



Local Enterprise Partnership:	Marches LEP (MLEP)
Growth Hub name:	Marches Growth Hub (MGH)
Date of Completion:	Updated 16th July 2020
Name of person completing S3 form:	Yasmin Sulaman
Job Title:	Business Support Officer (Growth Hub Lead)
Contact email address:	
Deadline for return to BEIS:	19 th June 2020

SUPPLEMENTAL GROWTH HUB FUNDING TO LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIPS

SCHEDULE 3 – SUPPLEMENTAL CONDITIONS OF FUNDING (2020-2021)

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

At Budget the Chancellor announced an additional £10 million for LEPs for Growth Hubs for Financial Year 2020-21, taking the total funding envelope up to £22 million.

Supplementary Grant funding is therefore offered to support the further development of Growth Hubs aligned to the Government's commitment to ensure that businesses in every region have access to high quality free and impartial advice and guidance via Growth Hubs. In addition, it is also being awarded in recognition of the immediate pressures faced by Growth Hubs as a result of Covid-19 to support delivery of activities and solutions to alleviate immediate pressures on businesses caused by COVID-19. The Government is committed to ensuring that in the medium to long-term Growth Hubs continue to strengthen and transition in order to create a consistent and quality driven network of Growth Hubs for businesses across all regions focusing on driving business growth and productivity.

REQUIRED ACTION

For LEPs to consider the '**Supplementary Conditions of Funding**' set out below and provide responses to a number of key questions which will enable the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to develop and issue formal Supplementary Grant Offer Letters.

To note that in line with the 'Supplementary Conditions of Funding', Supplementary Grant awards will provide LEPs with revenue funding, which can only be spent on agreed Growth Hub delivery, and solutions to alleviate pressures caused by COVID-19 related activities and cannot be used to make direct Supplementary Grants to business or to pay for any activities already being paid for from your 2020-2021 Core Growth Hub Grant Funding.

Unless specified otherwise, responses should not exceed 200 words per question, but please feel free to attach any supporting documents that would be of interest to BEIS.

Completed Schedule 3 templates should be returned to _____
and _____ by no later than 19th June 2020.

SCHEDULE OF WORK

As part of the wider offer for Local Growth Deals, government is providing an additional £10m of revenue funding to LEPs in 2020-21 for Growth Hubs. This schedule of work will enable LEPs to meet the Governments 'Conditions of Funding' which are as follows:

Condition 1 – Management, governance and coordination

Growth Hub (including any sub-Hubs) under direct leadership and governance of the LEP and under oversight of the LEP Accountable Body (AB). All appropriate LEP governance, transparency and accountability arrangements are in place and aligned and compliant with the national LEP Local Growth Assurance Framework. All Growth Hub branding meets the minimum requirements set down in the Growth Hub Network Branding/Communications Guidelines and Media Toolkit.

1. What approach will the LEP and Accountable Body take to governance in 2020-21 to ensure that the Growth Hub remains under the direct leadership and governance of the LEP and its Board and under oversight of the Accountable Body? To include confirmation that all appropriate LEP governance, transparency and accountability arrangements are in place and compliant with the national LEP Local Growth Assurance Framework.

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

The MLEP Board oversees the setting of the strategic direction for the Marches Growth Hub (MGH) and receives progress updates from the Chair of the MGH Steering Group. The last MGH update was presented to the LEP Board on 24 September 2019. Shropshire Council acts as the Accountable Body.

The MGH Steering Group is a sub-group of the LEP Board and meets 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 are reviewed annually, and the election of the Chair takes place every two years. The Chair of the Steering Group is also the Small Business Champion on the MLEP Board. MGH Steering Group agendas and minutes are prepared in line with the TOR. Please note that the MGH Chair resigned from his position with immediate effect on the 26th June 2020.

The MGH Operations Group is an officer level working group which meets every two months to ensure that activities are co-ordinated effectively across the MLEP 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 Monitoring 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.

The MLEP will continue to work with the contracted PR & Marketing consultants to ensure that the MGH meets the minimum requirements as laid out in the Growth Hub Network Branding/Communications Guidelines and Media Toolkit. The MGH website will continue to be reviewed at the LEP/MGH monthly website review meetings.

