

Minutes of Marches Growth Hub (MGH) Steering Group 18th March 2021

Present		
Dave Courteen	DC	MGH Chair, Marches LEP Small Business Champion, Managing Director Mosaic Group
Gill Hamer	GH	Marches LEP Chief Executive
Yasmin Sulaman	YS	Marches LEP Business Support Lead
Kathryn Jones	KJ	Marches LEP Partnership Manager
Frank Myers MBE	FM	LEP Board Member, Chair of Herefordshire Business Board – Director MCP Systems Consultants Ltd
Paul Kalinauckas	PK	LEP Board Member, Access to Finance Champion
Graham Guest	GG	Telford Business Board representative, Principal - Telford College
Beth Heath	ВН	LEP Board Member, Chair of Shropshire Business Board, Director Shropshire Festivals, Director Shropshire Think Tank
Kathy Mulholland	KM	Telford and Wrekin Council - Inward Investment and Business Support Service Delivery Manager
Nick Webster	NW	Herefordshire Council - Economic Development Manager
Emma Chapman	EC	Shropshire Council - Marches Growth Hub Shropshire Manager (in place of Matt Potts)
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	СР	Marches Skills Provider Network - Executive Officer
Maisy Owen	МО	Chamber Member - Chair of Members Committee, Director MO Management Consultancy Ltd
Hollie Whittles	HW	Federation of Small Businesses - Regional Chair West Midlands, Director Purple Frog Systems Ltd, Director FraggleWorks,
Sharon Smith	SS	Herefordshire & Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce - Chief Executive
Amy Bould	AB	Marches LEP PR and Marketing - Director Be Bold Media Ltd
Charlie Hepworth	СН	Black Country Consortium Ltd – Senior Researcher
Phil Peak	PP	Coventry & Warwickshire Growth Hub – Operations Director, West Midlands Growth Hu Cluster Lead

Apologies:

Matt Potts – Shropshire Council, Business Growth and Inward Investment Manager

Not Present: Oliver Hindle – Marches Area Lead – Cities and Local Growth Unit, BEIS ACTION **ITEM** 1. **Welcome and Introductions** GH welcomed members and introduced DC, the new MGH Chair. DC introduced himself and welcomed the group including new Members and guest speakers. DC confirmed MO will continue to represent Shropshire Chamber of Commerce. Thanks were conveyed to Richard Sheehan for his contribution. 2. **Declarations of Member Interest** DC acknowledged completed form received from HW. No further conflicts were declared. DC

	asked for hands to be raised if any conflicts should arise during the meeting.	
3.	Guest Speaker CH, PP and SH delivered an informative presentation followed by Q & A from the group.	
	Business After Brexit: A New Chapter for the West Midlands - event video link to be circulated https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=60V-hx20_z0	YS
	Breakdown of Business & Professional Sector business death data	СН
	Share COVID 19 loan default and business failure data when available.	YS/CH
	GH confirmed that data and feedback from businesses will help shape future business support projects/programmes and help inform short/medium/long-term Economic Recovery Plans. Continue encouraging and referring businesses to the MGH.	AII
	EC confirmed her suggestion to YS around LA's using Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) to support continuation of WM Cluster EU Support Project. Project legacy to be raised on next WM Cluster call.	YS
	SME Brexit Support Fund - Up to £2,000 to help with training or professional advice if a business has up to 500 employees and no more than £100 million annual turnover.	

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	SME Brexit Support Fund - Up to £2,000 to help with training or professional advice if a business has up to 500 employees and no more than £100 million annual turnover. PricewaterhouseCoopers are administering the grants for HMRC. On-line applications opened 15 th March. SME Brexit support fund — Customs Grant Scheme (customsintermediarygrant.co.uk) Members to share with their networks.	All	
	Copy speaker presentations to be circulated to the group with minutes.	YS	
4.	Minutes of the last meeting and actions 10/12/2020 Members approved the draft minutes. Actions were reported as being complete with some being covered during this meeting.		
5.	LEP Update KJ provided the following update: -		
	 Budget - UK Community Renewal Fund and Levelling Up Fund announced. Information to be circulated to the group: Links to Papers: 	YS	

	 Link to Prospectus: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-community-renewal-fund-prospectus/uk-community-renewal-fund-prospectus-2021-22 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/levelling-up-fund-prospectus Future role of LEPs is under review. KJ to keep the group updated. LEP awaiting 2021/22 Peer Network funding paperwork. DIT resource – DIT are looking at other ways to support key sectors and clarification on 	кл
	 the impact for this locally is awaited. PK led an Access to Finance Group consultation session on 28 January. Feedback from the session has been shared with Ministers. 	
6.	MGH Update YS provided the following update: -	
	 Bi-Annual reports to be shared once approved by BEIS. Apology received from BEIS, the delay in feedback is purely down to resource. Spend position for core funding is that we are on track to spend the full allocation. Spend position for Supplementary funding - £83,807.00 spend as of February 2021. Risk of underspend but we will not know the exact amount until Q4 claims have been received by the 3 physical hubs. Growth hub network in a similar underspend position due to delays in receiving funds from BEIS. Out of the 43 advisers, 3 are based outside the Marches area. Spend position for EU Transition business support funding - 50% defrayed to date. 	YS
	 Underspend expected by BEIS from the growth hub network due to short timeframe to deliver the project. Growth Hub Network Evaluation - Since the workshop in December YS has been involved in an interview consultation session with Technopolis (3rd of February). YS to keep the group updated on progress. MGH website upgrade & re-design - We are at the final stages of the exercise. Final group consultation session took place on Tuesday this week. Some further changes are being implemented before final importing and auditing of information. Sign off and live dates are yet to be agreed. Hoping to complete by the end of March/early April time. In response to SS question around the governance role of the group and the MGH, YS confirmed that the spend position (including any risks) will be verbally updated at each meeting moving forward. Written updates will be provided 6 monthly by presenting the BEIS report which details both spend and KPI information. This has been reflected in the draft TOR which will be discussed under Item 7. 2021/22 Contract BEIS have secured £22m for the growth hub network. Marches have been allocated 462k which is the same as this financial year. Delays in paperwork and understanding funding priorities/ T & C's is impacting on planning. BEIS are aiming to issue grant offer letters to LEPs by the end of March. 	
7.	 MGH Steering Group Review Update KJ explained the reasons for updating the Group TOR: to align with the evolving business support landscape (Business Support Reform, business needs, funding and delivery structures). KJ asked the group their thoughts on having a Business & Professional and Social Enterprise representative. EC suggested consideration be given to Dyke Yaxley as a Business & Professional representative. The firm are actively working with MGH Shropshire. Members to share suggestions with YS/DC by 12 noon 1 April 2021. There were no further comments or questions by the group on the proposed draft TOR. 	All

8.	Marketing and Social Media / Google Analytics	
	AB provided an update on activity and themes delivered October to January inclusive.	
	Risk of MGH being fragmented with partner/stakeholder/cluster partnerships. Group may	
	wish to consider how Business Support is framed moving forward.	4.0
	Be Bold to update report font.	AB
9	Any other Business	
	 Good Business Charter - This is open to all companies, charities and public sector organisations. 	YS
	There was no other business and the meeting closed at 18.35.	