ</p> <p>KJ</p>
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<p>7.</p>	<p>MGH Update</p> <p>YS updated the group on the following areas: -</p> <p>2019/20 Contract</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year-end report was submitted by the end of June submission date. Report currently being reviewed by BEIS. Link to the report will be shared in due course. <p>2020/21 Contract</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S1 & S3 (£257k Additional Funding) – following consultation with LA partners/growth hub Leads, the updated reports were re-submitted to BEIS following the Co-Design meeting on 16th July. Grant offer letter stage at present. Links to reports to be shared in due course. Targets have been linked to additional business advisor support which will be aligned to the draft MGH Comms plan as discussed at the last meeting. • Spend Position April – July 2020 – some slippage reported with part website re-design costs and Be Bold costs to support website information audit and information transfer to the new site . This was due to COVID 19. Overhead costs reduced as no spend against meetings due to virtual meetings. The MGH telephone line was closed in June as we are now promoting the Business Support Helpline on the website as opposed to having the office telephone line on transfer. • KPI Data April – July 2020 - enquiry levels are in-line COVID 19 impact, launch of LA discretionary grant schemes, premature business support announcement from government and PR/Marketing activity. Stats show enquiry numbers levelling off in all areas other than Shropshire where enquiry levels continue to rise. On-line growth Hub events continue to be delivered with a number of partners and these events are continuing to be very well received. Additional Business advisor support is being planned and, in some areas, already being delivered (MGH Shropshire). EC clarified e-mail figures for MGH Shropshire. • BSH - Significant upscale of advisers reported by the BSH. All Covid related calls coming into the Helpline system are being routed, logged and reported separately from normal calls, directly back to BEIS (in line with their Emergency Response remit) so as such they do not appear within the ‘business as usual’ traffic that we see detailed on the BSH report provided. This particular Coronavirus data report is not shareable externally with partners because it contains sensitive & personal customer data, but Covid volumes for the Marches were reported as 116 in April, 62 in May, 39 in June and 17 in July. • West Midlands Cluster – Weekly conference calls continue with the WM Cluster as well as weekly COVID reporting to BEIS. West Midlands Business Trends Survey is being promoted on the MGH website and the telemarketing/e-mail campaign continues into September to help understand COVID impact. Data will help support recovery plans/business policy moving forward. Results/reports will be shared in due course. 	<p>YS</p> <p>YS</p> <p>YS</p>
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8.	<p>MGH Steering Group Review Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4th August update from BEIS is that they are issuing a GDPR-compliant template for Data Sharing Agreements and Memorandum of Understanding between BEIS, BSH and the Marches LEP. Awaiting paperwork. YS to update local SLA/DSA agreements once the exercise above has been completed. 	YS
9.	<p>PR/Marketing/Social Media Update</p> <p>AB took the group through the April to July stats and the benchmarking report. The benchmarking report showed both the website and social media stats hold up well.</p> <p>AB explained that Q3 forward plan/themes will be linked to recovery and resilience (including LEP Recovery week) and aligning of LEP and MGH comms.</p> <p>A campaign will be developed to promote the additional 121 business advisor sessions and to help encourage referrals to finance and funding schemes.</p> <p>YS confirmed that an external evaluation of the growth hub network is in the pipeline. This has been delayed due to COVID 19. BEIS are currently at procurement stage. We may, in the future be able to access PR/Marketing comparisons through this exercise.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MO - feedback from the rural Shropshire community is that these areas feel the most disengaged. EC talked the group through MGH Shropshire outreach activity during 2019/20 before lockdown and how this is reported to BEIS in the Bi-Annual and Year-end report. The group was asked to encourage networks to sign-up to the MGH newsletter and to follow MGH social media channels. RS suggested heatmapping of MGH engagement. YS confirmed that engagement figures are confirmed in the BEIS Bi-Annual and Year-end report. AB confirmed that Gary Spence has already started a piece of work with LA partners looking at ERDF support/engagement. AB confirmed that Be Bold have been working on a tool to track engagement (Marches on the Map) to help pinpoint support received. YS agreed to share MO and RS feedback (engagement in rural areas and engagement mapping) at the next MGH Campaign meeting and MGH Operations Group meeting in September. 	<p>ALL</p> <p>YS</p>
10.	<p>Any other business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EC confirmed that the growth hub additional funding to support 12hr support is welcomed and is adding value to the MGH service. RS took the group through the newly announced Kickstart Scheme and the need to continue working closely with the MGH. In response to HW’s question, YS confirmed the AOB matter arising at the last meeting was actioned at the 9th July MGH Operations Group meeting. 	
11.	<p>2020 meetings (Quarterly 16:30-18:30 via Teams) Thursday 10th December</p>	