2. What approach will the LEP and Accountable Body take to ensure compliance with funding requirements (e.g. high level of scrutiny of spend; quarterly claims submitted to BEIS in line with specified drawdown timeline alongside associated evidence of defrayal; timely notification to BEIS of potential underspend and provision of end of year audit report?)

The MLEP team meets with the Accountable Body (finance team) monthly to review spend against profile and to discuss any concerns, including underspend. The information from this meeting is used to update PRMC which meet every two months. As outlined in Section 1, this is a sub-group of the LEP Board.

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.

Monitoring of the expenditure and financial performance of the Growth Hub is considered at every MGH Steering Group meeting.

The cost of the MGH Audit report is included in Schedule 1 to BEIS at the beginning of the financial year and the audit team at Shropshire Council is given sufficient notice to carry out the work required. This helps ensure the year-end reporting deadline is met. To confirm, the audit service provided by Shropshire Council is a chargeable service.

3. What will the LEP and/or any external Growth Hub providers and partners do to work proactively together to leverage additional sources of public and private sector funding and other resources specifically in relation to this funding to demonstrate coordination, alignment of business and enterprise support to add value and further enhance the Growth Hub offer e.g. EU funding¹, HEFCE, Local/Combined Authority, Local Growth Fund, Business Rate Retention, Growing Places Investment Fund, private sector contributions etc.?

Other sources of funding / Resources / Other

¹ The Managing Authority for ERDF is currently reviewing existing project activity and the case for adjusting provision to meet current circumstances, in line with ESI Funds objectives. An ERDF Q&A on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) sets out the initial response to COVID-19 and introduces some flexibilities in the approach. This will be updated on a periodic basis as further information is available.

The MGH includes a virtual hub which is supported by three physical growth hubs situated in Hereford, Shrewsbury and Telford & Wrekin. The MLEP area spans 2,300 square miles, so we have established these three sites with partners to ease access to the MGH services.

Due to limited core funding and resources, we work in partnership with our three local authorities (Shropshire, Herefordshire and Telford & Wrekin), University of Wolverhampton and University Centre Shrewsbury who provide excellent facilities for meetings/workshops/drop-ins and Business Support/Economic Development staff (total of 7.5 FTE) to support the operation of the three growth hubs. These partnership contributions significantly enhance the scope and breadth of growth hub services offered. The MGH operating model is designed to maximise leverage of public and private sector funds and enable effective referrals to wider economic growth initiatives.

Local authority contributions to the MGH are estimated as below: -

- Shropshire Council –operating costs of MGH Shropshire and dedicated staff resource (estimated £130k per year);
- Telford and Wrekin Council – dedicated staff resource at MGH Telford & Wrekin (estimated £242k per year);
- Herefordshire Council – dedicated staff resource at MGH Herefordshire estimated £70k per year); and
- During Q1 in 2020, each of the three local authority Economic Development teams supported the growth hub teams in dealing with the very high level of business enquiries received as a result of COVID 19.

Our Higher Education (HE) partners contributions are estimated below:

- University of Wolverhampton provides premises, equipment and covers all rent, heat and lighting costs at Marches Growth Hub – Telford & Wrekin and Marches Growth Hub – Herefordshire – estimated to be £35K per year and
- University Centre Shrewsbury provides rooms for events and conferences – this is estimated to be £2k per year.

EU Funding

MGH SME businesses currently have access to **22** EU funded business support projects (including grants and consultancy support) with a total financial value of over **£20million**. A further **£6m** of investment in business support schemes is in the pipeline. Funding and support through the current and planned programmes will continue until June 2023 and the MGH will signpost eligible businesses to this support.

Skills Related Funding Secured by the LEP:

MLEP was successful in their bid for £75K funding from Department for Education to support the development of the analytical toolkit for Skills Advisory Panels. This will drive an evidence-based approach to business focussed skills programmes.

Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC)

Work with CEC funded Enterprise Co-ordinators will continue in order to highlight the importance of links between businesses and schools as part of careers education and guidance.

European Social Fund (ESF) funding has been allocated to the following projects:

- **IN2 Youth Support Partnership** works with young people aged 15-24 not in education, employment or training (NEET) or at risk of becoming NEET to support them into further learning or work.
- **Skills Support for the Workforce** provides training for employees in SMEs to develop their skills, improve their prospects and support the growth plans of the business. The project also supports people affected by redundancy with upskilling and reskilling.

