



GROWTH HUB FUNDING TO LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIPS (LEPs)

SCHEDULE 3 - PRINCIPLES OF FUNDING (2020-2021)

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

To build on the success of Local Enterprise Partnership (LEPs) 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) have been a central instrument in achieving this goal.

It is for this reason that through the Industrial Strategy the Government has announced its intention to ensure that all businesses in every region have access to a local Growth Hub. 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. The following 'principles 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 'principles 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 local Strategic Economic Plans and the Industrial Strategy. This will also provide LEPs (including those in City and Devolution Deal areas) with the freedom and flexibility needed to 'blend' and 'evaluate the impact', of new and innovative local business support solutions around a core offer.

REQUIRED ACTION

For LEPs to consider the 'principles 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 and Karen.Hopwood@beis.gov.uk by no later than **Friday 31 January 2020**.

SCHEDULE OF WORK

As part of the wider offer for Local Growth Deals, Government is providing revenue funding to LEPs in 2020-21 for Growth Hubs. This schedule of work will enable LEPs to meet the Governments 'principles of funding,' which are as follows:

Principle 1 – Management, governance and coordination

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

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

The Marches LEP 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 MGH and receives progress updates from the Chair of the MGH Steering Group. The new LEP Chair, Mandy Thorn was announced in September 2019. The last MGH update was presented to the LEP Board on 24 September 2019. Shropshire Council acts as the Accountable Body. Please see diagram on Page 4.

The MGH Steering Group is a sub-group of the LEP Board and meets quarterly. On joining the MGH Steering Group, each member (excluding local authority partners) are asked to complete the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government template of the Register of Members' Interest Form and this is reviewed on an annual basis by the LEP Chief Executive Officer (CEO) in line with the LEP Conflicts of Interest Policy. In addition to this, members are asked to declare any interests at the start of all meetings for any relevant agenda items. The group has a very important role to play with regards to governance and provides guidance on key issues such as policy, objectives, budgetary control, marketing strategy and resource allocation.

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

The TOR are reviewed annually, and the election of the Chair takes place every two years. The Chair of the Steering Group is also the Small Business Champion on the LEP Board. MGH Steering Group agendas and minutes are prepared in line with the TOR. The TOR is currently in the process of being updated.

The MGH Operational 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 a LEP Board members, three Section 151 Officers and the LEP Director.

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 2020-21 and how will any potential conflicts of interest be managed? Please attach a diagram illustrating the structure where available.

The MGH 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, objectives, budgetary control, marketing strategy and resource allocation.

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 MGH 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 MGH Steering Group Membership comprises:

- Chair (private)- LEP Board Member/ Chair of Telford Business Board (nominated small business champion)
- Herefordshire Business Board (private)
- Shropshire Business Board Representative (private)
- Telford & Wrekin Business Board Representative (private)
- Shropshire Chamber of Commerce (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 Operational Group

This is an officer level working group which meets every two months to ensure that activities are co-ordinated effectively across the LEP managed virtual hub and the partner-led three physical hubs in Shrewsbury, Telford & Wrekin and Hereford. It reviews business support services from all partners in order to manage referrals, monitor outputs and share information. Its membership includes:

Local Partners:

- Herefordshire Council
- Shropshire Council
- Telford and Wrekin Council

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

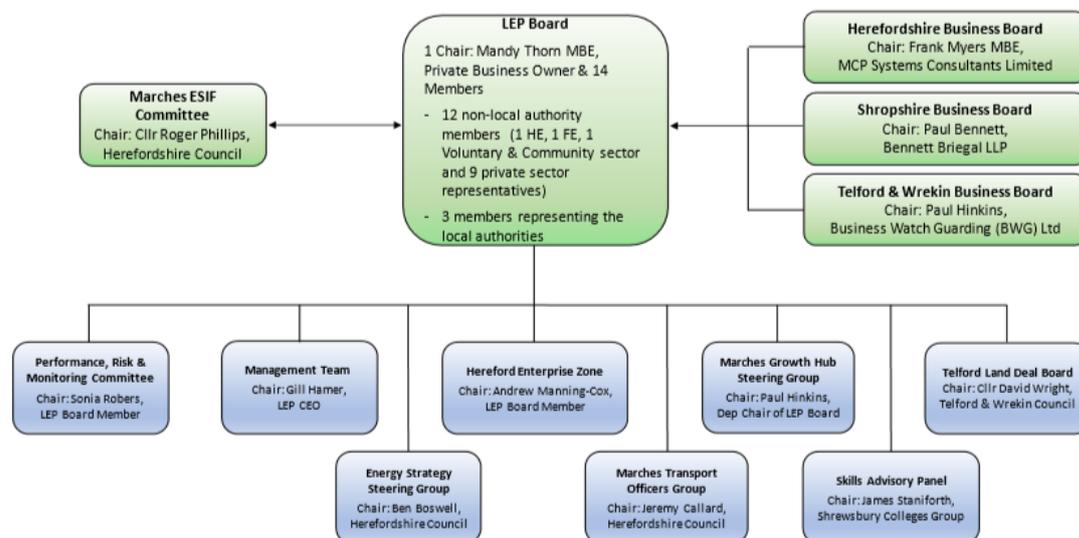
National:

