

Minutes of Marches Growth Hub Steering Group 28.03.2019
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Present		
Paul Hinkins	PH	LEP Board Member and Chair of Telford Business Board
Frank Myers	FM	LEP Board Member and Chair of Herefordshire Business Board
Paul O'Neill	PO	Director - Marches Skills Provider Network
Johnny Themans	JT	Telford Business Board Representative – Director, Good 2 Great Ltd
Amy Bould	AB	Marches LEP, PR & Marketing Consultant, Be Bold Media Ltd
Gary Dimmock	GD	University of Wolverhampton, Manager, Business Solutions Centre
Maisy Owen	MO	Chamber Member - Chair of Members Committee, Director of MO Management Consultancy Ltd
Matt Potts	MP	Shropshire Council – Business Growth & Investment Manager
Kathy Mulholland	KM	Telford & Wrekin Council - Inward Investment & Business Support Service Delivery Manager
Steve Havins	SH	Department for International Trade, Head of Business Development & Partnerships
Yasmin Sulaman	YS	Marches LEP Business Support Officer
Louise Pierce	LP	Marches LEP Data & Marketing Support Officer
Apologies:		
Gareth Wilson - Area Lead – Cities and Local Growth Unit		
Lindsay Barton - Shropshire Business Board Representative, FSB Branch Leader (Shropshire), Managing Director of Golden Kite Solutions Ltd		
Nick Webster - Herefordshire Council - Economic Development Manager		
Marc Fleetham – University of Wolverhampton – Director Business Solutions. Regional Knowledge Transfer Partnership Director, Chair KTP National Forum		
Kathryn Jones – Marches LEP Partnership Manager		
Not Present:		
ITEM		ACTION
1.	Welcome and Introductions The Chair welcomed Steering Group (SG) members. YS gave apologies for the members unable to attend.	
2.	Declarations of Member Interest YS reminded members who had not already done so that their Register of Members' Interests form needs to be handed in at this meeting or posted to the LEP.	
3.	Attendance update Members noted and agreed the accuracy of the figures provided.	

4.	<p>Minutes of the last meeting and actions SG members approved the minutes. YS confirmed that all actions were complete. At present there is no PR and Marketing benchmarking information available from BEIS. FM requested that BEIS look into collating and sharing this information.</p>	YS
5.	<p>LEP Update YS updated the group as follows:</p> <p>Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) The SEP was formally approved by Marches Enterprise Joint Committee on 19 March 2019 and has now gone to print. Copies will be available at the next meeting.</p> <p>Marches LEP is now working on its Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) which will be submitted to government this year. A planning meeting for board members and partners will be held in Ludlow on 11 April 2019 and this will determine the process for business engagement activities to help shape priorities. PH said that all three business boards are keen to be involved with the development of the LIS.</p> <p>Marches LEP Board Meeting 19 March 2019 This meeting focused on governance. The Marches LEP has now been incorporated as a company limited by guarantee and the Board is finalising its articles of association and decision-making processes. Shropshire Council will still act as the accountable body for the LEP, i.e. handle all government funding, and will continue to handle the LEP's corporate functions under a Service Level Agreement.</p> <p>YS congratulated PH on being formally confirmed as Deputy Chair at the Board Meeting.</p> <p>PH presented a MGH update paper at the Board Meeting. The LEP Board Chair wanted to thank the MGH for doing an excellent job and also thank the SG members and LEP team for their continued support/contribution and excellent work.</p> <p>The advert for new LEP Board members is live and closed as of 12.00 pm today. The LEP would like to thank the group for their help in promoting these opportunities through their networks.</p> <p>The vacancy for the LEP Chair will be advertised later in the year. The specification for the role is being drawn up and the vacancy will be widely advertised.</p> <p>Annual Performance The formal annual performance review of the LEP took place on 10 January 2019. Formal feedback has now been received and the Marches LEP has been assessed as good against all three key performance elements of governance, delivery and strategy.</p> <p>PH added that the annual performance confirmed that the MGH is performing excellently and has consistently maintained a high-quality service. Despite having one of the lowest levels of BEIS funding with a budget of £205k, the LEP has successfully leveraged local partnerships to obtain further funding that is locally tailored to the needs of the Marches.</p> <p>Core Funding</p>	YS

