

<b>Minutes of Marches Growth Hub (MGH) Steering Group 10<sup>th</sup> December 2020</b>
---

<b>Present</b>		
Gill Hamer	GH	Marches LEP Chief Executive
Yasmin Sulaman	YS	Marches LEP Business Support Lead
Steve Kenny	SK	Marches LEP Admin Officer
Frank Myers MBE	FM	LEP Board Member, Chair of Herefordshire Business Board – Director MCP Systems Consultants Ltd
Kathy Mulholland	KM	Telford and Wrekin Council - Inward Investment and Business Support Service Delivery Manager
Emma Chapman	EC	Shropshire Council - Marches Growth Hub Shropshire
Richard Nicklin	RN	University of Wolverhampton - Business Engagement Deputy Director
Steve Havins	SH	Department for International Trade - Head of Business Development and Partnerships
Colin Preece	CP	Marches Skills Provider Network - Executive Officer
Richard Sheehan	RS	Shropshire Chamber of Commerce – Chief Executive
Maisy Owen	MO	Chamber Member - Chair of Members Committee, Director MO Management Consultancy Ltd
Hollie Whittles	HW	Federation of Small Businesses - Area Lead Shropshire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire and Director FragglesWorks
Amy Bould	AB	Marches LEP PR and Marketing - Director Be Bold Media Ltd
Michelle Sillence	MS	WEAREUMi - Information and Relationship Manager
<b>Apologies:</b>		
Kathryn Jones - Marches LEP Partnership Manager		
Sharon Smith – Herefordshire & Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce, Chief Executive		
Matt Potts – Shropshire Council, Business Growth and Inward Investment Manager		
Beth Heath – Shropshire Business Board Representative, Director Shropshire Festivals, Director Shropshire Think Tank		
<b>Not Present:</b>		
Oliver Hindle – Marches Are Lead – Cities and Local Growth Unit, BEIS		
Nick Webster – Herefordshire Council - Economic Development Manager		
ITEM		ACTION
<b>1.</b>	<b>Welcome and Introductions</b> YS welcomed members and guest speaker MS.	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Declarations of Member Interest</b> YS thanked RS and HW for their Declaration of Interest form. No further conflicts were declared. YS asked for hands to be raised if any conflicts should arise during the meeting.	

3.	<p><b>Guest Speaker</b> MS delivered an informative presentation on the inbound Business Support Helpline (BSH) service and took the group through Marches data covering period 01 April to date (December). This was followed by questions from the group.</p> <p>MS confirmed that agreements between BEIS/WearUMi and LEPs are still not in place. Templates are due to be shared in January. Until then, the BSH are unable to share customer contact details with LEPs. In the meantime, the BSH team are sharing local growth hub details with customers.</p> <p>YS confirmed that in general, pre-start to start-up conversions are captured by growth hubs teams and reported to BEIS 6 monthly.</p> <p>AB to e-mail MS to access a breakdown of intel covering November.</p>	AB
4.	<p><b>Attendance update</b> Members approved the report.</p>	
5.	<p><b>Minutes of the last meeting and actions 03/09/2020</b> Members approved the draft minutes. Actions were reported as being complete with one action being covered under Item 7 (heatmapping of engagement).</p>	
6.	<p><b>LEP Update</b> GH provided the following update: -</p> <p><b>General Update</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministers are grateful of and value the weekly intelligence reports from LEPs/Growth Hubs and Growth Hubs are being recognised for their work;</li> <li>• Additional 2020/21 funding is short-term which needs to be defrayed by March 2021;</li> <li>• Spending Review – LEPS and Growth Hubs to receive 2021/22 funding. No details of amounts as yet so unable to start planning.</li> <li>• PR &amp; Marketing contract is due for renewal at the end of March 2021;</li> <li>• No news on replacement EU Funding; and</li> <li>• Pressure on Local authority partners to deliver COVID 19 funding.</li> </ul> <p><b>MGH Chair Update</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four candidates to be interviewed on the 5th of January. Panel will include GH, KJ, YS and LEP Board Member Sara Williams.</li> </ul> <p>YS provided the following update: -</p> <p><b>Marches Small Business Recovery Grant</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• YS took the group through the timeline and progress to date. 389 applications have been received across the Marches. Applications to the Wider economy are closed whilst Visitor Economy applications remain open.</li> </ul> <p><b>Peer Network Programme</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tender submissions were reviewed on the 5<sup>th</sup> of November and interviews were carried out on the 17<sup>th</sup> of November. There are concerns amongst the LEP network around the limited timescale to deliver this programme. Progress to be shared at the next meeting.</li> </ul> <p><b>Additional Resources via DIT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• John Wigley, Export Academy Advisor (previously known as Channel Manager) and David Caine, Marches LEP Food and Drink Cluster Lead. Both are actively working with the LEP and growth hub teams. SH added that David delivered his first webinar event on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December with 40 attendees.</li> </ul>	KJ