- **Building Better Opportunities** works with disadvantaged people in Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin aged 19+ to help them overcome barriers to social and economic inclusion.
- **Building Skills and Growth Capacity** is improving the labour market relevance of education and training to support the growth of SMEs and microbusinesses.
- **Life Ready, Work Ready** engages SMEs, young people, schools and colleges to enable business and education to share information on skills that employers need.
- **Marches Centre of Manufacturing & Technology (MCMT) Skills for Growth** supports SMEs in the manufacturing and engineering sector with skills development by assessing and delivering skills solutions essential to help them grow.

Each of the ESF Project Managers has met with the MGH teams in order to encourage referrals to their schemes and to better understand issues affecting the local business community.

Growing Places Funding (Marches Investment Fund)

- £1.58m of Marches Investment Fund (MIF) has been awarded to support strategic tourism and other business initiatives affected by the floods and Covid-19 virus. The three physical growth hubs will work with their Economic Development Leads to ensure the growth hub service adds value to the support that will be delivered through the local authority recovery plans and the support that will be available through MIF and other local authority government funding. They will also work with partners to ensure activity is not duplicated and services are delivered collaboratively where possible.

4. What steps will the LEP take to ensure that in the year ahead a greater level of flexibility is built into current Growth Hub delivery model in order that it allows for provision of new (including currently un-defined) business support services to adapt and scale-up and down at pace in line with current and future national and local policy priorities? To also include ensuring that the Growth Hub remains free (at point of entry), is fully impartial and provides support to all businesses irrespective of size, sector and eligibility for individual programmes e.g. not restricted to ERDF eligible businesses.

Additional Business Adviser resource (including specialist Business Advisers) across the wider MGH team will enable in depth support for businesses as they move to economic recovery and beyond. Additional growth hub resource will allow for greater levels of flexibility to the current Growth Hub delivery model.

The MLEP is committed to providing a free of charge and independent point of contact through the MGH. Our enquiry handling capacity has been enhanced by using the National Business Support Helpline in addition to the staff in the three physical growth hubs and this model ensures that businesses are able to access free impartial advice and signposting/brokerage to potential areas of support.

MGH will remain an impartial broker and continue to work with relevant local, regional and national partners who deliver programmes and services within our area. In addition, we will continue to leverage resources to amplify the MGH and to work with Government to establish the Growth Hub as a key route to market for national and local industrial strategy delivery.

The growth hub additional funding will allow for additional resource to support the Growth Hub lead (MLEP central team) allowing the planning and management of a much larger budget (£462k instead of £205k), delivery of short-term COVID 19 recovery plans and to support the West Midland cluster model moving forward including future EU Exit activity.

Condition 2 - Data, monitoring, reporting, evaluation and value for money

Compliance with refreshed Growth Hub '**Monitoring and Evaluation Framework**' agreed between government, the What Works Centre and LEPs. Using robust monitoring and evaluation systems to exercise continuous service improvement; ensure excellence in quality delivery and deliver greater levels of impact on business growth.

The LEP must commit its Growth Hub (including any external providers) to use common metrics and evaluation approaches as set out in the new Framework. This will include provision by the LEP to BEIS of **aggregated** Growth Hub performance data on a bi-annual and end of year basis for all interventions regardless of level of intensity.

The LEP will also be expected to submit **non-aggregated** (firm level) data to BEIS on an annual (and ad-hoc) basis for all medium and high intensity diagnostics and interventions (including provision of primary unique business identifiers e.g. Companies House Registration Number or VAT/PAYE and postcode) to enable BEIS to undertake an overarching evaluation of the performance, outputs and impact of all Growth Hubs.

In addition, the LEP will be expected to produce an end of year evaluation of the impact of the Growth Hub and publish the results in an Annual Review of the Growth Hub's performance and impact which will be shared with BEIS by the **30th June 2021**.

