



Department for  
Business, Energy  
& Industrial Strategy

<b>Local Enterprise Partnership:</b>	Marches LEP
<b>Growth Hub name:</b>	Marches Growth Hub
<b>Date of Completion:</b>	22 April 2021
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<b>Deadline for return to BEIS:</b>	<b>Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021</b>

## **GROWTH HUB FUNDING TO LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIPS (LEPs)**

### **SCHEDULE 3 – CONDITIONS OF CORE FUNDING (2021-2022)**

#### **NON-CLUSTER LEADS**

#### **STRATEGIC CONTEXT**

The Government recognises that local economies are reliant on strong businesses to provide sustainable private sector-led growth and job creation. Growth Hubs (led and governed by LEPs) continue to be a central instrument in achieving this goal. It is for this reason that the Government has sought to ensure that all businesses in every region have access to a local Growth Hub.

The Government is committed to ensuring that the Growth Hubs continue to strengthen and evolve in order to create and maintain a consistent and quality-driven network of Growth Hubs for businesses across all English regions, focusing on driving business growth and productivity. We want Growth Hubs to carry on building their reach, developing peer-to-peer networks, connecting businesses to the best support available from the private and public sectors, and to target support on those businesses with the opportunity, ambition and greatest potential to grow.

Growth Hubs also have a key role to play in the levelling-up agenda and in economic recovery, supporting those wishing to start and scale-up their businesses and to leverage the opportunities of Net Zero and new international trading arrangements. At the same time Growth Hubs will continue to use their unique position in the local business ecosystem to gather on the ground business and economic intelligence to support local and national service provision, and feed in to ongoing policy development.

The following 'conditions of funding', therefore reflect these ambitions whilst also acknowledging the Government's commitment to greater devolution of the tools of economic growth and productivity to local areas.

Through these 'conditions of funding' Government will continue to seek to ensure that all Growth Hubs across England offer a consistent, quality and output driven service to business and ensure that core Growth Hub services are prioritised on those activities with the greatest impact on business growth, supporting delivery of Government and local strategies. This will also provide LEPs with the freedom and flexibility needed to develop new and innovative local business support solutions around a core offer, and allow for collaboration and cross border working including working innovatively with Cluster Leads and members.

In addition to a continuation of funding resources for every Growth Hub we will continue to invest in the development and delivery of the Growth Hub Cluster model, which we believe has helped to ensure that good practice is shared and implemented more widely, engenders closer collaboration between Growth Hubs, and has become a highly valued channel to disseminate and receive information.

In 2020/21 the funding allocated to the Growth Hub Network comprised £12m of Core funding and £10m of Supplementary funding. However for 2021/22, these two separate streams have been combined into a single core funding allocation of £22m.

## **REQUIRED ACTION**

For LEPs to consider the '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 grant offer letters.

To note that as in previous years, grant awards will provide LEPs with revenue funding, which can only be spent on core Growth Hub delivery and development activities and cannot be used to make direct grants to business.

Responses should ideally not exceed 300 words per question, but please feel free to attach any supporting documents that would be of interest to BEIS e.g. organisational charts, presentations, evaluation reports etc.

Completed templates should be returned to [Growth.Hubs@beis.gov.uk](mailto:Growth.Hubs@beis.gov.uk) and [Karen.Hopwood@beis.gov.uk](mailto:Karen.Hopwood@beis.gov.uk) by no later than **Noon on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021**.

## SCHEDULE OF WORK

Government is providing revenue funding to LEPs in 2021-22 for delivery of 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**

The Growth Hub (including any sub-hubs) remains under the 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 2021-22 to ensure that the Growth Hub remains under the direct leadership and governance of the LEP 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. Note: details on the Growth Hub delivery model are requested under Condition 4.

The Marches LEP 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 Marches LEP Board oversees the setting of the strategic direction for the Marches Growth Hub (MGH) and receives progress updates from the Chair of the Marches Business Support (MBS) Steering Group. Shropshire Council acts as the Accountable Body.

The MBS Steering Group is a sub-group of the LEP Board and meets quarterly. On joining the group, each member (excluding local authority partners) is 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) and Chair of the MBS Steering Group 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, partnership working, objectives, budgetary control, marketing strategy and resource allocation.

The MGH governance is outlined in the Accountability & Assurance Framework [Accountability-and-Assurance-Framework](#) including the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the group. [TOR](#)

The TOR are reviewed annually with the last review taking place in April 2021. The TOR have been refocussed to reflect current economic conditions and changes to the funding landscape.

The election of the Chair takes place every two years. Following open advertisement, a new private sector Chair was appointed in January 2021 [MBS Chair](#). The Chair of the MBS Steering Group is also the Marches LEP Small Business Champion. MBS Steering Group agendas and minutes are prepared in line with the TOR.

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 LEP 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 Marches LEP 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 four 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.

2. Which local stakeholders, partners and businesses will be involved in the governance of the Growth Hub in 2021-22 and how will any potential conflicts of interest be managed? Please attach a diagram illustrating the structure where available.

The MBS Steering Group meets on a quarterly basis. The group has a very important role to play with regards to governance and provides guidance on key issues such as policy, partnership working, objectives, budgetary control, marketing strategy and resource allocation.

Following open recruitment, a new private sector Chair was appointed in January 2021. The MBS Steering Group TOR was reviewed and updated in April 2021 to enable a more strategic view of business support and changing funding landscape.

