



Growth Hub Annual Report 2016-17

LEP Accountable Body:	Shropshire Council
Local Enterprise Partnership:	Marches Local Enterprise Partnership
Growth Hub name:	Marches Growth Hub
Date of Annual Report:	2016/2017
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Date:	25 th May 2017
Deadline for return to BEIS:	25 May 2017

This template has been produced by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) at the request of a Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) to help with the production of their end of year Growth Hub Annual Report and is being provided as a guide to the type of information that BEIS expects to be included.

LEPs are however; free to use an alternative format for their reviews as long as the key content areas specified within the template are incorporated within final reports.

This will ensure consistency and transparency to help evaluate the impact of the funding provided for the development of Growth Hubs in 2016-2017 and allow BEIS to publish an overarching Growth Hub summary, drawing on the information provided in individual Growth Hub Annual Reports.

We request that the Annual Report should be completed and returned to BEIS in word format (not as a pdf) and that each section should provide the details requested in a short and concise way.

Annual Reports should be submitted to [Karen Leigh](#) and [Caroline Davies](#) at BEIS by no later than **25 May 2017** and copied to your BEIS Local Area Lead for information.

Note: The requirement for each Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to produce a Growth Hub Annual Review is set down in Schedule 3 of individual Grant Offer Letters and is also a requirement of the common 'Metrics and Evaluation Framework' which all LEPs have sign up to.

Growth Hub Executive Summary

A. Please set out the objectives and priorities of your Growth Hub and its high-level achievements in 2016-17. Include its key features and strengths. [250-300 words maximum]

Objectives

Engagement & Support

The Marches Growth Hub (MGH) is an important tool used by the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (MLEP) to engage with and support entrepreneurs/businesses. The Marches LEP area spans 2,300 square miles and is home to 29,800 SME's. To be able to cover such a broad geographical area with limited resources and funding, we have had to develop robust strategic partnerships and excellent working links with three local authorities (LA's), two Chambers of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses (FSB), three universities, several private sector-led business network groups and government all of which are key to the MGH success.

MGH Model

Through the virtual hub www.marchesgrowthhub.co.uk, central helpline 0345 6000 727 and the three-physical hub situated in Hereford, Shrewsbury and Telford & Wrekin, the MGH is supporting thousands of businesses by linking them to national and local support including: -

- local authority (LA) business support teams
- Department of International Trade (DIT)
- Intellectual Property Office (IPO)
- Manufacturing Growth Programme (MGP)
- EU funding programmes.

Comms

In addition to our up-to-date user-friendly website, we deliver a high level of social media activity to help raise the awareness of the MGH service. Please see achievements in Section C on page 13.

A monthly digital news digest is issued to a growing number of users keeping them up-to-date on existing and new products and services as well as promoting achievements and events. A flexible MGH marketing plan is in place with the aim of building the profile of the MGH as a single point of access for business and skills support across the LEP area.

Priorities

Partnership Development

- The two monthly Operational Group meetings help maintain and further develop the relationship with partners that manage the three Physical Hubs and support engagement with key national business support providers and local delivery partners.
- We have continued to develop and grow the sphere of influence of the MGH. We have done this through building links with a much broader range of SMEs via our accountants and solicitors, the Chambers of Commerce, FSB and other business representation organisations.
- Continue to maintain and develop our stakeholder list to ensure wider engagement.

Improving Comms

- To ensure successful outreach over such a vast geographical area, we have further developed our marketing strategy to continuously improve how we engage with all our key audiences (business community/partners and stakeholders) in a variety of formats, across different platforms (digital, social and more traditional means such as print media and events).
- We have focused our efforts to provide interesting, relevant and useful content that can be used across multiple channels e.g. case studies and video.
- We have started to prioritise on key sectors and package activity into campaigns to help generate stronger results.

Encouraging Business Start-up and Growth

- The commissioning of twelve SME case studies that will help promote success and encourage business start-up and growth.
- Promotion of the Midlands Engine Investment Funds (MEIF) along with our locally designed and government funded growth and innovation business support schemes.

Improving Export

- Through our sponsorship, DIT could commission eight case studies (including video sound bites) to help promote the exporting services available.

Achievements

The awareness of the MGH service is increasing month on month and this is highlighted by the 2016/17 results below: -

- **2779** Walk-in's, calls or web enquiries to Marches Growth Hub
- **2795** Businesses supported by the Marches Growth Hub (including support received from Partners)
- **4053** People attended Marches Growth Hub business support events
- **11 EU** funded business support programmes including grant schemes now being delivered
- **£1221,736** Grant funding awarded to Marches businesses
- **128** new jobs created thanks to grant support.
- **687** enquiries sign posted to third parties.