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

The diagram below sets out how the MGH Steering Group reports into the Marches LEP Board, the reporting structure plus our three Business Boards. The Business Boards help to provide direct links to private businesses testing the effectiveness of the service and provide a route to publicise the service.

The LEP Board is made up of the Chair and fourteen members.

Diagram 1: Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Group Structure



3. What approach will the LEP and Accountable Body take to ensure compliance with funding requirements (e.g. high level of scrutiny of spend; quarterly claims submitted to BEIS in 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 MGH Steering Group meeting.

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

To confirm, the audit service provided by Shropshire Council is a chargeable service.

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 MGH receives £205k per annum from the Department for Business, Energy, & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) towards operating costs. The MGH is managed by the MGH Steering Group. Shropshire Council acts as the Accountable Body.

The Marches LEP area spans 2,300 square miles and is home to 30,755 businesses of which 89% are micro businesses with less than ten employees. To be able to cover such a broad geographical area with limited resources and funding, the Marches Growth Hub (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 that is supported by three physical growth hubs situated in Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and Herefordshire. Since July 2018, telephone enquiries are handled by the National Business Support Helpline (NBSH) via the virtual hub telephone line 0345 6000 727.

Due to the limited funding and resources, the three local authorities, University of Wolverhampton (UoW) and University Centre Shrewsbury provide facilities and Business Support/Economic Development staff to support the operation of the three physical hubs. Please note two of the MGH physical hubs are situated in UoW Business Solution Centres. **The university is currently carrying out a review of its business engagement activity. As a key MGH partner, we await the outcome of this review to understand possible implications to the MGH service in Telford & Wrekin and Herefordshire. As of 3 March 2020, feedback from UoW is that the Business Solution Centre Herefordshire will remain as it is. Discussions are yet to take place regarding the Business Solution Centre in Telford & Wrekin. We anticipate discussion to take place late March.**

The MGH project is managed by a full time Marches LEP Business Support Officer (BSO) and supported by the LEP Admin Officer 1 day per week. The BSO role involves government liaison, virtual hub management including the MGH website, supporting the three physical growth hubs and 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 by the LEP legal team and will reflect required aggregated and non-aggregated data requirements.

5. Growth Hubs are currently embedded within LEPs Strategic Economic Plans. Please confirm what plans will be put in place to embed the Growth Hub within your Local Industrial?

The Marches LEP Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) and draft 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. The draft LIS was submitted to government in December 2019.

As part of the development of the LIS, Marches LEP held a programme of facilitated consultation events with stakeholders. This included MGH Steering and Operational 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 draft LIS.

Innovation and productivity improvement form part of the key strands of the draft 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 MGH will remain central to the delivery of and access to business support and innovation services.

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 e.g. EU funding, HEFCE, Local/Combined Authority, private sector contributions etc.?

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 Marches LEP area spans 2,300 square miles, so we have established these three sites with partners to ease access to the MGH services.

Due to limited core funding and resources, we work in partnership with our three local authorities (Shropshire, Herefordshire and Telford & Wrekin), University of Wolverhampton and University Centre Shrewsbury who provide excellent facilities for meetings/workshops/drop-ins and Business Support/Economic Development staff (total of 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 – heat, light and operating costs related to Marches Growth Hub – Shropshire premises and dedicated staff resource (estimated £130k per year)
- Telford and Wrekin Council – dedicated staff resource at Marches Growth Hub – Telford & Wrekin (estimated £242k per year)
- Herefordshire Council – dedicated staff resource at Marches Growth Hub – Herefordshire estimated £70k per year)

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

- University of Wolverhampton provides premises, equipment and covers all rent, heat and lighting costs at Marches Growth Hub – Telford & Wrekin and Marches Growth Hub – Herefordshire – estimated to be £35K per year. **(To note: The university is currently carrying out a review of its business engagement activity. As a key MGH partner, we await the outcome of this review to understand possible implications to the MGH service in Telford & Wrekin and Herefordshire)**

- University Centre Shrewsbury provides rooms for events and conferences – this is estimated to be £2k per year.