Each member (excluding Local Authority partners) is required to complete the Register of Members' Interest Form on joining the group and this is reviewed on an annual basis by the LEP CEO and Chair of the MBS Steering Group in line with the LEP Conflicts of Interest Policy. In addition to this, the group are asked to complete a Declaration of Interest form should there be any conflicts in relation to the agenda for each meeting. The completed form is presented to the Chair at the beginning of the meeting.

The MBS Steering Group Membership comprises:

- Chair (private and nominated small business champion)
- Access to Finance Representative – (private and Marches LEP Board Member)
- Herefordshire Business Board Representative (private)
- Shropshire Business Board Representative (public)
- Telford & Wrekin Business Board Representative (private)
- Shropshire Chamber of Commerce (private)
- Herefordshire & Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce (private)
- Federation of Small Business (private)
- Marches Skills Provider Networks (private)
- Department for International Trade (public)
- University of Wolverhampton (public)

- Telford & Wrekin Council (public)
- Herefordshire Council (public)
- Shropshire Council (public)
- Marches LEP (private)
- PR/Marketing consultant (private)

In attendance: - Cities and Local Growth Unit team member

#### 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
- University of Wolverhampton
- Marches LEP
- PR/Marketing consultant

#### National:

- Department for International Trade
- Economic Growth Solutions (Deliver Manufacturing Growth Programme)
- British Business Bank

This [link](#) sets out how the MBS Steering Group reports into the Marches LEP Board, the reporting structure plus the area's three Business Boards. The Business Boards help to provide direct links to private businesses testing the effectiveness of the service, provide a route to publicise the service and enable the LEP to gather intelligence from the business community.

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

The Marches LEP 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 MBS Steering Group meeting.

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.

4. What approach will the LEP take to ensure management and key delivery roles are appropriately resourced to ensure that the Growth Hub has the capacity and capability to deliver its contracted objectives, business outputs and intended impacts?

The Marches LEP area spans 2,300 square miles and is home to 30,755 businesses of which 89% are micro businesses with fewer than ten employees. To be able to cover such a broad geographical area with limited resources and funding, the MGH have had to continuously 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.

The MGH partnership model includes a virtual growth hub and website [www.marchesgrowthhub.co.uk](http://www.marchesgrowthhub.co.uk) that is supported by three physical growth hubs situated in Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and Herefordshire. Since July 2018, telephone enquiries are handled by the Business Support Helpline.

Due to the limited 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 hubs. Please note one of MGH physical hubs is situated in UoW Business Solution Centres.

The MGH project is managed by a full time Marches LEP Business Support Lead (BSL) who is currently supported by the LEP Admin Officer 1 day per week. There are plans to recruit 1 FTE administrator to support the BSL in the coming month. The BSL role involves government and West Midlands (WM) Growth Hub Cluster liaison, virtual hub management including the MGH website, supporting the three physical growth hubs, chairing the MGH Operations Group and leading on Access to Finance policy.

The MGH partnership model operates with significant input from the three local authorities and the University of Wolverhampton. The partner Service Level Agreement/Data Sharing Agreements are currently being reviewed and will reflect required aggregated and non-aggregated data requirements.

Where appropriate, and where economies of scale can be achieved, MGH will look to the WM Growth Hub Cluster to support delivery of key initiatives, e.g., WM EU Business Support Project during 2020/21.

5. Growth Hubs are currently embedded within LEPs Strategic Economic Plans and Local Industrial Strategy. Please confirm what plans will be put in place to embed the Growth Hub within your local strategies/recovery plans? Also, how you intend to work with Local Authorities/Mayoral Combined Authority?

The Marches LEP Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) and Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) were developed with partners and aligned with areas of specialism across the Marches region and the economic growth plans that each of the local authority partners have developed. As part of the development of the LIS, Marches LEP held a programme of facilitated consultation events with stakeholders. This included MGH Groups, MGH clients and partner projects.

MGH will continue to provide information on and access to a range of business support programmes, including those that are designed to support the LEP's key sectors as defined in its SEP and LIS.

Innovation and productivity improvement form part of the key strands of the Marches LIS. The LEP will work with strategically important companies (and their supply chains) to identify innovative projects that increase efficiency, reduce costs and drive productivity in our core and emerging sub sectors.

The LEP's Economic Recovery Plan provides an overarching framework which enables alignment of the three local authorities' individual detailed plans. The MGH will remain central to the delivery of and access to business support and innovation services across the Marches geography.

6. What plans will be put in place to enable the LEP and/or any external Growth Hub providers and partners to work proactively together to leverage additional sources of public and private sector funding and other resources to demonstrate coordination, alignment of business and enterprise support to add value and further enhance the Growth Hub offer.

a) Other sources of funding/ Resources / Other

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 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

**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– estimated to be £18K 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 will have access to over 10 EU funded business support projects (including grants and consultancy support) with a total remaining financial value of £8m. Funding and support through the current and planned programmes will continue until June 2023. The Marches LEP is seeking to understand opportunities associated with successor funds including the Community Renewal Fund which is available through Herefordshire Council.

**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, and related research undertaken by the SAP will continue to drive an evidence-based approach to business focussed skills programmes.

**Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC):-**

The newly developed Marches Careers Hub drive work with CEC funded Enterprise Co-ordinators and continue 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 will continue working with the MGH teams to encourage referrals to their schemes and to better understand issues affecting the local business community.

The Marches LEP will work with partners to understand opportunities in Herefordshire associated with the new Community Renewal Fund and how this can be used to fund business support and skills projects to meet local needs.