With limited funding, resources and such a vast geographical area, we have increased social media and Comms activity to help support outreach and profile raising resulting in an increase of MGHUB service take-up. This has proven successful and is demonstrated in the figures below. Further information on achievements are detailed in Section C on page 13.

- **13,788** website users
- **1,947** twitter followers
- **Six #** campaigns

Growth Hub 2016/2017 final grant spend position

Please state how much of your 2016/2017 grant has been spent to 31 March 2017.

If the 16/17 funding has not been fully drawn down at year end, how much will be spent by 26th May 2017? The £205,000 budget for 2016/17 will be fully spent by the 26th of May 2017. We have a small overspend of £327.03 which the LEP will cover from its core budget.

Please provide an overview of expenditure according to the activity spend headings in your 2016/2017 Schedule 1 form which formed part of your 2016/2017 offer letter with an explanation for any underspend you may be anticipating.

<u>Description</u>	<u>Total</u>		
	Budget	Actual	Variance
Virtual hub operation/management	54,923.38	50,923.70	3,999.68
Hub website maintenance/SEO	3,940.00	2,230.00	1,710.00
Skills site maintenance/hosting	3,500.00	3,000.00	500.00
Growth Hub mapping of products	0.00	0.00	0.00
Hub CRM	1,250.00	591.86	658.14
Marketing/s media/materials/adverts	49,053.99	48,684.54	369.45
Physical Hubs Events/Support Programme	74,999.78	74,924.71	75.07
Information databases	7,120.56	17,120.56	-10,000.00
Room hire/events/sponsorship	10,212.29	7,851.66	2,360.63
Total	205,000.00	205,327.03	-327.03

Summary of progress of your Growth Hub to date

B: Summary of Growth Hub progress [100 words maximum per question]

- **Strategic Partnerships**
- **Which organisations are delivering the Growth Hub activity? Are they a public or private sector organisation? Are they operating under a contract or partnership arrangement? What have been the benefits of this approach?**

MGH Delivery

The Marches Growth hub has one full time member of staff (Helpline Manager), who manages the helpline, e-mail enquiries and maintains the website. This person is supported by the Marches LEP Business Support Officer. Due to limited resources, we work in partnership with the three local authorities (LA's) and the University of Wolverhampton who provide tier one Business Support/Economics Development generalists to support the operation of the three physical hubs.

Operating Contract

A service level agreement (SLA) and data sharing agreement (DSA) is in place. These two key documents specify that direct referrals to partners are responded to within 48hrs, data protection protocols are followed and information on the website is maintained and kept up-to-date.

Benefits

The SLA and DSA ensures that the service continues to be valued by our local businesses and the wider business support services network. It also helps ensure that the MGH service remains to be

the first port of call for accurate, up-to-date and impartial information on business support across the whole of the LEP area.

- **What opportunities have been explored by the LEP to support cross boundary working with other LEPs, Growth Hubs and strategic partners to ensure value for money (e.g. cluster working; joint projects and sharing resources)? Where possible, stating how these will support local and Industrial Strategy key sectors.**

Midlands Business Support Network - MGH staff attend the network meeting which occurs four times a year. The network includes West and East Midlands Growth Hubs along with several national business support providers. Opportunities for cross border working are investigated as well as sharing best practice and coordination of events to ensure value for money is obtained across the wider area.

Midlands Engine - The Marches LEP is a key partner in the Midlands Engine (a long-term strategy for economic growth for the wider region). The LEP has been working with other LEPs to develop this plan. The ambition of the Midlands Engine is to improve the economy of the Midlands and the UK, deliver enhanced quality of life for citizens/community and to become a globally recognised driver of the economy. One of the strands born from this strategy is the Midlands Engine Investment Fund (MEIF) which is due to be launched in July 2017. The Board, LEP and Growth Hub team will continue to support the strategy and delivery of this fund.

The Business Growth Programme - (BGP) is a £33m fund which consists of four strands of business support; namely the Business Development Programme, the Business Innovation Programme, the Green Bridge Supply Chain Programme and the HS2 project. BGP grants are available to eligible companies across the Marches area, via the European Regional Development Fund. The scheme is being delivered by Birmingham City Council in partnership with the Marches LEP and Greater Birmingham & Solihull and Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire LEPs.

ERDF Projects - In partnership with the University of Wolverhampton, the Marches LEP supports several ERDF projects namely; Green Shoots Plus Fund, Innovative Product Support Service (IPSS), Knowledge Exchange & Enterprise Network (KEEN) and Built Environment Climate Change Innovations (BECCI). These are delivered across the Black Country and the Marches LEP areas.