ERDF

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

An information sharing event is held each financial year to support referrals. The last event took place on 3 October 2019 and similar events will be scheduled in 2020/21. The event brings EU project managers, growth hub staff, local authority economic development officers and other business support together to support relationship building and alignment of the business and enterprise support landscape. The event provides an opportunity to find out more about new projects as well as providing a refresher on some of the more established projects.

Skills Related Funding Secured by the LEP:

Marches LEP 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 funding is enabling us to have a better understanding of current and future skills and employment priorities that will impact on our area. This will result in an evidence-based approach to skills development programmes and may provide further opportunities for integration of business support and skills interventions, particularly in our strategically important sectors.

Work with Careers and Enterprise Company funded Enterprise Co-ordinators has continued in order to highlight the importance of links between businesses and schools as part of careers education and guidance.

European Social Fund 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 businesses with less than 250 employees. The training is fully-funded and flexible 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 some of the most 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 systems. The project supports the growth of SMEs and microbusinesses by ensuring they can identify and access skills development options that align with and unlock their growth plans.
- **Life Ready, Work Ready** engages SMEs, young people and schools and colleges to ensure there are easy ways for business and education to come together to share information on skills that employers look for, enable employers to influence activities in schools and to give people a better understanding about the jobs and skills needed in the local area.
- **Marches Centre of Manufacturing & Technology (MCMT) Skills for Growth** is improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems. The project supports SMEs in the manufacturing and engineering sector by assessing and delivering skills solutions essential to help them grow.

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

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 Growth Hub Network Branding/Communications Guidelines and Media Toolkit?

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.

Principle 2 - Data, monitoring, reporting, valuation and value for money

Compliance with refreshed 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 delivery and deliver greater levels of impact on business growth.

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

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

In addition, the LEP will be expected to produce an end of year evaluation of the impact of the Growth Hub and publish the results in an Annual Review of the Growth Hub's performance and impact which will be shared with BEIS by the **31st May 2020**.

8. 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 new 'Metrics & Evaluation Framework' including indicators that relate to levels of business awareness, engagement, transformation, value for money, outputs and impact?

We have Data Sharing Agreements and Service Level Agreements in place with all Growth Hub delivery partners. These documents are currently being reviewed by the legal team and will be updated to reflect the information required for reporting purposes from the three physical hubs and external partners.

KPI reports used to capture the information required will be updated accordingly for all partners to ensure we receive correct and full information in a timely manner.

The three physical growth hub leads will deliver an Induction session with all externally contracted delivery agents/brokers. This session will include data collection and reporting requirements set down in the new Metrics & Evaluation Framework.

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

9. 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.

A data capture excel spreadsheet has been developed for use by all local authority partners in each of the three physical growth hubs. 2020/2021 funding has been allocated to support further CRM development to enable better 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.

10. What local Growth Hub service delivery and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) have been agreed locally?

Marches LEP and MGH will comply with the requirements of the new Metrics & Evaluation Framework.

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

MGH currently and will continue to record the following activities:

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

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

11. 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 FAME/MINT. The current FAME/MINT contract expires at the end of March 2019 and will be renewed in April 2020.

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.

12. 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 and short, medium and longitudinal impact on business growth?

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.

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

The MGH would like to continue with impact case studies during 2020/21 and would welcome BEIS feedback and approval.

Principle 3 - Strategic partnerships and business support simplification

Build and strengthen relationships with the key local players across the public and private sectors and national providers such as Innovate UK (IUK), Department for International Trade (DiT), the British Business Bank, investors, universities and others to exploit opportunities for collaboration and to further join up and simplify the local business support ecosystem.

13. What approach will the LEP take, via the Growth Hub, to continue to develop strong, inclusive partnerships with all of the local and national players (public and private) involved in the ongoing development and delivery of the Growth Hub? This would typically, but not exclusively include the following:

Note: Please provide a short summary under each organisation.

National service and local providers namely, FSB, two Chambers of Commerce, Department for International Trade (DiT), Intellectual Property Office (IPO), Innovate UK, Enterprise Europe Network, and EU funded projects are encouraged to hold events and regular clinics at each of the three physical hubs (free of charge). This increases the opportunity for local businesses to update their knowledge, obtain quality advice and access networking opportunities.