5. What systems will be used by the LEP to ensure robust and quality driven data capture and reporting to BEIS of **non-aggregated** (firm level) data for all businesses receiving medium-intensity and high-intensity diagnostics, support and advice e.g. in each instance this must include accurate capture of Companies Registration Number or VAT/PAYE and postcode as the primary unique business identifiers. Includes the systems put in place to ensure that the Project (including elements delivered via externally contracted delivery agents/brokers) fully complies with the data collection and reporting requirements agreed with BEIS?

We have Data Sharing Agreements and Service Level Agreements in place with all Growth Hub delivery partners. These documents are currently being reviewed by the legal team and will be updated to reflect the information required for reporting purposes from the three physical hubs and external partners. KPI reports used to capture the information required will be updated accordingly for all partners to ensure we receive correct and full information in a timely manner.

The three physical growth hub leads will continue to deliver induction sessions with all externally contracted delivery agents/brokers. These sessions include data collection and reporting requirements set down in the Growth Hub Metrics & Evaluation Framework.

The importance of accurate and timely data collection will continue to be confirmed at both the MGH Steering Group and MGH Operations Group meetings. KPI data is presented at these meetings therefore any concerns can be flagged in a timely manner.

6. Please confirm the Key Performance Indicators and Quality Performance Standards that will be set by the LEP to ensure that the Growth Hub irrespective of whether it is delivered in-house by the LEP/MCA/LA or by an externally contracted provider in order that it delivers a service that is aligned with the 'Conditions of Funding' attached to this Grant and in order that all Growth Hubs provide a consistent assured and quality driven service to all businesses irrespective of size or sector?

MLEP and MGH will comply with the requirements of the Metrics & Evaluation Framework.

Local MGH arrangements are supported through Service Level Agreements with key partners.

MGH currently and will continue to record the following activities:

- Enquiries (broken down by local authority area, trading status and source)
- Referrals to partner projects (in line with Service Level Agreement)
- No of events and attendees (broken down by subject and local authority area)
- Customer satisfaction.

The MGH Steering Group and MGH Operations Group review these KPIs at each meeting.

Key Performance Indicators:

- KPI 1. Number of unique businesses receiving high intensity support (12 hr) – 77 (based on the 4 days support model detailed in Schedule 1)
- KPI 2. Number of businesses referred to a finance and/or funding programme – 38

7. What approach will the LEP take to ensure that the performance and impact of the Growth Hub is robustly measured and evaluated? Including key areas such as:
- delivery metrics, business needs including specific **COVID-19**-related needs;
 - reach and impact of support provided to businesses during and beyond **COVID-19**;
 - value for money and short, medium and longitudinal impact on business resilience, growth and productivity?

Marches LEP and MGH will continue to collect and comply with the requirements of the Metrics & Evaluation Framework. This will help measure growth hub service impact.

Local MGH arrangements are supported through Service Level Agreements with key partners.

MGH currently and will continue to record the following activities:

- Enquiries (broken down by local authority area, trading status and source)
- Referrals to partner projects (in line with Service Level Agreement)
- No of events and attendees (broken down by subject and local authority area)
- Customer satisfaction.

The MGH Steering Group and MGH Operations Group review both KPIs and value for money at each meeting.

As part of the 2018/19 and 2019/20 evaluation, the MGH commissioned three impact case studies to help demonstrate value for money and short, medium and longitudinal impact on business growth.

Specifically, in relation to **COVID-19** and the collection of business data and intelligence, what approach will the LEP via its Growth Hub take to:

1. Link up with other parts of the public and private sector to ensure businesses receive the right advice and support to respond and recover from **COVID-19**?
2. Prepare case studies of any businesses that are negatively or positively impacted?
3. Work with local partners and wider network to understand business and the questions they have and provide a central co-ordination point to feed back into government?

4. Produce a weekly (with flexibility to move to daily) situation reports coverings the themes that relate to overall impact / contact, macro economy/developments, local business intelligence and case study examples of businesses and key sectors at risk.
5. Identifying and report sub-sectors that are experiencing growth or a temporary spike in demand e.g. personal protective equipment (PPE) and ventilators.
6. Government websites (e.g. GOV.UK) will be the primary place where information and guidance relating to public health and government business support schemes will be published. How will the LEP via its Growth Hub ensure that businesses in their local area are updated on the latest government information and advice on **COVID-19** on their website, for example via RSS feeds from the government sites, alongside any other locally developed and funded support packages, programmes and sources of finance?
7. How with the LEP via its Growth Hub also work in partnership with Mayoral Combined Authorities/Local Authorities and other partners promote via their platforms and channels to engage for example hard to reach businesses and those operating in rural areas?
8. Work in partnership with government and Cluster leads to facilitate delivery of co-ordinated one to many webinars for businesses, for example "Cashflow Management" etc.

