

Minutes of Marches Business Support (MBS) Steering Group 9 December 2021

Present		
Dave Courteen	DC	MBS Steering Group Chair, Marches LEP Small Business Champion, Managing Director - Mosaic Group
Yasmin Sulaman	YS	Marches LEP Business Support Lead
Jo Grivell	JG	Marches LEP Business Support Admin
Rachel Laver	RL	Marches LEP CEO
Ilia Bowles	IB	Marches LEP Director of Corporate Services
Paul Kalinauckas	PK	LEP Board Member, Access to Finance Champion
Oliver Hindle	OH	Marches Area Lead – Cities and Local Growth Unit, BEIS
Nick Webster	NW	Herefordshire Council - Economic Development Manager
Matt Potts	MP	Shropshire Council - Business Growth and Inward Investment, Shropshire Council
Beth Heath	BH	Chair of Shropshire Business Board, Director, Shropshire Festivals, Director, Shropshire Think Tank
Graham Guest	GG	Telford Business Board Representative, Principal Telford College
Amy Bould	AB	Marches LEP PR and Marketing - Director Be Bold Media Ltd
Maisy Owen	MO	Chamber Member - Chair of Members Committee, Director MO Management Consultancy Ltd
Sharon Smith	SS	Herefordshire & Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce - Chief Executive Officer
John Wigley	JW	Department for International Trade – Strategic Partnership Manager
Colin Preece	CP	Marches Skills Provider Network - Executive Officer
Elwyn Turner	ET	Director, Dyke Yaxley
Mike Goodall	MG	Federation of Small Businesses
Charlie Hopkirk	CH	Senior Researcher, Black Country Consortium

Apologies:

- Hollie Whittles - Federation of Small Businesses West Midlands Regional Chair, Director Purple Frog Systems Ltd, Director FragglesWorks with Mike Goodall, Federation of Small Businesses in attendance.
- Kathryn Jones - Marches LEP Partnership Manager
- Kathy Mulholland - Telford and Wrekin Council - Inward Investment and Business Support Service Delivery Manager
- Richard Nicklin - University of Wolverhampton - Business Engagement Deputy Director
- Frank Myers MBE - LEP Board Member, Chair of Herefordshire Business Board – Director MCP Systems Consultants Ltd

Not Present:

ITEM		ACTION
1.	<p>Welcome and Introductions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DC welcomed everyone to the meeting and confirmed apologies received. DC confirmed a change had been made to the issued agenda to accommodate a DIT update and discussion under Item 8. - Members agreed for the meeting to be recorded to support action orientated minutes.. 	
2.	<p>Declarations of Member Interest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No conflicts were declared before the meeting. DC asked for hands to be raised if any conflicts should arise during the meeting. 	
3.	<p>Minutes of the last meeting and actions 2/9/2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Members approved the draft minutes. Actions were reported as being complete with some being covered during the meeting. - DC confirmed that no further action is required on the second action under Item 5. The LEP PR/Marketing strategy will help inform Business Support PR/Marketing priorities. 	
4.	<p>LEP Update</p> <p>RL provided the following LEP update: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Levelling Up White paper has been further delayed until the New Year. - LEP Network is using the opportunity to better position itself in terms of all the good things LEPs do. - Details of LEP review will come out of the Levelling Up White Paper. - Still do not know if the LEP will receive any core funding next fiscal year. - LEP have started planning activity irrespective and will continue to deliver to contractual obligations. - Lobbying local MPs, so they can speak with Michael Gove and Kwasi Kwarteng. - Asked that members continue to promote the LEP. <p>IB provided the following update on the Marches COP26 event road show: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The LEP received £15,000 from BEIS which was distributed equally across the three local authorities to help support their COP26 events. All events have been extremely successful. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Shropshire Council hosted an electric vehicle exhibition with 1500 people in attendance. ○ Herefordshire Council gave people the opportunity to have a free ride on the Beryl bikes. ○ Telford and Wrekin Council held an event in collaboration with the British Ironworks Centre and created an ocean trail, to highlight the impact of single use plastic to marine life. - IB requested for members to share any details of barriers for companies trying to achieve Net Zero. - SS advised the Chambers would be keen to work with any partners on Net Zero and would share the latest Quarterly Economic survey which included details of barriers to sustainability. 	<p style="text-align: center;">All</p> <p style="text-align: center;">All</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SS</p>