Innovate UK (IUK):

For period FY2010/11 to 14/01/2019 the following was achieved in the Marches area: -

147 separate organisations were involved in Innovate UK funded projects, 108 of these were (micro, small, medium and large) businesses. A total of £14,366,988 was offered in grant funding, with £11,789,561 of this going to businesses. (data requested 14/1)

The LEP continues 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 Innovate UK's services and events and continuously improve the information on our website.

Knowledge Transfer Network (KTN):

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

The LEP and growth hub teams also 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 will look to work closely with the three physical growth hubs including spending time at each growth hub 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) / Enterprise Europe Network (EEN):

All three physical growth hubs have a regular DIT presence which has helped inform both the MGH Steering and Operations Group on emerging business issues and concerns. Events providing practical support to new exporters and new markets are also delivered at each of the 3 physical hubs and as part of the MGH high profile events programme. A very successful 'Get ready for Brexit' workshop was delivered with DIT on 18 October 2019 at Shrewsbury Town Football Club with over 70 delegates in attendance. Further events will be considered in 2020/21 should there still be a need to raise awareness of the DIT support on offer.

Referrals are also made to the EEN and the MGH promotes their services and events.

British Business Bank (BBB):

We will continue to work very closely with the Midlands Engine Investment Fund (MEIF) Senior Relationship Manager and four MEIF fund managers to help support outreach activity and raise the profile of the funds available.

The MEIF Senior Relationship Manager Ryan Cartwright is a member of the MGH Operations Group. Ryan with the support of the local Experts in Residence is currently helping to build growth hub capability and capacity with alternative finance training scheduled 20th January 2020 at MGH Telford & Wrekin. A further session is yet to be scheduled at MGH Herefordshire.

Two members of the MGH team represent Marches LEP on the MEIF Regional Advisory Board (RAB) one of which acts as the MEIF Regional Advisory Board Chair.

Intellectual Property Office (IPO):

The IPO contact Sophie Walker continues to actively work with the growth hub teams. We will continue to encourage Sophie to hot desk and deliver events at each of the 3 physical growth hub locations 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 <https://www.bethebusiness.com/group-event/mentoring-for-growth/> is now available to Marches SMEs.

Following a meeting with Andrew Cleobury - Marches Mentoring Advisor in September 2019, the programme is being promoted on the MGH website and Andrew is actively working with all three growth hubs on possible collaborative working.

Banks:

All three growth hubs will continue to work with the Marches LEPs Experts in Residence Gemma Bourne, NatWest and Deborah Norton, RBS. The British Business Bank and the Experts in Residence are supporting growth hub training in January 2020 with a view to adding value to team capability and capacity. Gemma will be delivering monthly mini NatWest Boost your Business events in partnership with

MGH Shropshire starting from February and these sessions will continue during 2020/21. The other two growth hubs will look to deliver a similar programme in their areas.

Marches LEP Access to Finance Strategy

Following the successful Access to Finance Summit events and Strategy Workshops across the Marches, the Marches LEP Access to Finance Strategy was approved by the LEP Board on 24 September 2019. 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. An Access to Finance Group (yet to be formed) will act as a sub-group of the LEP Board and will support the Access to Finance Strategy delivery plan.

ICAEW / Accountants:

The MGH links into ICAEW members and other accountants through the Professionals Partnership in Shropshire and Telford which is supported by the Shropshire Chamber of Commerce. MGH Herefordshire links into a similar network in Herefordshire through events and business clinics run by accountancy and finance professionals.

Angel Networks:

The MGH will continue to promote the Regional Angels Programme which was launched by British Business Banks on 1 October 2018. 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 Hub Telford & Wrekin and MGH Herefordshire are 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 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, Herefordshire & Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce and Women In Rural Enterprise (WIRE) activity and events that take place across the county. Where possible, business events are arranged in partnership with these organisations and information on forthcoming events is shared to avoid duplication.

Shropshire Chamber of Commerce are represented on the MGH Steering Group. Herefordshire & Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce and FSB are yet to confirm a representative for the MGH Steering Group.

Both Shropshire and Herefordshire & Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce are working with the growth hubs to deliver a programme of resilience events supported by Growth Hub Funding allocated to the West Midlands Cluster.