1. Partnership working will continue to be encouraged through the MGH governance and meeting structures, i.e. through the MGH Operations Group (two monthly), MGH Steering Group (quarterly) and MGH Campaign (quarterly) meetings. These continue the sharing of good practice and will ensure businesses receive the right advice and support (public and private sector) to respond and recover from COVID-19. The additional funding will help support the much-needed additional business advisers/specialist advisers to deliver 121 in-depth support. Additional support will be provided through the MGH events programme which is currently being delivered on-line.
2. MGH PR/Marketing consultants will continue to prepare and promote business case studies (both negatively or positively impacted by COVID 19).
3. Both the MLEP and MGH will continue to work with local partners and the wider network to understand business concerns and needs. Feedback is currently being reporting weekly to BEIS by the MGH via the MLEP. Since 6 April 2020, the LEP Chair has hosted virtual meetings once every 2 weeks (moving to monthly from June) with local partners including the NFU, FSB, British Business Bank and two Chambers of Commerce, Business Board Chairs and Private Sector Board members to hear about the support their respective business groupings were seeking from the government and whether the government business support is right and reaching the businesses. More recently the feedback has been about how businesses are responding to the government's recovery and social distancing guidance. The MLEP Chair has fed this information up every 2 weeks into the West Midlands Group of LEP Chairs which then informs the 2 weekly LEP network meetings held with Ministers and senior civil servants from MHCLG and BEIS. The LEP Chair has also been providing regular written reports on the issues impacting on the economy to the Marches MPs including the outcome of LEP Survey. At the recent May MLEP meeting there was a facilitated discussion on Economic Recovery Planning. Findings from all the above activity will be shared with government to help inform future business support policy.
4. Additional funding will help support extra resource within the LEP team. This support will enable the continuous production of a weekly (with flexibility to move to daily) situation reports coverings the themes that relate to overall impact/contact, macro economy/developments, local business intelligence and case study examples of businesses and key sectors at risk.
5. Through discussions detailed in answer 3, the MLEP will be able to identify and report on sub-sectors that are experiencing growth or a temporary spike in demand e.g. personal protective equipment (PPE) and ventilators. This information will also be collected and reported by the 3 physical growth hubs and additional business adviser team.
6. The MGH COVID 19 information page and toolkit for businesses was developed in March 2020 and this continues to be updated in-line with all government announcements. The page also included links to GOV.UK, local authority and partner information/support. This page will continue to be supplemented with social media content as well as dedicated COVID 19 newsletters. A link to the page can be found here: <https://www.marchesgrowthhub.co.uk/advice-and-support/coronavirus->

[information-for-businesses/](#). The MGH COVID 19 information page and toolkit sits within the MGH website which promotes national, regional and local business support including Access to Finance.

7. All MGH social media updates (includes cabinet office information links) will continue to be shared across Marches LEP, Hereford Enterprise Zone channels as well as MGH partners including local authority partners. The MGH teams work very closely with other local authority departments (Business rates, town clerks, libraries, industrial site groups etc) all of which help reach rural businesses and stimulate MGH interest/signposting and referrals.
8. The Growth Hub Lead will continue to work with and support the work of West Midlands Cluster. Careful planning will be required with regards to one to many webinars for businesses, to ensure that there is no duplication locally.

Condition 3 - Strategic Partnerships and Business Support Simplification

In response to the NAO report on business support schemes (January 2020), engaging with government reform of business support - including development of a national new digital offer and driving up standards and consistency across all English regions. Alongside building and strengthening relationships with the key local players across the Public and Private sectors and National providers such as Innovate UK (IUK), Department for International Trade (DiT), the British Business Bank, investors, Universities and others to exploit opportunities for collaboration and to further join up and simplify the local business support ecosystem.