7. What plans are/will be put in place to ensure that the Growth Hubs will meet the minimum requirements as laid out in the current Growth Hub Network Branding/Communications Guidelines and Media Toolkit, and to take into account any revisions of the framework?

The Marches LEP will 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 is currently being upgraded and re-designed to help enhance user experience and the new website will be launched in the coming months. The website will continue to be reviewed at the LEP/MGH monthly website review meetings.

Weekly WM Growth Hub Cluster meetings will help share information and understand any changes to requirements.

8. Please confirm the LEP's 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 or in-part by BEIS.

The Marches LEP agrees to full align the MGH and any new national business support brand that may follow.

The Marches LEP will 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.

9. Please also confirm the LEPs agreement to ensure that the Growth Hub delivery model will have the flexibility to evolve and to adjust to priorities during FY 2021 - 2022, ready to align with and transition to any revised delivery model which may potentially come into being from FY 2022 - 2023, and that the delivery model will have the capability to adapt to any further changes that might occur in business support national policy and delivery landscape.

Within 2020-21 MGH and its partners flexed delivery to meet the needs of business and incorporated additional services including Peer Networks, the ERDF Small Business Grant Scheme and signposting to the local authorities grant schemes etc.

The MBS Steering Group has been refocused to enable a more strategic view of delivery by all partners and to enable more flexibility in adjusting to changing priorities. The Marches LEP will ensure that the Growth Hub delivery model will have the flexibility to evolve and to adjust to priorities during FY 2021 - 2022, ready to align with and transition to any revised delivery model which may potentially come into being from FY 2022 - 2023, and that the delivery model will have the capability to adapt to any further changes that might occur in business support national policy and delivery landscape.

10. 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, and to adapt and scale-up (or 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.

Funding will be ringfenced to allow for provision of new business support services, and to adapt and scale-up (or down) at pace in line with current and future national and local policy priorities.

The Marches LEP 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 physical growth hubs and this model ensures that businesses are able to access 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.

### **Condition 2 - Data, monitoring, reporting, valuation and value for money**

Compliance with the current version of the Growth Hub '**Metrics 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 of 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 current Framework. This will include provision by the LEP to BEIS of **aggregated** Growth Hub performance data on a bi-annual, end of year and ad-hoc 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 end of **May 2022**.

11. What systems will be put in place to ensure that the Growth Hub (including any externally contracted delivery agents/brokers) fully complies with the data collection and reporting requirements set down in the current 'Metrics & Evaluation Framework' including indicators that relate to levels of business awareness, engagement, transformation, value for money, outputs and impact? Also to ensure at all times compliance with Data Protection Legislation.

Data capture processes have been developed for use by the local authority partners in each of the three physical growth hubs.

Delivery partners will be kept fully briefed to any data collection changes. Data collection requirements will be built into induction of new team members including subcontracted advisers.

2021-2022 funding has been allocated to support further CRM development to enable any additional data recording and analysis by the three physical growth hubs.

12. What systems will be put in place 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.

Data capture processes have been developed for use by the local authority partners in each of the three physical growth hubs. 2021-2022 funding has been allocated to support further CRM development to enable additional data recording and analysis by the three physical growth hubs.

It should be noted that there is a significant number of micro businesses in the Marches, many of which are sole traders, therefore the proportion of businesses supported that appear on Companies House records due to incorporation, will be low. In addition, micro businesses will often be below the VAT threshold level.

13. Please confirm the Key Performance Indicators and Quality Performance Standards that will be set by the LEP to ensure that the Growth Hub (whether delivered "in-house" by the LEP/MCA/LA or by an externally contracted provider) delivers a service that is aligned with the 'Conditions of Funding' attached to this Grant, 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. Please note that this information is yet to be received by the LEP.

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 Operations Group review these KPIs and value for money at each meeting and the MBS Steering Group review KPI and spend/value for money reported to BEIS six monthly.

Key Performance Indicators:

- KPI 1. Number of unique businesses receiving high intensity support (12 hr) – 81 (based on 4 days support model at a daily rate of £500)
- KPI 2. Number of businesses referred to a finance and/or funding programme – 40.

14. How will the LEP ensure that the Growth Hub makes best use of freely available national data sets (e.g. HMRC export data) to supplement local intelligence, shape delivery of core Growth Hub services, and identify, engage and support the business target audience?

With the support of Growth Hub funding, the three physical hubs will continue to have access to COBRA and Beauhurst/FAME platform.

In addition to this, all available national data (export, HMRC and Scale-up Institute) is highlighted and shared with the three physical hubs to help support engagement strategies.

Local economic data and intelligence will be shared with the MBS Steering Group to enable a clear understanding of challenges and opportunities in order to support the Marches business communities.

15. What approach will the LEP take to ensure that the performance and impact of the Growth Hub is robustly measured and evaluated? Including areas such as value for money, short, medium and longitudinal impact on business growth, delivery metrics, business needs, reach and impact of support provided to businesses.

We completed an independent Review & Evaluation of the MGH in 2017/18. The action plan from this exercise was implemented during 2018/19. This was overseen by the MGH Steering Group now known as MBS Steering Group.

As part of the 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21 evaluation, the MGH commissioned three impact case studies to help demonstrate value for money and short, medium and longitudinal impact on business growth. 2020/21 case studies will be shared in the 2020/21 year-end report.

The MGH would like to continue with impact case studies during 2021/22 and would welcome **BEIS feedback and approval.**

The BSL is currently involved in the Growth Hub Network Evaluation exercise.