	<p>The LEP has received formal confirmation of Core funding for 2019/20 (including funding for the Growth Hub). Bids have now been submitted.</p> <p>Stronger Towns Fund The Marches LEP has received formal notice of the £1.6billion Stronger Towns Fund from the Government. This is a new package of support to strengthen communities and fund ‘Town Deals’ across England. It will be used to create new jobs, provide training opportunities and boost growth and £322m has been allocated to communities in the Midlands. Details of priorities, eligibility and application process are expected after the Local Authority elections.</p> <p>Marketing & Data Support Officer LP’s post has been extended to the end of April 2019 – to concentrate on closing off the financial year and finalise end of year reporting. A temporary administrator is in post to support the central MGH team 1 day per week from April. YS will support the MGH 100% from 1 April. Her current allocation is 3 days per week. PH informed the SG that from the next meeting, action orientated minutes will be taken by YS. PH thanked LP for her support and contribution to the SG.</p> <p>Skills YS informed the group that Aggie Caesar-Homden is happy to answer any questions SG members may have around the paper provided.</p>	
6.	<p>MGH Update</p> <p>Spend Update YS confirmed that the MGH is on track to spend its £205k allocation. Quarter 4 claims have been received from the 3 Growth Hubs and a slight underspend has been reported by MGH Herefordshire.</p> <p>KPI Data Dec 2018 – Feb 2019 LP provided the group with updates from each of the 3 Growth Hubs to support the data provided in her report:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shropshire Although the Hub continues to see a good number of start-up businesses, the number of existing businesses looking for support is increasing. These businesses are generally looking for grants and funded programmes to support growth. <p>There was a spike in the number of businesses engaging with the Growth Hub in January. This was due to an increase in publicity and social media presence as well as the trend seen every year with many businesses seeing January as a new start.</p> <p>There have been a good number of events, but attendee numbers have been lower due to cancellations and no shows. The Growth Hub is trialling various ways of addressing this. The highest attendance levels were at the Social Media and Forging links with your local Supply Chain events.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telford & Wrekin 	