Priority Sectors

The Marches Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) identifies three priority sectors: -

- Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering (with auto specialism)
- Agri-food packaging/Agri-tech
- Defence and Cyber Security.

Advanced Manufacturing/Engineering (with auto specialism)

- **The Business Growth Programme** – please see above.
- **Drive Midlands initiative** - The Marches LEP along with other Midlands LEPs is supporting and promoting this to local manufacturing businesses that supply the auto sector. The aim is to develop a self-funded trade body for auto sector suppliers. We also have a Board member that sits on the Auto Council LEP Group.
- **The Manufacturing Growth Programme** – Delivered by Economic Solutions Ltd, the programme supports SME Manufacturers to grow by identifying, understanding and removing barriers to growth and enabling sustainable business improvement.

Agri-tech

- **Agri Tech West Alliance** - In 2016, The Marches, Stoke & Staffordshire, Worcestershire and Cheshire & Warrington LEPs, worked together to explore the detailed footprint of the

Agri-Tech Sector within their geography, with the aim of developing an effective working partnership (called the Agri Tech West Alliance) that will drive business growth and productivity, delivering a step-change in business competitiveness that will extend beyond the geographies of these four LEPs. Since then, the LEPs have produced The Agri Tech West Scoping Study Final Report (November 2016). This provides an understanding of the agri-tech sector asset base, including sub-area strengths, commonalities, comparative advantages and opportunities. Our response to the Industrial Strategy included a proposal from this group.

Defence & Cyber Security

- The Marches LEP along with Worcestershire LEP and Gloucestershire LEP is developing a programme to support new and growth potential businesses that support the new and emerging defence and cyber sector in the Marches.

We have or are developing a number of projects that will address the needs of growth potential businesses in these sectors that in turn will support the Industrial Strategy.

- **What approach has the LEP through its Growth Hub take to continue to develop strong, inclusive strategic partnerships across the LEP area and what plans have been put in place to ensure that any local conflicts (where they exist) are overcome?**

Inclusive Strategic Group

Growth Hub Steering Group

The is a sub-group of the LEP Board which meets on a quarterly basis. The group has a very important role to play as it provides guidance on key issues such as policy and objectives, budgetary control, marketing strategy and resource allocation.

Steering Group membership includes: -

Local Partners

- Chair (Private)- LEP Board Member/ Chair of Telford Business Board (nominated small business champion)
- Herefordshire Business Board (private)
- Shropshire Business Board Representative (private)
- Shropshire Chamber of Commerce (private - non-secretariat)
- Marches Skills Provider Networks (private)
- Federation of Small Businesses (private)
- Telford & Wrekin Council (public)
- Herefordshire Council (public)
- Shropshire Council (public)
- Marches LEP (public/private)
- Women in Rural Enterprise (private)

In attendance: - BEIS

Growth Hub Operational Group

The Operational Group meet every two months. The aim of the group is to manage referrals and outputs from the virtual hub and the three physical hubs and to ensure inclusivity of key national business support providers and local delivery partners.

The membership includes: -

Local Partners:

- Herefordshire Council
- Shropshire Council
- Telford and Wrekin Council
- University of Wolverhampton- Green Shoots Plus

- LEP Growth Hub staff
- National:
- DIT
 - Economic Growth Solution Ltd.

All members are required to provide an update on their service area, level of activity in the Marches area and comply with the SLA that has been developed so we can monitor progress and make continuous improvements.

Other business support providers (local and national) are asked to attend the Steering and Operational Group as and when required. A recent example of this is a representative from the British Business Bank who delivered a presentation on the new Marches Engine Investment Fund.

As the business support landscape evolves the membership of the Operational group will be amended to ensure all key partners attend the meetings. The Group is Chaired by Chair of the Growth Hub Steering Group.

Conflicts of Interest

On joining the Growth Hub Steering Group each member is asked to complete a detailed Register of Financial and Other Interest Form and this is reviewed on an annual basis by the LEP Director with the Chair of the Growth Hub Steering Group. In addition to this, they are asked to complete a Declaration of Interest Form at the start of all meetings for any relevant agenda item. The LEP Director with the Chair of the Growth Hub Steering Group monitor any conflicts of interest in line with the LEP Conflicts of Interest Policy.