16. What approach will the LEP via its Growth Hub take to the collection of business data and intelligence, including:

- Produce weekly (or to other required timescales) situation reports, using agreed template(s) and processes, covering themes and “Hot Topics” including: impacts and opportunities relating to business and economic conditions/developments, economic shocks, Government policy changes, and examples of key local sectors, places or businesses at risk or experiencing disruptions, and noteworthy local businesses successes.
- Work with local partners (public, private, third sector and academia) and wider network to understand business and its needs and provide a central co-ordination point to feed back into Government, and working with Cluster Lead/other Cluster members to provide regional-level intelligence
- Any business surveys undertaken by the Growth Hub or its local partners.
- Developing and maintaining a suite of case studies of business impacted positively or negatively by economic conditions, policy changes or economic shocks, and businesses that have benefited from particular national or local schemes and initiatives.

- MGH will continue to work with the three physical growth hub teams and produce weekly (or to other required timescales) situation reports, using agreed template(s) and processes, covering themes and “Hot Topics” including: impacts and opportunities relating to business and economic conditions/developments, economic shocks, Government policy changes, and examples of key local sectors, places or businesses at risk or experiencing disruptions, and noteworthy local businesses successes.
- MGH will continue to work with local partners (public, private, third sector and academia) and wider network to understand business and its needs and provide a central co-ordination point to feed back into Government including working with WM Cluster Lead to provide regional-level intelligence.

- MGH will continue to support any business surveys and share findings in the weekly report to BEIS. Currently, businesses in the Marches are being re-pollled for their views on the economic and business support measures put in place during the pandemic as the region prepares for recovery. Marches LEP Poll
- MGH will continue to develop and maintain a suite of case studies of business impacted positively or negatively by economic conditions, policy changes or economic shocks, and businesses that have benefited from particular national or local schemes and initiatives. A link to all MGH case studies can be found here:  
<https://www.marchesgrowthhub.co.uk/advice-and-support/case-studies/>

### **Condition 3 - Strategic partnerships and business support simplification**

In response to the NAO report on business support schemes (January 2020), engage with government reform of business support - including driving up standards and consistency across all English regions. Alongside building and strengthening relationships with the key local players across the Public, Private and Third Sectors, Academia, 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.

17. 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, private etc) 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.

**Note:** Please provide a short summary under each organisation.

- **Innovate UK (IUK):**

The LEP will continue to work with Ewa Bloch, Innovate UK's Regional Manager for the West Midlands to help understand how we can further support those businesses that have already received funding and how we can support additional businesses. In addition to this, we will continue to promote their services and events and continuously improve the information on our website.

- **Knowledge Transfer Network (KTN):**

The MGH refer businesses to the University of Wolverhampton Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) programme.

The LEP and growth hub teams work closely with Mark Matchett who is the KTN lead supporting the 'Place' based innovation agenda in the West Midlands and a Knowledge Transfer Adviser - West Midlands.

Mark continues to work closely with the three physical growth hubs and will look to spend time at each growth hub (when it is safe to do so) delivering drop in sessions/workshops/seminars as well as piggy backing onto MGH events. The MGH website is kept up to date to reflect the KTN/KTP offer including links to success data and case studies.

- **Department for International Trade (DIT) :**

MGH will continue to promote DIT services and events. We will continue to work very closely and seek innovative ways to build and strengthen the partnership working as demonstrated by supporting DIT additional resource allocated in the Marches during 2020/21 and the West Midlands EU Business Support Project which referred into DIT events and 1:1 clinics.

DIT, Head of Business Development & Partnerships – West Midlands Regional Delivery Partner is a member of both the MGH Operations Group and MBS Steering Group which helps inform the groups on emerging business issues and concerns.

MGH will continue to promote DIT services and events and push out messaging through social media platforms.

- **British Business Bank (BBB):**

The MGH will continue to work closely with the fund managers to help promote the funds available.

The Marches LEP BSL is the Chair of the MEIF West Midlands Regional Advisory Board (RAB). LEP Board Member and Access to Finance Champion Paul Kalinauckas is a member of the MEIF West Midlands Strategic Oversight Board. The MEIF Senior Relationship Manager Ryan Cartwright is a member of the MGH Operations Group and Marches LEP Access to Finance Group.

- **Intellectual Property Office (IPO):**

The Marches IPO contact continues to actively work with the growth hub teams. Collaborative events will continue to be planned to ensure that local businesses are able to tap into relevant patent, trademark and intellectual property support.

- **Be the Business (Productivity Leadership Group):**

The Mentoring for Growth Programme will continue to be promoted to Marches SMEs. All three growth hubs will continue to work closely with the Marches Mentoring Advisor exploring collaborative working where possible.

- **Banks:**

All three growth hubs will continue to work with banking partners and the Marches LEPs Experts in Residence. Collaborative Marches wide events have already commenced in April 2021 with NatWest Bank with more activity in the pipeline.

Marches LEP Access to Finance Strategy - The main objective of the Access to Finance Strategy is to promote the availability of external finance to local businesses seeking to grow thereby adding value to the local economy. The Access to Finance Group will continue to hold consultation sessions which will help inform access to finance policy and business intelligence to government.

- **ICAEW / Accountants:**

The MGH will continue to link into ICAEW members and other accountants through their established networks. In addition to this, MGH teams will link with this group through events and business clinics run by accountancy and finance professionals.

- **PBS sector (including local specialist advisors and support via a pool of Legal and Professional sector partners):**

The MGH will continue to link with this sector via their established networks.

During 2020/21, with the support of Growth Hub Supplementary Grant funding, the growth hub teams developed relationships with specialist advisors some of which are from the PBS sector. These relationships will be further developed moving forward.