8. What approach will the LEP take, via the Growth Hub, to continue to develop strong, inclusive partnerships with all of the local and national players (public and private) involved in the ongoing development and delivery of the Growth Hub? Including, improving visibility and coherence to businesses, by aligning services (including wider government regional offers) under a common model and further developing the Growth Hub cluster model.

MGH Model

The MGH partnership model includes a virtual growth hub and website www.marchesgrowthhub.co.uk that is supported by three physical growth hubs situated in Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and Herefordshire. Since July 2018, virtual hub telephone enquiries have been handled by the National Business Support Helpline. The MGH supports individuals and businesses by linking them to national, regional and local support including: -

- GOV.UK
- Department for International Trade (DIT);
- Intellectual Property Office (IPO)
- UK Research and Innovation (UKRI);
- LA Economic Development teams and
- A portfolio of European Union (EU) funded programmes delivered by partners.

Due to the limited core funding and resources, the three local authorities, University of Wolverhampton (UoW) and University Centre Shrewsbury provide facilities and Business Support/Economic Development staff to support the operation of the three physical growth hubs. The MGH partnership model operates with significant input from the aforementioned partners.

In addition to our up-to-date user-friendly website (which is being upgraded and re-designed during 2020), we deliver a high level of social media activity via 3 platforms (Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn) to help raise the awareness of the MGH service. 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 PR/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.

The MLEP team via the MGH will continue to develop strong partnerships with all local and national players (public & private). The two monthly MGH Operations Group meeting, helps maintain and further develop the excellent working relationship between the staff at the virtual hub, three LA's and university partners that manage the three physical hubs. The meeting also helps support and develop engagement with key national business support providers and local delivery partners (both public and private). Previous agenda items have allowed for discussions around the Governance, Brexit, and Scale-up activity.

MGH Operations Group

This 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. It reviews business support services from all partners in order to manage referrals, monitor outputs and share information. Its membership includes:

Local Partners:

- Herefordshire Council
- Shropshire Council
- Telford and Wrekin Council
- Shropshire Council (European Regional Development Fund Technical Assistance Officer)
- University of Wolverhampton
- Marches LEP
- PR/Marketing consultant

National:

- Department for International Trade
- Economic Growth Solutions (Deliver Manufacturing Growth Programme and work across 15 LEP areas)
- British Business Bank

The FSB, two Chambers of Commerce, DIT, IPO, UKRI and local EU funded projects are encouraged to hold events and regular clinics at each of the three physical hubs (free of charge). This increases the opportunity for local businesses to update their knowledge, obtain quality advice and access networking opportunities. This activity is now being delivered on-line.

The Growth Hub Lead will continue to support the West Midlands Cluster model and the activity that will be delivered through the allocated £80k.

Condition 4 - Triage, diagnostic and brokerage

Proactively engage and support all businesses (particularly SMEs) to take up external advice including that provided by the private sector. Providing access to a free (at point of access) and impartial joined up local 'single point of contact' and in the medium to long term prioritising those businesses with the opportunity, ambition and greatest potential to grow.

9. Please confirm the LEPs agreement to fully align its Growth Hub and any sub-Hubs (by association) with any new national business support brand that may follow? This requirement will apply to all Growth Hubs whether they are delivered in-house by the LEP/MCA/LA or via external providers under contract to the LEP where funded fully/in-part by BEIS.

The MLEP agrees to fully align the MGH with any new national business support brand that may follow.

10. What steps will the LEP take via its Growth Hub during the year ahead to:

1. Drive up demand and engage more businesses per annum, in particular those with high growth potential (including whether high or low productivity)?
2. Make best use of available national and local data sets to identify and target those businesses with the opportunity, ambition and greatest potential to grow?
3. Work with the PBS sector to increase access to local specialist advice and support? Including for example, expanding and simplifying access for businesses specialist advice from the pool of Legal and Professional sector partners (HR, Accountants, legal, financial and insolvency practitioners) offering pro-bono advice, webinars and deeper support developing mechanisms to connect clients and providers and filling gaps.

1. MGH PR/Marketing activity (funded through the growth hub core budget) will help drive up demand and engage with more businesses, in particular those with high growth potential. This will be done through website content, monthly MGH e-newsletters, social media, through e-marketing campaigns and advertorials. Further funding from the additional funds will be allocated around sponsored social media. Draft 2020/21 PR/Marketing Comms framework is attached and provides more information. This is a working document and will continue to be



11 MGH draft
comms plan 202021

updated in-line with new government, public and private sector support.