- **National and Local Integration**

- **The co-ordination of local, national, public and private business support is a core purpose of a Growth Hub; businesses want a seamless, simple customer journey to get to the help they need. Please set out what activity you have undertaken to join up your Growth Hub offer with other national business support programmes e.g. Department for International Trade; Innovate UK and the Enterprise Europe Network; Intellectual Property Office; Better Business for All and British Business Bank etc. What have been the benefits of the approach?**

National service and local providers namely, FSB, Chamber of Commerce, DIT, Intellectual Property Office (IPO), Innovate UK, Enterprise Europe Network, and ERDF funded projects are encouraged and have been holding regular clinics at our three physical hubs (free of charge) to increase the opportunity for local businesses to update their knowledge, obtain quality advice and access networking opportunities.

DIT

All three physical hubs have a regular DIT presence which has helped inform the Operational Group on emerging business issues and concerns. To improve referrals to DIT by Growth Hub staff, DIT organised two training sessions to all MGH support staff in February and March 2017. The aim of the session was to receive an update on products/services, share ideas and information to encourage companies to start exporting or to export more.

Innovate UK

We have been liaising with Innovate UK's Regional Manager to improve the information on our website in relation to their services. In addition to this, there has been several meetings with the

Regional Manager to exchange updates and plans.

Knowledge Events

Three knowledge events have been organised by MGH/LEP with the aim to help improve the knowledge of MGH business support staff. Key partners both local and national were invited to these events to increase awareness of products and services available. The three events included presentations and training from Innovate UK, IPO, University of Wolverhampton (ERDF projects) and sales training from a local private stakeholder company.

British Business Bank

The British Business Bank delivered a MEIF presentation to two out of the three Area Business Boards and the MGH Operational Group during January to March 2017. A LEP board member and the LEP Partnership Manager are part of the MEIF Oversight Board and the Growth Hub Coordinator has recently been accepted on the MEIF Regional Advisory Board.

- **Governance**
- **How have the LEPs governance arrangements aided the establishment and development of the Growth Hub? What have been the benefits of the approach?**

Please see page Inclusive Strategic Groups on Page 6.

Governance Benefits

The benefits of the governance structure are that the LEP Board can assist with the setting of strategic direction for the Growth Hub. The private sector led Board mirrors the Growth Hub boundaries and ensures that the Growth Hub is a useful tool to assist with the LEP's overall strategy for growth. The three LA's and three Area Business Boards are members of the LEP Board and therefore fully support and endorse the Growth Hub and have become key members in assisting in the delivery and success of the Growth Hub. Three LA members and a Business Board representative attend the Growth Hub Steering Group and/or Operations Group and each LA provides personnel to help operate the Hub at these physical locations. The Business Boards help to provide direct links to private businesses testing the effectiveness of the service and provide a route to publicise the service.

- **Triage and Diagnostics**
- **What type of Growth Hub delivery model/typology is being utilised e.g. physical hub; virtual; hub and spoke or other? Why have you taken this approach and what have been the benefits to the user?**
- **If the Growth Hub has a physical presence, what are the location of the Hub and where appropriate any spokes? Why have you chosen these locations?**
- **Describe your Growth Hub website functionality e.g. key content areas and tools?**
- **Have you developed any innovative online tools or localised content that might be of benefit to others e.g. diagnostic tools; rate and review systems etc? If yes, please provide details.**

- **Which national programmes/content has been integrated within your Growth Hub offer e.g. [GOV.UK \(Business Support\)](#); [GREAT.GOV \(Export Support\)](#); Better Business for All and the Business Support Helpline (access available at no cost upon request from BEIS). How is content being used, and what are the main benefits to the Hub?**
- **Does the Growth Hub employ its own business advisers/navigators or are they seconded into the hub?**
 - **How many are employed (total number of FTEs)?**
 - **Are they generalists and/or specialists e.g. sector focussed; access to finance; inward investment etc? Why have you taken this approach?**
 - **Are they accredited (e.g. SFEDI)? If yes, what have been the benefits of the approach?**
- **Where are they located?**

MGH Model

The MGH model adopted by the Marches LEP includes a 'virtual' support centre that is supported by three physical Growth Hubs.

The Virtual hub has one dedicated Helpline Manager supported by the Marches LEP Business Support Officer. Both the Helpline Manager and the Business Support Officer are based at the LEP office. The Helpline Manager has a wealth of business experience with a background in Business Banking and currently is working toward a Level 5 – Business Support Diploma. In addition to this, the Helpline Manager has recently been accepted to join the British Business Bank MEIF Regional Advisory Board.