The MBS Steering Group is currently seeking two PBS sector representatives to join the group.

- **Angel Networks:**

The MGH will continue to promote the Regional Angels Programme (British Business Bank). The programme is designed to help reduce regional imbalances in access to early stage equity finance for smaller businesses across the UK. It aims to address this issue by increasing the availability, supply and awareness of angel and other early-stage equity investments across the country, particularly in areas where this type of finance is less readily available.

Referrals into the Midlands Engine Investment Fund also offers access to a range of finance options include venture capital and business angels.

At present, there is no dedicated Angel Networks within the Marches area.

- **Universities/Business Schools:**

MGH Telford & Wrekin is sponsored and hosted by University of Wolverhampton which allows access to information on Higher Education including undergraduate, post graduate programmes, degree level apprenticeships and business support projects.

Events being delivered by University Centre Shrewsbury, the University of Wolverhampton, NMITE and Harper Adams University are promoted on the MGH website's events calendar and information on training providers, FE and HE programmes is contained on its skills micro site at <http://skillssearch.marchesgrowthhub.co.uk/>.

- **Business Intermediaries (e.g. Chambers, FSB etc):**

All three growth hubs are very supportive of FSB, Shropshire Chamber of Commerce and Herefordshire & Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce activity and events that take place across the Marches. Where possible, business events are arranged in partnership with these organisations and information on forthcoming events is shared to avoid duplication. The MGH will continue to promote free events available through these partners.

Both Shropshire Chamber of Commerce and Herefordshire & Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce are represented on the MBS Steering Group.

- **Enterprise Zones:**

MGH Herefordshire is based in the Shell Store on Hereford Enterprise Zone (HEZ) which is the UK's only Enterprise Zone with a defence and cyber security focus. Business located on the Enterprise Zone are encouraged to use the growth hub for access to business advice and information.

- **Local/Combined Authorities:**

As detailed earlier, our three local authorities are critical to the delivery of the MGH. They provide staffing for the 3 physical hubs which enables effective referrals to core local authority economic growth and business support services.

- **Catapults/Incubators and Accelerators:**

The Marches LEP works closely with the Manufacturing Technology Centre (MTC) - part of the High Value Manufacturing Catapult to identify opportunities for joint working. The MGH promotes events delivered at MTC and other Catapult sites in the UK.

## Hereford Shell Store Business Incubation and Innovation Centre

Shell Store is the first Incubation Centre in the Marches. The project creates more than 2,000 square metres of employment space, with room for new and growing businesses to set up and expand. [The Shell Store Incubation Centre - Skylon Park](#). MGH Herefordshire is now based within the Shell Store and will encourage residents to use the growth hub to access business advice and information.

- **Better Business for All (BBfA)/Regulators:**

The Marches LEP is a member of the BBfA Steering Group which includes economic development and regulatory services representation from across the Marches, as well as business representation. A pilot BBfA project which was in progress for Shropshire is currently on hold until further notice.

- **Libraries/Business & IP Centres:**

MGH Shropshire have a place on the Shropshire Libraries mobile library to support outreach activity in rural areas across the county. The mobile library visits 240 villages during a two-week period. Activity is on hold due to COVID 19 and will commence again when it is safe to do so.

MGH Shropshire previously held 1:1 surgeries at different libraries every month in the market towns. These sessions will recommence when it is safe to do so.

MGH Herefordshire and MGH Telford & Wrekin will explore opportunities with their local libraries.

- **Enterprise Agencies:**

There is no Enterprise Agency presence in the Marches however MGH works with organisations that champion business start-up, e.g., Shropshire Youth Support Trust and Prince's Trust etc.

- **Government Departments e.g. DCMS, DWP and HMRC:**

HMRC support services will continue to be promoted by the MGH and collaborative working/events will continue to be explored by the growth hub teams.

- **National Cyber Security Centre:**

MGH teams will continue to promote, make referrals to and work closely with The Midlands Centre for Cyber Security, a Hub for businesses to address and develop their cyber security needs, products or services. [www.cyberquarter.co.uk](http://www.cyberquarter.co.uk)

- **Others (public, private, third sector etc):**

The Marches LEP is private-sector led - it has the voice of its business community at its heart and engages with employers through the three Business Boards in Shropshire, Telford and Herefordshire. As well as engaging with individual businesses, the Business Boards also work with organisations including the Chambers of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses and local authorities.

### **IOD & IOEE**

The MGH will continue to work closely with the Institute of Directors (IOD) and Institute of Enterprise and Entrepreneurs (IOEE).

### **Shropshire Wildlife Trust Partnership**

MGH Shropshire team is supporting Shropshire Wildlife Trust with the Meres & Mosses Business Environment Network.

### **Partners for Social Enterprise Networking**

MGH Shropshire will continue to support a Social Enterprise Programme which includes collaborative events.

**The Entrepreneur Club**

Work will be pick-up in due course with The Entrepreneur Club and a wealth planning specialist to deliver a suite of workshops for growth businesses. The workshops will be followed by business 1:1 surgeries with MGH Shropshire.

**HR Collaborations**

The growth hubs are actively working with local HR specialists and delivering workshops and events encompassing employment and company law.

MGH Telford & Wrekin supports the local HR Forum which is a private sector led networking and discussion group made up of HR professionals from the area's larger employers. This enables referrals to the MGH's events programmes and wider support.

MGH Shropshire are planning a HR Conference around Leadership & Performance in 2021 following a successful event in 2019 and 2020.