2. Both the MLEP and MGH teams have access to FAME (MGH core funding support this) and Scaleup Institute information to help monitor and identify business with the opportunity, ambition and greatest potential to grow. The growth hubs are encouraged to use national and local data wherever possible to help further develop their scale-up plans.
3. The MGH will continue to link into the PBS sector through the Professionals Partnership in Shropshire and Telford which is supported by the Shropshire Chamber of Commerce. MGH Herefordshire links into a similar network in Herefordshire through events and business clinics run by accountancy and finance professionals. Collaborative working will continue to be explored.

11. In the short term, how will the LEP via its Growth Hub harness flexible resources to prioritise businesses affected by COVID-19? This could include for example:

- a. Refocusing any existing Account Managers/Advisors, Brokers and Sector Specialists to focus on the response and boost local capacity?
- b. Seconding in staff from the LEP, Economic Development/Skill Teams in MCA/LAs?
- c. Harnessing of Careers Enterprise Advisors or other local Advisers?
- d. Seconding in from private sector, recruiting new staff and procuring suppliers which may be required where Growth Hubs have resource locked into ERDF programmes?

- a. The 3 physical growth hubs teams will look to increase their business adviser capacity by commissioning Business Adviser and Sector Specialists. Additional funding will be used to support this.
- b. Since March 2020, the growth hubs have been supported by their wider Economic Development teams. This support is still in place and may be enhanced to strengthen account management and signposting to relevant support through the growth hub.
- c. The MGH will continue to work with MLEP Careers Enterprise coordinators and is seeking additional resource to strengthen link between schools and businesses.
- d. MLEP will be looking to recruit temporary resource to support the central LEP Growth Hub team. The three physical growth hubs will be allocated some funding to commission additional resource that will help support/strengthen business engagement, account management, aftercare and the collection and reporting of data and intelligence to inform future support needs. This will also help free up growth hub team time so they can support

more businesses resulting in increased business engagement. If any of the hubs choose not to use the allocation for additional resource support, then there will be flexibility to use the allocation towards costs relating to business events/workshops/seminars not funded through the core growth hub budget.

12. How will the LEP via its Growth Hub respond to business already in crisis or at risk during COVID-19? Including increasing Growth Hubs visibility as the 'go-to' local contact point, and proactively reaching out to customers digitally and through existing business Advisors, Navigators, Account Managers and Sector Specialist to help reduce the pressure on partners such as LAs managing Business Relief Grants. This should include for example:

1. Engaging businesses via existing CRMs/other databases to identify the effect of the current crisis and what help might be needed to address their individual challenges, digitally, through business advisors and organised local campaigns.
2. Handling local enquires from businesses irrespective of size and sector that are seeking information and guidance on government support measures and ensure that local support is easily accessible (e.g. Growth Hub main numbers diverted to alternative numbers and mobile phones) and access to Growth Hub services extended and accessible outside of typical working hours e.g. evening and weekends.
3. Providing support and brokering businesses into other sources of specialist support and advice (e.g. that offered by the private sector) who will be best placed to help with legal issues, HR, accounting, finance or insolvency etc.

1. The 3 physical growth hub teams have CRM systems that track individual and business enquiries. The CRM systems are being used to reconnect with businesses to offer more in-depth advice and support. MGH pro-actively engages with businesses via its Business Support newsletter and social media channels on Twitter, Linked in and Facebook. In March 2020, the newsletter had a total of 2043 business contacts. In addition, e-shots were sent by the three local hubs to a total of 9,900 business contacts (March 2020 data).
2. COVID 19 enquiries from individuals and businesses (irrespective of size and sector) that are seeking information and guidance on government support measures are received via the virtual hub enquiries inbox and via the 3 physical growth hub enquiry inboxes. In addition to this, the 3 local authority partners have set up specific COVID 19 support e-mail enquiry inboxes. The NBSH freephone is clearly promoted on the MGH website and through partner comms. Since March 2020, the 3 physical hubs have been supported fully by their wide economic development teams and this support remains in place for the time being. MGH events have moved on-line and are being very well received. National, regional and local partner events are also promoted on the MGH website. Business Adviser 121 sessions are being delivered on-line and will continue until further notice.
3. The 3 physical growth hubs will source specialist support and advice offered by the private sector to help with legal issues, HR, accounting, finance or insolvency etc. Some of the physical hubs are already delivering business 121 programmes – offering businesses a 121 session with business specialists. During these sessions, businesses can evaluate their current position and seek support to help move their business forward. Themes include data protection and cyber security; HR; business finance & growth and sales. A number of the business specialists at present are giving up their time FREE of charge to support this initiative. I attach the draft 2020/21 MGH PR/Marketing