Due to limited resources, we have worked in partnership with the three local authorities who have provided officers to support the operation of the three physical hubs. These tier 1 officers are business support/economic development generalists providing a signposting service. Most of this team are working towards a Level 5 – Business Support Diploma/Certificate. To note, we do not have an established skilled advisor team in our hubs. We have only recently recruited with ERDF a more skilled team of advisors (x7) to deliver the Building Business Confidence (BBC) Programme. This team will work across the Marches from 1 April 2017 and will have some capacity and skill sets to work with scale-up potential companies. The BBC programme was designed in 16/17 and is a mentoring scheme for both start-up and growing businesses focusing on sales, improving turnover and developing the workforce.

To ensure an efficient and effective service is delivered to our Businesses the Marches LEP has devised a Service Level Agreement (SLA) and data sharing agreement with our key delivery partners. These two documents specify that direct referrals to partners are responded to within 48 hours, data protection protocols are followed and information on the website is maintained and kept up-to-date. By creating these documents (agreed by the key partners) we aim to ensure that the service continues to be valued by our local businesses and the wider business support service network and the Marches Growth Hub is the first port of call for accurate, up-to-date and impartial information on business support.

As the Marches LEP covers a large geographical area (2300 square miles) this model (virtual and physical) ensures that businesses can easily access 24hr business support as well have opportunities to access face to face support, attend local events and have direct access to national service providers as well as European funded business support schemes.

Virtual Growth Hub

This is serviced by a business-friendly website (www.marchesgrowthhub.co.uk), a single local contact number helpline (0345 6000727) along with an email address. The service is managed by a dedicated Helpline Manager 08.45-5pm every weekday who provides general advice and a signposting service. In addition to this, the Coordinator ensures that the information on the website is maintained and kept up to date.

Website - www.marchesgrowthhub.co.uk

The website includes information and links to both local and national business support services, training and events. It has been designed with a searchable directory. Local content has been produced and a filter to the search facility has been created to help businesses pinpoint the eligible products and services.

The website is constantly evolving; developments include the creation of an Employer Skills Search Facility. This was developed by the LEP and its Skills Board (which includes business representatives, training & skills providers and universities) to help employers find the right local training for their staff. This search facility brings together in one place all the providers delivering training, skills and qualifications in the Marches for the first time. As well as detailing, more than 1000 courses on offer, it is designed with employers in mind. It offers businesses a chance to search directly for courses, training and skills adding value to their staff and their businesses. In addition to this the website homepage was revamped in time for the first-year Anniversary in October 2016.

The website is fully aligned with the Business is Great Campaign and links to content and tools on GOV.UK and GREAT.GOV. In addition to this, the website links with the national Business Support Helpline to assist with pre-start and start-up enquiries. We also live data share. Dedicated pages are provided on the site for the national business support programmes such as DIT in addition to separate directory enquiries.

Physical Growth Hubs

As well as hosting a programme of events, the three physical hubs offer a drop-in service and the opportunity to have face to face appointments. The face to face activity intervention tends to be light touch to medium intensity. Other facilities include hot desking, meeting rooms, event space, video conferencing and the opportunity to have face to face appointments with public and private sector partner organisations (for example DIT and ERDF supported schemes).

The three physical growth hub offices are situated in key towns in each local authority area i.e. Hereford, Shrewsbury and Telford & Wrekin. The MGH -Telford & Wrekin was the first to open on 21 October 2015 followed by the MGH - Herefordshire on the 17th of November 2015 and MGH - Shropshire on 7th of March 2016 with space also available within the University Centre, Shrewsbury.

The Hereford and Telford & Wrekin hub is situated within buildings operated by the University of Wolverhampton. The Chamber of Commerce is due to co-locate with the Hereford hub in May

2017. The Shropshire Hub is co-located with the Chamber of Commerce and DIT within the LA owned building on Battlefield Enterprise Park. The aim of the co-location of the physical hubs at the University sites is to improve links with graduates and the wider business community, encouraging innovation and helping universities to understand the needs of the local business community. All three physical hubs also have a regular presence from DIT.

- **Business Support Simplification**
- **How have you continued to simplify the business support landscape? What approach has been taken and what have been the benefits?**

To ensure the business landscape is not populated by duplicate products and services, the LEP officers are working with the Marches ESIF Committee to ensure that any new applications for business support funding are viewed by the Growth Hub Operational Group to ensure that they compliment current business support rather than duplicate.

- **Growth Hub Sustainability**
- **How are you ensuring that your Growth Hub is deliverable and sustainable beyond March 2018 when the current round of Government funding ends, ensuring that core services continue to remain free to business at first point of contact?**

The Marches Growth Hub financial model is relatively low cost providing a virtual hub (based in the LEP office) which is funded 100% by the BEIS annual funding, with three physical hubs, supported by both staff and financial resources by our three local authority partners and the University of Wolverhampton. The three physical hubs are located in buildings either owned or leased by the University and one Local Authority and they bear the bulk of the cost of these well-appointed facilities.