**Growth Hub Gurus**

MGH Telford & Wrekin's Growth Hub Guru Club is an extension to the growth hub team and delivers a series of free interactive workshops based around each stage of the business journey. The gurus share their expertise and work with businesses to help them overcome barriers. The initiative has become a core part of MGH Telford & Wrekin events programme offer.

**Local Authority Town Councils and Town Clerks**

The growth hub teams will continue to actively work with the Town Councils and Town Clerk teams to help support outreach activity. This includes growth hub presentations at Town Clerk meetings to help raise awareness of the MGH service.

18. What approach is the LEP/Growth Hub taking to explore opportunities for sharing office space, hot desking and other resources with local partners such as DIT, Innovate UK, the BBB and IPO where it makes sense to do so and will deliver a greater level of value for money and/or deliver greater outputs and impact for the Growth Hub? Please confirm where this is already happening.

Hot desking at the 3 physical growth hub sites is on hold at present due to COVID 19 restrictions. This will be encouraged when it is safe to do so.

**DIT**

All three growth hubs will look at having a weekly DIT presence at each of the sites when it is safe to do so. This has previously helped inform the MGH Operations Group on emerging business issues and concerns. There is a DIT representative on both the Operations Group and MBS Steering Group.

**Universities**

MGH Telford & Wrekin are situated within buildings operated by the University of Wolverhampton. The aim of the co-location of the physical hub at the University site is to improve links between graduates and the wider business community, encourage innovation and increase access to business support and skills development programmes delivered by the University.

Meeting space is available within the University Centre Shrewsbury at no cost to the MGH.

**BBB**

The MEIF Senior Relationship Manager is a member of the MGH Operations Group and Marches LEP Access to Finance Group. This helps support the delivery of the MEIF and other funds resulting in greater take up, outputs and impact.

#### **Collaboration**

All local partners have access and will be encouraged to hold regular clinics/workshops/seminars (free of charge) at the three physical hubs (when it is safe to do so) to help increase the opportunity for local businesses and business intermediaries to access the support and advice available. In addition, local networking groups will be encouraged to use the facilities to encourage their members to access other business support initiatives.

19. What steps are being taken to collaborate flexibly with other LEPs, Growth Hubs, Cluster leads, BEIS, other government departments and agencies, national and regional services and sector lead bodies to ensure that business and enterprise support interventions activities are optimised across wider geographies and to deliver increased value for money, outputs and impacts (e.g. across Growth Hub Cluster areas, MCA/LA boundaries, and groupings such as Northern Powerhouse/Midlands Engine/Western Gateway, rural networks etc)?

The LEP has a strong track record in working with other strategic partners and work continues with:

- WM Growth Hub Cluster including Made Smarter West Midlands Project which will be launched in May 2021
- West Midlands ERDF funded business support and innovation projects such as Business Growth Programme and Manufacturing Growth Programme
- Three other LEPs on Cyber Security (Cyber Resilience Alliance)
- Supporting Midlands Engine (including Midlands Engine Investment Fund, Midlands Connect and Midlands Engine Trade and Investment Strategic Programme Group including attendance at MIPIM)
- Welsh partners on identifying opportunities for potential collaboration.

20. How will the LEP through the Growth Hub continue to simplify the local business support landscape (eg joining up activities or service provision, hiding the wiring for customers) for the benefit of business? How will duplication be minimised/avoided?

To ensure the business landscape is not populated by duplicate products and services, the LEP/MGH works with partners to ensure that any new business support projects complement current business support rather than duplicate.

Projects funded by the new Community Renewal Fund in Herefordshire will be encouraged to work through and with MGH to align provision.

#### **Condition 4 - Triage, diagnostic and signposting**

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.

21. What type of Growth Hub delivery model will be used by the LEP in 2021-2022 to deliver a proactive local triage and diagnostic service to all businesses in the LEP area, prioritising those with the opportunity, ambition and greatest potential to grow? Are any changes planned to the current Growth Hub delivery model?

The MGH partnership model will remain the same during FY 2021-22. This includes a virtual growth hub and website [www.marchesgrowthhub.co.uk](http://www.marchesgrowthhub.co.uk) that is supported by three physical growth hubs situated in Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and Herefordshire. Telephone enquiries will be handled by the National Business Support Helpline.

Partners from the three local authorities have confirmed their continued support towards the operation of the three physical hubs.

The generic advisory teams in the three growth hubs, comprise local authority staff, who deliver a programme of events and work with individuals/businesses to identify their key needs. This supports signposting/referrals to appropriate in-depth support, including our EU funded programmes. Information on interactions and referrals are captured on the MGH CRM to ensure that MGH retains an overview of brokerage undertaken and recommended next steps.

2021/22 funding will allow the growth hubs to develop a framework to broker in business/specialist advisors as and when required to provide 1:1 business advice. This model was used during 2020/21 and was well received by the business community. This will continue to enable in-depth support to businesses to help them become more resilient, scale-up and increase productivity.

University of Wolverhampton provides premises, equipment and covers all rent, heat and lighting costs at Marches Growth Hub Telford & Wrekin.

Access to in-depth support programmes, e.g. EU funded, is reserved for those businesses that have the most capacity and potential to grow and create new jobs.

22. What steps will the LEP take to ensure that the Growth Hub focusses on those delivery models demonstrated to be most effective for SMEs, prioritising those businesses with the ambition and greatest potential to grow e.g. through intensive and sustained face-to-face support, creation of peer to peer and mentoring networks and locally embedded and/accessible expertise and or specialist support?