	<p>In comparison to last year's figures the Growth Hub has delivered more events to more attendees. There was a focus on developing a full calendar of events for 2019 towards the end of 2018.</p> <p>The Hub is getting less phone enquiries and more enquiries via email. This is probably because the team have made email a stronger call to action.</p> <p>The number of face to face appointments is down on last year – currently going through a transition period with many of the grants, projects and programmes looking to be extended so offers for meetings with businesses have reduced. It is anticipated that this will pick up over the next couple of quarters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Herefordshire <p>Historically in Herefordshire there has been a dip in the number of enquiries, interactions and events throughout December and into January, which picks up again in February. The data shows this again for 2018/2019.</p> <p>The Hub engages with a good number of both start up and existing businesses in Herefordshire, who in the main are looking for funding and finance.</p> <p>MGH Herefordshire is promoted through a range of sources including digital and social media, events, awards, advertising boards but there is always more that can be done to further promote the support service available locally.</p> <p>MP requested that Growth Hub year end data be shared when available.</p> <p>High Profile Events</p> <p>LP thanked LEP Board members PH and FM for supporting the recent high profile events. She also thanked the Department for International Trade (DiT) for their involvement in the two Business Growth and Export events and Connect 2 Grow for funding the Digital event in Herefordshire and part funding the event in Telford. Partners were also acknowledged for their role in exhibiting at, attending and promoting the events.</p> <p>LP updated the group on the 3 recent high profile events as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Love Digital, Three Counties Hotel, Hereford on 14.02.2019 45 delegates attended the event. The top reason for attending was networking. 94% of delegates completing a feedback survey said the event had met their expectations. The guest speaker, Lucas Karemo of Google Garage, was very well received. • Business Growth and Export Show, Hereford Racecourse on 19.03.2019 47 delegates attended the event. The DiT hub truck was in attendance. The guest speaker was ex-SAS Officer and Head of Operations at British Land, Joff Sharpe. The top reason given for attending was to learn more about exporting. • Get Digital – Survive or Thrive, Enginuity on 20.03.2019 59 delegates attended as well as several guests from Telford Business Board; Telford & Wrekin Council; the Marches LEP and Hardip Begol, Director, Integration and Communities, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. The exhibition room housed 23 stands and these were a mixture of partners and private companies. The most popular 	<p>YS</p>
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	<p>reason for attending was to listen to the guest speaker, Bruce Daisley who is European Vice President of Twitter. The panel discussion was very well received.</p> <p>There was some discussion around events and understanding why people do not attend. KM suggested more specific sector-focused events might be beneficial. SH said that DiT struggle with getting numbers to their events and are looking at more segmenting. PO mentioned that attendance at college open evenings is on the decrease yet the number of enrolments is increasing. He suggested that the need for face to face interactions is possibly on the decline with certainly students preferring digital means.</p> <p>The Growth Hubs will discuss if the events met their expectations at the next MGH Campaign Meeting.</p> <p>2019/20 Contract YS informed the group that Schedules 1 and 3 have been submitted to BEIS. The grant offer letter is expected by the end of March. Some questions from BEIS have been received around the physical Growth Hubs and PR/Marketing spend.</p>	YS
7.	<p>Steering Group Review Update YS confirmed that the draft Data Sharing Agreement (DSA) between BEIS, NBSH and the Marches LEP and the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) have now been reviewed by Shropshire Council legal team and comments fed back to BEIS legal. A call between the legal teams is suggested as the next step.</p> <p>Part of this exercise requires rework to the Partner Service Level Agreement (SLA)/DSA to ensure that it is fit for purples and GDPR compliant. SC legal team are currently reviewing and a meeting will be arranged as the next step.</p> <p>The legal costs for this work form part of 2019/20 financial year costs.</p>	
8.	<p>Brexit Update A report on responses to the Brexit survey and enquiries to the Growth Hubs around Brexit was provided in advance to the group. LP talked through the responses.</p>	
9.	<p>Marketing and Social Media / Google Analytics AB updated the group as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website visits are on a par with last year. Promotion of the high profile events has taken customers directly to the relevant Eventbrite page rather than to a page on the MGH website. • The Brexit toolkit page is in the Top 10 most visited pages for the first time. • Social media statistics remain much the same but there were several boosted Facebook posts in March. 70% of the 20% traffic to the website from social media comes from Facebook. • There were double page features on the Growth Hubs in the Shropshire Star and Hereford Times in January/February and there have been 60 other pieces in the press during this 2 month period. 	
10.	<p>Guest Speakers – Source and Be Bold</p>	

	<p>Source currently have 3 contracts in place with the MGH. These are for website hosting, maintenance and Search Engine Optimisation (SEO). Rob Bramhill gave the group an overview on the work Source do as part of these contracts, impact and recommendations for improvement.</p> <p>AB then gave the group a presentation on the work Be Bold carry out as part of their PR and Marketing support contract with the MGH.</p> <p>YS confirmed that for 2019/20 the MGH has capacity to support up to 10 days support per month from Be Bold. This figure comprises 1 day support per Growth Hub, making a total of 3 days; 4 days supporting the virtual hub and the 3 days remaining to support physical hub high profile events (if required) or on creative activity to be agreed depending on the business need. MGH Shropshire have given up 2 of their allocated days for the year in order to use the funds to support their local plans.</p> <p>YS also confirmed that there was no capacity in the MGH 2019/20 budget to support sponsorship of the Shropshire Star and Hereford Times business supplements.</p> <p>There was a discussion around sponsored marketing activity.</p>	
11.	<p>AOB</p> <p>PO informed the group that the Apprenticeship themed events which took place at Shrewsbury Town Football Club and Telford International Centre earlier this year had been successful. A Hereford Skills Day will take place on 03 July 2019 in partnership with Herefordshire Council and the University of Wolverhampton.</p> <p>PH would like to invite Paul Kalinauckas, the LEP Board Member who is leading on Access to Finance, to the next SG meeting to brief the group on activities to date and progress made by the Access to Finance Working Group.</p> <p>PH requested that the attachments forming the papers for each meeting are combined and sent out as one document.</p>	<p>YS</p> <p>YS</p>
	<p>Future Meeting Dates (quarterly 4.30 – 6.30) Thursday 27th June 2019 Thursday 26th September 2019 Thursday 12th December 2019</p>	