The Virtual Growth Hub was launched in October 2015 and the three physical hubs opened between October 2015 and March 2016. Our focus, in the next 12 months, will be to build on the business support services for the Marches area provided by the Marches Growth Hub and to increase/maximise the awareness of this offer and the brand within the local business community.

We feel that the brand and services of the Growth Hub are starting to embed in the local business support landscape and the benefits of these services are being acknowledged by local stakeholders and businesses alike. We now aim to investigate opportunities to seek financial support from a variety of sources, both public and private to sustain the service via the three physical hubs. We have already secured ERDF funding to deliver more face to face support via our three physical Growth Hubs and we are willing to investigate and adopt best practice from other Growth Hubs that have been operating for a longer period.

Self-sustainable options being explored include seeking core funding from our business partners, sponsorship from the business and professional services community, and potentially charging for some additional services, over and above the core offer that the Hub provides.

We will put in place over the next 6 months a sustainability plan in consultation with all key Growth

Hub stakeholders with an options analysis which will include seeking funding for the virtual hub service (to replace the BEIS funding) from the local authorities, the University and other partners. This Plan will be considered by the Growth Hub Steering Group in Sept 2017 and by the LEP Board in November 2017.

We have allocated £5k from the 2017/18 BEIS funding allocation for evaluation of the Growth Hub service to demonstrate to stakeholders the worth of the service to the business community. This will be commissioned in Summer 2017 to support us making the case to partners of the value and impact of the service.

The Marches LEP though is of the opinion that for the website and helpline to remain free at the first point of contact and that some BEIS core funding for this operation would be welcomed.

Overview of Key Achievements

C. Key Achievements. Provide information on the key achievements of your Growth Hub linked to the requirements of the 2016-2018 'Common Metrics and Evaluation Framework', providing high level overview figures (taken from bi-annual reviews and/or LOGASNET and customer satisfaction rates for the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017 and cumulatively reflecting the total impact of the Growth Hub since launch.

- **Performance Metrics**

Indicator	2016-17 Total	Growth Hub Cumulative (since launch)
Total number of businesses engaged	2779	9347
Total number of individuals (pre-starts and start-ups (trading less than one year) engaged	Virtual Hub 1/4/16 – 31/3/17 = 156 (trading length not captured)	Virtual Hub = 357 (trading length not captured)
Total number of referrals to public/private support	(Virtual Hub) 134	(Virtual Hub) 195
Total number of referrals to national programmes e.g. DiT/UKTI, Innovate UK, IPO, Start-Up Loans etc	Virtual Hub to DIT 5 (IPO & SUL signposting service only, see Executive Summary)	Virtual Hub to DIT 7 (IPO & SUL signposting service only, see Executive Summary)
Total number of businesses receiving diagnostic & brokerage support	N/A	N/A
Total number of businesses that have received intensive face to face support	25	46
Total number of individuals who have been helped to start a business	Not recorded	Not recorded
Total number of mentoring or business to business relationships created	13 Referrals to Manufacturing Growth Programme Oct 16 – March 7	Not applicable

Total number of jobs created (if applicable)	128	528
Total number of jobs safeguarded (if applicable)	Not recorded	37 (up to March 2016)
£increase in GVA (if applicable):	Not recorded	Not recorded
£Private sector match secured (if applicable):	117,874	N/A

With limited funding, resources and such a vast geographical area, we have increased social media and Comms activity to help support outreach and profile raising resulting in an increase of MGHUB service take-up. This has proven successful and is demonstrated in the figures below.

Web Statistics

	<u>Since launch (Oct 15)</u>	<u>April 2016 - March 2017</u>
Website users	17,408	13,788
Web visits	31,505	24,340
Page views	113,548	83,371
Average time spent	4.15 mins	4.07mins
Return/new visitors	45%/55%	45%/55%
Most visited pages	Calendar/About Us/Start-Up	Calendar/Start-up/About Us

Social Media

Twitter followers	1,947 (gained 433 followers since September 31 2016)
Twitter potential viral reach	3.11 million
Facebook	175, up 150% with monthly reach average 8,600
Great/Gov.UK click through	2,728 between April 2016- March 2017

Top Tweets: - access to funding and grant support secured the widest reach. A single tweet focusing on food and tourism EU grants, on March 31 2017, alone had a potential reach of 83,846 people.