	<p><b>Appointments at the Marches LEP</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eden Ihle-Vance joined the LEP team on 16 November as the new Careers Hub Lead under the Careers and Enterprise Company project. <a href="https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/">https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/</a>.</li> </ul> <p><b>Growth Hub Network Evaluation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BEIS have commission Technopolis to conduct an independent evaluation of the growth hub network. YS to attend the first workshop on the 17<sup>th</sup> of December.</li> </ul> <p><b>EU Transition Growth hub Funding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BEIS have secured £6.4m for LEPS to support EU Transition activity during 1 November 2020 to 31 March 2021.</li> <li>• Marches LEP have been allocated £136,050.00. Grant offer letter and finer details are yet to be received.</li> <li>• Following consultation with our three local authority partners, it has been agreed to deliver this activity through the West Midlands Growth Hub Cluster. This approach will help support project management, procurement, data reporting and economies of scale.</li> <li>• The project is currently being developed by the Cluster.</li> <li>• All activity will blend with local support and signposting/referrals will be made to partners and growth hub teams. Discussions have already taken place between the cluster lead and SH.</li> <li>• Tender opportunities will be promoted on the MGH and LEP website.</li> </ul>	
7.	<p><b>MGH Update</b> YS provided the following update: -</p> <p><b>2019/20 Contract</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year-end report has been approved without any queries. Links to the reports were shared with the group on 15<sup>th</sup> of September.</li> </ul> <p><b>2020/21 Contract</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bi-Annual reports (core and additional funding) – Core funding report was submitted to BEIS on 15<sup>th</sup> October. No queries to date. Additional funding report was submitted on 27<sup>th</sup> November. Both reports will be reviewed together by BEIS in due course. Reports to be shared once approved.</li> <li>• Spend Position (core funding) – Starting to catch-up on slippage. Overhead costs remain low due to on-going virtual meetings. No Q2 claim received from MGH Herefordshire due to growth hub supporting LA discretionary grant delivery. Growth hubs have been asked to feedback on any spend concerns.</li> <li>• Spend position (additional funding). Q2 growth hub spend part shown in Q3. Interim claims paid in November and therefore not shown in the report. No spend to date from MGH Herefordshire. During Q2, 7 new advisers were in place delivering 121 advice. In Q3 &amp; Q4 the MGH will have access to 44 advisers across the Marches. Be Bold promoting the support on offer and encouraging contact which will help build a pipeline for MGH Herefordshire. MGH Herefordshire Invitation to tender is live at present for 4 business advisers.</li> <li>• KPI Data – The standard reports have been amended to compare the period in question against the previous year. YS took the group through August and September data and referred members to the executive summary reports provided by the growth hub teams.</li> <li>• EC provided an update on MGH Shropshire including enquiry levels/types, start-up trend and also touched on the new Marches Step-up Programme.</li> <li>• Engagement Heatmap – in response to a request at the last meeting, a heatmap report was shared detailing growth hub medium and high interactions across the Marches. This information is reported to BEIS 6 monthly.</li> </ul>	YS

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>West Midlands Cluster – Weekly conference calls continue. Telemarketing report looking at Marches COVID 19 impact was shared with members on the 25th of November. West Midland Business Trends Survey is being promoted on the MGH website. Q2 report has already been shared with members.</li> <li>MGH website upgrade &amp; re-design - Test site link was shared with growth hubs and Be Bold for feedback followed by a Teams session with Source on 18th November. Harvesting and transferring of information currently in progress. Once this has been done, further auditing will take place.</li> </ul>	
<b>8.</b>	<p><b>MGH Steering Group Review Update</b></p> <p>YS provided the following update: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4<sup>th</sup> August update from BEIS is that they are issuing a GDPR-compliant MOU and Data Sharing Agreement template for BSH/BEIS and LEPs. Templates have not been received to date. Local agreements will be updated once this exercise has been completed.</li> </ul>	<b>YS</b>
<b>9.</b>	<p><b>Marketing and Social Media / Google Analytics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AB provided an informative update on activity and themes delivered during August and September. AB also touched on Business Recovery week data and took the group through the forward plan around EU Transition.</li> </ul>	
<b>10</b>	<p><b>Any other Business</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CP raised concerns with the Marches skills portal and missing information CP went on to share details on the MSPN course finder tool . YS aware that this has already been flagged by Clair Schafer with the LEP Skills Lead, Aggie. YS to flag with Aggie.</li> <li>There was no other business.</li> </ul>	<b>YS</b>