11 MGH draft
comms plan 202021

Comms framework which includes MGH planned events.

13. Please set out below any other local innovative approaches that the LEP and/or Growth Hub is taking or plans to take to support businesses through and beyond COVID-19. BEIS are

particularly interested in hearing about any initiatives or best practice at both the LEP, / Northern Powerhouse / Midlands Engine / Ox-Cam ARC / Western Gateway and Growth Hub Cluster level that can be shared across the wider network and help inform future business support policy thinking (to be discussed and agreed with BEIS on a case by case basis).

This feeds into capacity building to support delivery of Government policy priorities (including supporting a cross-government approach to economic shocks) and act as a stepping-stone towards strengthening the business support landscape through the Spending Review period.

Since 6 April 2020 the MLEP Chair has hosted virtual meetings once every 2 weeks with local partners including the NFU, FSB, British Business Bank and two Chambers of Commerce, Business Board Chairs and Private Sector Board members to hear about the support their respective business groupings were seeking from the government and whether the government business support is right and reaching the businesses. More recently the feedback has been about how businesses are responding to the government's recovery and social distancing guidance. The MLEP Chair has fed this information up every 2 weeks into the West Midlands Group of LEP Chairs which then informs the 2 weekly LEP network meetings held with Ministers and senior civil servants from MHCLG and BEIS. The LEP Chair has also been providing regular written reports on the issues impacting on the economy to the Marches MPs including the outcome of LEP Survey.

In all cases, at present, the discussions are focussed around recovery. At the recent May MLEP meeting there was a facilitated discussion on Economic Recovery Planning. Findings from all the above activity will help inform future business support policy.

Condition 5 - Support for ambitious and High Growth Businesses (Scale-Ups)

Make best use of available National and local data sets to identify and target those businesses with the opportunity, ambition and greatest potential to grow. Develop deep relationships with Public and Private Sector providers and use these to curate impactful interventions (including those offered by Universities, export, access to finance and Innovation support and Private Sector programmes).

14. What plans does the LEP have in place through its Growth Hub to provide intensive, sustained engagement with high-potential firms to drive their growth?

Additional funding will allow the three physical growth hubs to commission additional accredited Business Advisers and Specialist Advisors to provide intensive 121 business growth support/sustained engagement with high potential businesses firms. Support will include signposting to relevant EU programmes which offer longer term support.

15. In the medium to long-term how will the Growth Hub provide access to an increased number of commercially experienced and accredited Account Managers, Senior Account Managers and Sector Specialists? Specifically, to identify, engage and maintain long-term relationships (not limited to 12 hours) and assisting with multiple interventions over time (incl via specialist

support programmes) to help business to become more resilient, grow and increase productivity. To include for example, business planning, accessing finance, innovation and IP protection; exporting; reducing carbon footprints, the adoption of management best practice and use of technology.

Additional funding will allow the three physical growth hubs to commission additional experienced Business Advisers and Specialist advisors to provide intensive 121 business support/sustained engagement to help businesses to become more resilient, grow and increase productivity.

The additional business adviser resource will also help increase signposting and referrals to national, regional and local support including DIT, UKRI and EU programmes.

Specialist advisors will be commissioned in specific areas identified in LA recovery plans and MLEP Local Industrial Strategy (which is being updated as an economic recovery plan). Specialist support could include support in the following areas: Legal, HR, Finance (including accountancy and accessing the different types of finance), digital (supporting businesses get on-line) and Sales and Marketing experts to help businesses look at new ways to reach customers/markets, streamline processes, support effectiveness of sales and help diversify offerings.