Newsletters

Monthly newsletters between April 2016 and March 2017 went out to 1,700 businesses.

Campaigns

- We have delivered the six #campaigns being Get Digital, Get Started, Industrial Strategy, Manufacturing, Midlands Engine and there has been an ongoing campaign to promote Access to Funding as schemes go live such as Marches Business Investment Grant (MBIG), MIEF and EU funding calls.

Wider Comms

- News releases to support MGH campaigns as well as promotion of EU funding opportunities have been widely carried by print media across the whole of the LEP area
- Significant coverage has focused on growth projects and in relation to events held at the physical hubs.
- Key titles also carried stories on the launch of the MGH Shrewsbury in April 2016, and this was also covered BBC Radio Shropshire with a live outside broadcast from the official

opening.

- Promotional double page spreads for the MGH has appeared in both key Marches print titles, the Shropshire Star and Hereford Times, plus positive media coverage for the MGH and its events as and when released. MGH was also promoted via three columns in the glossy business magazine Shropshire Business plus a full page within the Business Direction magazine in Herefordshire.
- BBC Radio Shropshire featured an interview with Marches LEP Director Gill Hamer which discussed and promoted the information, advice and support available from the MGH.
- A series of videos, encouraging Apprenticeships was created in April 2016 to co-incide with Apprenticeship Week and has resulted in 788 views on YouTube to date.
- The MGH is regularly updated with blogs provided by both the hub team, stakeholders, and local authority partners.

Customer Satisfaction

In line with the requirements of the common 'Metrics and Evaluation Framework' for 'medium' and 'high' intensity interventions only, please also provide the tabulated responses to the satisfaction question set out below:

"How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the quality of this service?" rated on a five-point scale.

For 'light-touch' interventions, a survey approach is sufficient. Questions that could be included based on standard questions asked of customers by all Growth Hubs.

"How likely would you be to recommend this service to a friend/colleague", rated on a standard five-point scale?

Note: (1 Very Dissatisfied- very poor, 2 Somewhat Dissatisfied - poor, 3 Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied- average, 4 Somewhat Satisfied - good, 5 Very Satisfied – excellent)

Please see table on Page 15. We started to capture this information from December 2016.

Customer Satisfaction Survey Results

		Customer Satisfaction Surveys											
Month	Hub	No. sent	No. returned	How Satisfied Were You With The Service Received?, 1 being very dissatisfied, 5 being very satisfied.				In The Absence Of Growth Hub Support How Likely Are You To Undertake Same Activity?, 1 being very Likely, 5 being very					
				1	2	3	4						
December 2016	Hereford	17	17			2	6	9			3	4	10
	Telford	0	0										
	Shrewsbury	12	2					2		1		1	
	Virtual	33	4				1	3	1		1	2	
January 2017	Hereford	12	12				8	4				4	8
	Telford	9	9					9		9			
	Shrewsbury	26	19				2	17		2	2	8	7
	Virtual	43	4			1		3	1			1	2
February 2017	Hereford	18	11				7	4				9	2
	Telford	12	12					12	1	8			
	Shrewsbury	86	54			4	14	36		4	16	18	16
	Virtual	71	8		1	3		5		1	1	1	5
March 2017	Hereford	103	39	0	2	9	17	11	1	5	12	10	11
	Telford	18	18	0	0	1	5	12	0	0	0	4	14
	Shrewsbury	66	17	0	0	0	3	14	1	0	5	7	4
	Virtual	62	10	1	0	2	2	5	1	0	3	3	0

- **Evaluation**
- **How else you have measured customer satisfaction and what else have you found?**

N/A

- **How have you measured the impact you have had in terms of businesses (or individuals) acting on the help/advice they received from the Growth Hub and what have you found?**

The MGH went live on the 19th of October 2015. The focus on the first twelve months has been to launch and set-up our three physical hubs, develop referral systems and to raise awareness. The next phase of the development of the MGH is to examine the impact and therefore we have allocated £5k from the 2017/18 BEIS funding allocation for evaluation of the Growth Hub service to demonstrate to stakeholders the worth of the service to the business community. This will be commissioned in Summer 2017. The findings will be used to help support the case to partners of the value and impact of the service.