2021/22 funding will allow the growth hubs to develop a framework to broker in business/specialist advisors as and when required to provide 1:1 business advice. This model was used during 2020/21. This will enable in-depth support to businesses to help them become more resilient, scale-up and increase productivity.

23. What steps will the LEP take to ensure that the Growth Hub continues to provide access to all businesses via a free and impartial local 'single point of contact'?

The Marches LEP 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 physical growth hubs and this model ensures that businesses are able to access 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.

24. How will the LEP ensure that the Growth Hub delivers greater value for money, by making best use of free national assets (e.g. GOV.UK and GREAT) and the national Business Support Helpline (e.g. to support pre-starts), and shared assets across the Growth Hub Network?

We transferred the virtual hub helpline to the National Business Support Line in July 2018. During 2020/21 the Business Support Helpline handled 1457 Marches enquiries.

The MGH 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 Live chat service.

25. How will the LEP ensure that the Growth Hub proactively promotes those programmes (public and private) that:

- a) enable more businesses to access new market opportunities and be more confident in trading internationally;
- b) are most successful at stimulating business investment in science, research & development and innovation, and encourage the adoption of innovative technologies and management best practice;
- c) enable more businesses to source the right people, access apprenticeships and develop workforce skills to enable businesses to attract and employ new workers and fill gaps in technical and basic leadership and management skills; and
- d) increase business awareness and participation in public procurement and major infrastructure projects, improving the knowledge needed to compete successfully and increasing SME procurement capabilities? As a minimum, we would expect there to be a link on the Growth Hub website to the Government's free portal, Contracts Finder. Also encouraging the facilitation of events, e.g. Meet the Buyer, to help support SMEs wishing to join the public sector supply chain.
- e) increase business awareness of the opportunities created by new national strategies and support programmes e.g. Net Zero, Peer Networks, Help to Grow and Made Smarter

**Website** - [www.marchesgrowthhub.co.uk](http://www.marchesgrowthhub.co.uk)

The website includes information and links to national, regional and local business support services, training, events and tender opportunities. It has been designed with a searchable directory. A filter to the search facility has been created to help businesses pinpoint eligible products and services. To note, the MGH website is currently being upgraded to WordPress, re-designed and will be launched during the next month or so.

The website also includes an Employer Skills Search Facility. This was previously developed by the LEP and its Skills Board (which included business representatives, training & skills providers and universities). 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.

All programmes are proactively promoted by the MGH PR/Marketing consultants. This is done through website content, regular MGH e-newsletters, social media platforms, through e-marketing campaigns and advertorials.

Specific examples of each of the above points is detailed below:-

Enable more businesses to access new market opportunities and be more confident in trading internationally:

- a) This is supported through referrals to locally delivered DIT programmes and services, including international trade missions, support for new exporters and support for existing exporters that are seeking new international markets.

Are most successful at stimulating business investment in science, research & development and innovation, and encourage the adoption of innovative technologies and management best practice:

- b) Eligible businesses are encouraged to access in depth support from relevant projects and partners, e.g. through the AGRI, Manufacturing Growth Programme, KTN etc. Awareness raising events are also delivered by the three physical growth hubs to promote innovative practices.

Enable more businesses to source the right people, access apprenticeships and develop workforce skills to enable businesses to attract and employ new workers and fill gaps in technical and basic leadership and management skills:

- c) Businesses are encouraged to access information the MGH website on local training providers to meet their skills needs. Events on skills issues and potential solutions are delivered by each of the three physical Growth Hubs. Finally, in-depth programmes, e.g. the Manufacturing Growth Programme, allow businesses to attract consultancy support for leadership and management skills development.

The Marches LEP will look to deliver training sessions to the MGH teams to help increase their understanding of skills issues and how these can be considered in the delivery of business support programmes. This will lead to better promotion of the importance of staff training and development (including leadership and management, reskilling and apprenticeships) in driving business growth and help increase referrals to ESFA and ESF funded programmes. This will be particularly important to enable understanding for new projects funded under the Community Renewal Fund.

Increase business awareness and participation in public procurement and major infrastructure projects, improving the knowledge needed to compete successfully and increasing SME procurement capabilities:

- d) Businesses are encouraged to participate in public procurement opportunities, and these are promoted on the MGH [Tenders & Opportunities](#) and LEP website [Tenders and Vacancies](#). In addition, events are delivered by the three physical growth hubs to highlight opportunities and increase awareness of good practice in tendering.

increase business awareness of the opportunities created by new national strategies and support programmes e.g. Net Zero, Peer Networks, Help to Grow and Made Smarter

- e) New national strategies and support programmes will be communicated to the growth hubs teams in a timely manner supported by information sessions where required to help support signposting

and referrals. New programmes will be promoted via the MGH website, comms, social media platforms and established business support networks to help support uptake.

26. What steps will the Growth Hub take to work in partnership with the British Business Bank, the Financial Sector, accountants and others to raise awareness of mainstream and alternative sources of finance covering debt, equity (e.g. private equity funding, venture capital, alternative bank lending), leasing, diversified funding streams and microfinance to increase supply of finance options for growing or struggling firms?

We have excellent working relationships with the BBB and local business professionals (accountants and solicitors).

The LEP Board has an Access to Finance Champion - Paul Kalinaukas who helps raise the profile of finance support available to businesses. Paul is a member of the West Midlands MEIF Strategic Oversight Board (SOB).

The Marches LEP BSL is the Chair of the West Midlands MEIF Regional Advisory Board (RAB).