5.	<p>Cities and Local Growth Unit Update OH provided the following update: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A brief overview of his role. - Acknowledged it is a difficult time for the LEP due to the delay in the Levelling Up White paper. - Thanked the LEP and growth hubs for the weekly intelligence reports which have been crucial for government in getting real time economic intelligence. - Praised the Growth Hub for the approval of the 2020/21 annual report. - DC thanked OH for his update and asked OH to attend the next meeting to share the outcome of the White paper and what this means for the LEP/Growth HUB/Business Support landscape. 	OH
6.	<p>PR/Marketing Update - April to July 2021 Update and new report template AB provided the following update: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Update on current and future PR activities, with the priority being to get businesses through the front door of the Growth Hub – aligned to the ‘Here to Help’ comms objective. - AB talked through the new draft PR/Marketing report for Q2. The group agreed that the new report template is a significant improvement, more visual, informative and better demonstrates the impact of PR/Marketing. DC shared feedback received before the meeting from FM and HW. The group shared their feedback and observations via chat to help finalise the report. - A request from AB for the LEP to consider sponsored social media if the budget allowed. - Organisational Impact - YS to provide AB with Manufacturing Growth Programme data to support/add some context around the impact statement. - IB thanked AB for the hard work and effort that has gone into the new report template. - DC thanked AB and members for their observations and feedback which will help finalise the report. 	AB YS YS
7.	<p>MGH Update YS provided the following update: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2020/21 Contract Feedback – The Growth Hub 2020/21 year-end report was formally approved at the meeting with BEIS on 26th October. The following feedback was shared by BEIS:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Despite being one of the lowest funded growth hubs, MGH continues to deliver high end performance demonstrating continuous improvements. o Customer satisfaction remains high in line with BEIS’ requirements. o Support for scale-ups was noted to be significant compared to other growth hubs; and o Positive feedback was received following a secret shopper review of our re-designed MGH website. The review related to design and accessibility rather than content. - 2021/22 Contract Update - Draft Bi-Annual report was submitted to BEIS in October. The report will be shared once feedback has been received from BEIS. - Spend position as of 31st October 2021 is £116,116.52. <p>JG provided a quick update on the MGH Website Google Analytics report as the agenda change did not allow sufficient time to review the paper in detail. JG asked for any questions/feedback to be sent to her direct. The report will be covered in more detail at the next meeting.</p> <p>CH talked the group through the new Power BI Growth Hub light touch data report and MGH Enquiry and Interaction Analysis report findings. This was followed by a Q & A session with the group.</p> <p>The update covered the following: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - August - October 2021 light touch interaction data analysis. - Findings for the April – September 2021 MGH Enquiry and Interaction Analysis which included medium, high and sustained Interaction data analysis by LA area, by enquiry 	YS All

	<p>type, sector and the size of the business : Marches Growth Hub Business Enquiry & Interaction Analysis (arccgis.com)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DC thanked CH for the informative updates and asked for the report links to be shared with the minutes. 	YS
8	<p>DIT Update</p> <p>JW provided the following update on the draft International Trade Strategic Plan and Ideas for Future LEP/DIT Collaboration. The update was followed by a Q & A session with group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - JW explained his role as DIT Strategic Partnership Manager and the aim to drive engagement with local businesses using the DIT services. - The current view is the Marches is underrepresented in terms of referrals into the DIT teams. - The strategic plan details the opportunities to improve the take up of DIT services through dialogue and working with all partners and highlights the support that DIT can provide to businesses to encourage an increase in export activity. - JW confirmed that he was already working very closely with three growth hubs and FSB. - JW asked members to contact him directly with feedback on the strategic plan and to explore collaborative working. - YS asked JW to review the information on the MGH website to ensure it is fit for purpose and asked for sufficient notice to be given to help support the promotion of events. - YS to share social media handles so DIT can tag the MGH on messaging. - JW to share case studies to support DIT promotion. 	<p>All</p> <p>JW</p> <p>YS</p> <p>JW</p>
9.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DC confirmed the schedule for 2022 meetings would be shared in due course. - There was no other business and the meeting closed at 18.20. 	