- **Any key achievements not listed above directly linked to the Growth Hub, which could include for example, overall economic impact, impact of any local programmes delivered by the Growth Hub?**

See Growth Hub achievements in Executive Summary

- **Scale-Ups**
- **Has the Growth Hub undertaken any local activity in 2016-17 to directly address the scale-up challenge? This could include:**
 - **Attending the Scale Up Institutes and Goldman Sachs “Driving Economic Growth through Scale-Up Businesses and Ecosystems Programme” Identifying and targeting scale-up businesses.**
 - **Developing a local Scale-Up Plan (and/or incorporating within LEPs Strategic Economic Plan)**
 - **Identifying growth businesses and those with the potential to scale-up?**
 - **Introduced any new local programmes aimed at scale-ups and those businesses with growth potential e.g. via ERDF or other funding streams?**

Scale-up Institute

The Marches LEP Director attended a 3-day Scale-up training course in May 2016 (Birmingham) and receives regular updates from the Scale-up Institute.

Scale-up Plan

With the input of each of the three physical Growth Hubs, we will produce a scale-up plan in

response to the challenges/opportunities. Within this plan will be appropriate targeted events (networking or educational) that will be promoted to identified scale-up businesses that we feel could potentially achieve greater levels of growth/productivity. At present, The Marches LEP is currently undertaking research to support the refresh of the Strategic Economic Plan. The findings will help support the scale-up plan which is required by BEIS in July.

Database

We are currently refining intelligence that has been made available through several business databases on the sectors and sizes of businesses that fit into the scale-up definition in the Marches. This information will be sorted by SIC code and transferred to the CRM. This will allow for targeting, support event participation and for reporting purposes.

Targeted Events

We will use tools such as the Midlands Engine Investment Fund (MEIF) to help identify and target growth/scale-up projects. To allow for this, we will work very closely the British Business Bank Fund Manager and Senior Relationship Manager. This will also include linking in with PR and marketing activity driven through the MEIF website, case studies, newsletters, press release and social media

We will also continue to work with our partners and networks to support outreach activity. This could include shared events with relevant high profile speakers.

Scale -up pilot group to support Food and Drink Manufacturing Sector

This group is supported by the Marches Growth Hub Telford & Wrekin, Enterprise Telford, University of Wolverhampton and Harper Adams University. Members of the cluster can share best practice, learn about new innovations and technology in the sector and find out about collaborative research and product development. The group has only been running for three months and if it works well, we will replicate this group for scale-ups in other priority sectors.

Local Programmes

Partner organisations have a programme of business growth products/services on offer. These products include ERDF products/services listed below as well as schemes delivered by the two DIT teams.

- Building Business Confidence Programme delivered by Good2Great
- The Manufacturing Growth Programme delivered by Economic Solutions Ltd
- Business Growth Programme delivered by Birmingham City Council.

Summary of Evaluation Activity for your Growth Hub

D. Evaluation. What type of activity has been undertaken to evaluate the wider impact of your Growth Hub? What has the evaluation told you?

- **How have you approached a more in-depth evaluation of your Growth Hub? What can you tell BEIS about the findings from the wider evaluation of your Growth Hub?**
- **What are your plans for a more formal evaluation at the end of 2017-2018?**

The MGH only went live on the 19th of October 2015. The focus on the first twelve months has been to launch and set-up our three physical hubs, develop referral systems and to raise awareness. The next phase of the development of the MGH is to examine the impact and therefore we have allocated £5k from the 2017/18 BEIS funding allocation for evaluation of the Growth Hub service to demonstrate to stakeholders the worth of the service to the business community. This will be commissioned in Summer 2017.

- **What local performance targets were set for your Growth Hub and were these**

achieve. If yes, please provide details.

We do not have any local performance targets. We now have ERDF funded project targets to report on which include business assists and jobs created so these will be reported alongside the BEIS outputs.

Lessons Learned

E. Lessons learned/good practice. What lessons have been learned from the experience of building capability and capacity within your Growth Hub? What areas of innovation and good practice can you share with BEIS and other Growth Hubs?

- **What approach has been taken to building capability and capacity within your Growth Hub? Has this approach been successful?**

Please see Section C on page 13.

- **What challenges has your Growth Hub faced and how they have these been overcome/mitigated/**

We have changed the Growth Hub Manager/Business Support Officer lead in the past 3 months so there has been a short space of time without this resource which has impacted on progress.

- **Has your Growth Hub participated in any of the BEIS partnership pilots (e.g. HMRC export data/communications; Better Business for All; British Business Bank and ICAEW or other). If yes, please provide details.**

We have participated in the BEIS HMRC export data and communications pilot. Better Business for all is currently being investigated.

Note: If you have any additional material that you think would further illustrate the typology and impact of your Growth Hub please attach these listing what you are sending with your covering email. This could include info-graphics, diagrams and flow charts or case studies.

Other information could include quotes from businesses you have assisted, any innovative activity or collaborative activity with intermediaries. Please note that this material should be a Hyperlink.