The MEIF Senior Relationship Manager Ryan Cartwright is a member of the MGH Operations Group and Marches LEP Access to Finance Group.

The MBS Steering Group is currently seeking two PBS sector representatives to join the group.

Marches LEP Access to Finance Strategy - The main objective of the Access to Finance Strategy is to promote the availability of external finance to local businesses seeking to grow thereby adding value to the local economy. The Access to Finance Group led by Paul Kalinaukas will continue to hold consultation sessions which will help inform access to finance policy and business intelligence to government.

27. What steps will the LEP take via its Growth Hub during the year ahead to utilise the full allocation of core funding to consolidate changes made in FY 2020/21, continue to further strengthen capacity and provision, and embed the increase in advisor resources provided for with supplementary funding in FY 2020/21. How will this support the creation of a consistent and quality driven core offer, driving business recovery, growth and increased productivity.

2021/22 funding will allow the growth hubs to develop a framework to broker in business/specialist advisors as and when required to provide 1:1 business advice. This model was used during 2020/21. This will enable in-depth support to businesses to help them become more resilient, scale-up and increase productivity.

### **Condition 5 – 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).

28. What steps will the LEP take in 2021-22 to further develop and deliver against locally agreed 'Scale-Up Plans' to ensure that recognised scale-up challenges are overcome and businesses with the opportunity, ambition and greatest potential to grow are prioritised and supported by the Growth Hub?

The growth hub teams will further develop their scale-up plans considering any identified challenges faced by businesses in their area. Plans will be aligned with their local authority strategic economic plans which will tie into the overarching LEP recovery plan.

Scale-up/business growth activity through the growth hubs will aim to target businesses (including business intermediaries and business professionals' network) with the potential to grow and get ahead.

The growth hubs will be encouraged to use national and local data wherever possible to help further develop their plans.

29. How will the LEP ensure that the Growth Hub uses national and local data such as the Scale-Up Institute (SUI) map, the Fast Track 100 and those made available by Government to identify and target those businesses with the opportunity, ambition and greatest potential to grow?

The growth hubs will use business information platforms and Scaleup Institute information to identify and monitor scale up businesses.

The growth hubs are encouraged to use national and local data wherever possible to help further develop their scale-up plans.

The MGH Operations Group is also encouraged to consider ways in which partners can identify businesses with most potential to grow based on indicators used by the local authority economic development teams.

Access to in-depth support programmes, e.g., EU funded, is reserved for those businesses that have the most capacity and potential to grow and create new jobs.

MGH also refers appropriate businesses to the Goldman Sachs programme for in-depth follow up support.

30. How will the LEP ensure that the Growth Hub is able to broker/introduce high quality face-to-face Account Managers that have the skills and experience to:

- undertake a high level 'diagnostic' review that takes a 360-degree view of areas for development across the business;
- spend time with the senior management team of the business to identify the barriers that are preventing them from achieving their high growth ambition and broker a solution;
- work in collaboration with the private and public sector to draw on impactful programmes such as the London Stock Exchange's ELITE programme, Goldman Sachs 10k SMEs together with any locally driven bespoke programmes;

- maintain close relationships with these programmes and develop a strong understanding of local provision in order to help identify the most appropriate package of support; and
- manage the relationship with the business over the life of the intervention and report progress along the firm's growth journey, improving the LEPs, Growth Hubs and Government's' understanding of the challenges this group of businesses face and the solutions they need now and will potentially need in the future.
- **Note:** Please confirm the level of this resource (e.g. Scale-Up Adviser 1 FTE); their skill levels; any sector/other specialisms; where they are located and whether alternative sources of funding are/will be used to fund the post/s (e.g. ERDF).

£162k of 2021/22 funding has been ringfenced towards brokering in additional business/specialist advisors. This will enable in-depth support to businesses to help them become more resilient, scale-up and increase productivity.

During 2020/21, with the support supplementary growth hub funding, the growth hub teams had access to a framework of 43 advisors consisting of general advisors and specialists who were called upon as and when required. This model will be used during 2021/22.

Each growth hub will be allocated £54k each towards in-depth 1:1 support which will be available to any business of any size which has been trading for at least 6 months. Support will be capped at 4 days per business. Based on a daily rate of £500 x 4 days support, we anticipate engagement with 77 businesses.

All new advisors will receive an induction from their local growth hub to ensure they fully understand policies/procedures, code of conduct and reporting requirements including feedback to help inform the growth hub on challenges and further support needs.

31. Please set out below proposals for any other local innovative approaches identified and defined by the LEP and/or Growth Hub aimed at those businesses with the opportunity, ambition and greatest potential to grow, which have the potential to become local or cross-LEP/Growth Hub test and learn pilots, with best practice shared across LEP and Growth Hub Networks and feeding into and informing future business support policy thinking (agreed with BEIS on a case-by-case basis).

Each of the three growth hubs wishes to develop an area of expertise in line with their local specialisms and economic priorities: Herefordshire – defence and security; Shropshire – environmental technologies and Telford & Wrekin – digital and advanced manufacturing This would enable each physical hub to develop sectoral expertise across the Marches LEP area and encourage referrals between hubs for follow up in-depth support. These aspirations are dependent on successfully securing external funding.

32. 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.

2021/22 funding will allow the growth hubs to develop a framework to broker in business/specialist advisors as and when required to provide 1:1 business advice. This model was used during 2020/21. This will enable in-depth support to businesses to help them become more resilient, scale-up and increase productivity.