Enterprise Zones:

MGH – Herefordshire is based 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. In 2020/21 we will explore opportunities to access HEZ funding to sponsor the delivery of events at MGH – Herefordshire

Local/Combined Authorities:

As detailed earlier, our 3 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

Preparatory work has begun for the redevelopment of the derelict building on HEZ (Skylon Park). This will be the first Incubation Centre in the Marches. The project will help create more than 2,000 square metres of employment space, with room for new and growing businesses to set up and expand alongside facilities for development and innovation, presently earmarked for the new NmiTE University in Herefordshire. The centre is due to be completed in 2020. <https://www.marcheslep.org.uk/shell-store-development-to-create-a-business-incubation-and-innovation-centre/>

MGH Shropshire is developing a pilot Start Up and Growth Accelerator Programme for Shropshire working in partnership with a media company.

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 is in progress for Shropshire at present. It was agreed by the Steering Group that surveys – one for businesses and one for local regulatory officers who interact with businesses will be conducted in the first instance.

Both surveys have now been conducted and results are yet to be analysed. The results of these surveys will be the foundation for an event for local businesses and regulators to agree a way forward for BBfA in Shropshire.

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.

MGH - Shropshire also hold 121 surgeries at different libraries every month in the market towns. MGH Herefordshire and MGH Telford & Wrekin are currently exploring opportunities with their local libraries.

Enterprise Agencies:

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

Others (public and private):

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.

<https://www.telfordbusinessboard.co.uk/>

<https://www.herefordshirebusinessboard.co.uk/about-hbb/>

<https://shropshire.gov.uk/shropshire-business-board/about-us/>

LEP Network

The Network sees all 38 of the UK partnerships come together on areas of shared importance, to work with Government and share knowledge and good practice.

Midlands Business Support Network

The network includes National Business Support Providers along with the West and East Midlands Growth Hubs. Opportunities for cross border working will continue to be investigated as well as sharing best practice and coordination of events to ensure value for money is obtained across the wider area.

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 <http://www.meresandmossesben.co.uk/page/7/events.htm> and working towards an Environmental/Green summit.

Partners for Social Enterprise Networking

MGH Shropshire will continue to support a Social Enterprise Programme which includes high profile events, the last of which was delivered successfully in November 2019. A further event is being planned for 2020. <https://www.shropshirestar.com/news/business/2019/12/10/spark-social-event-hailed-huge-success/>

The Entrepreneur Club

Work will continue 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 at MGH Shropshire.

CATAX

CATAX are sponsoring MGH Shropshire, allowing the team to use their designated meeting rooms at Shrewsbury Town Football club and The Shrewsbury Club. The growth hub team is also arranging joint business visits with CATAX to raise awareness of R & D tax relief and Capital Allowances on commercial properties.

Retail Collaborations

This initiative involves retail businesses taking up an empty unit in a shopping centre for free for a set period of time. Businesses are asked to complete an expression of interest with successful businesses securing a unit space. The successful businesses then go on to trial the retailing unit for a set period of time. Successful outcomes are measured as permanent take-up of units in the Shopping Centre. MGH - Shropshire will look to continue with this initiative during 2020/21.

HR Collaborations

The growth hubs are actively working with local HR specialists and delivering workshops and events encompassing employment and company law. The workshops and events have been followed-up with 121 meetings and business surgeries.

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 September 2020 following a successful event in 2019.

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.

Marches Skills Provider Network

The first Herefordshire Skills Show took place on 3 July 2019 in partnership with Marches Skills Provider Network <http://www.mspn.co.uk/>. The event was very well organised and attended and received extremely positive feedback. Due to the success, a second event is being planned for October 2020.

ERDF Programmes

MGH SME businesses currently have access to **22** EU funded business support projects (including grants and consultancy support) with a total financial value of over **£20million**. A further **£6m** of investment in business support schemes is in the pipeline. Funding and support through the current and planned programmes will continue until June 2023. The growth hub teams and project managers will continue to work very closely to help maximise promotion and up-take.

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.

14. 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.

DIT

All three growth hubs have a weekly DIT presence at each of the sites which has helped inform the MGH Operations Group on emerging business issues and concerns. There is a DIT representative on both the Operations Group and Steering Group.

Universities

MGH Herefordshire and MGH Telford & Wrekin are situated within buildings operated by the University of Wolverhampton. The aim of the co-location of the physical hubs at the University sites 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. The university is currently carrying out a review of its business engagement activity. As a key MGH partner, we await the outcome of this review to understand possible implications to the MGH service in Telford & Wrekin and Herefordshire.

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

Chambers of Commerce

The Herefordshire & Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce is co-located with the MGH – Herefordshire and until recently MGH - Shropshire Hub was co-located with the Shropshire Chamber of Commerce.

All three physical hubs have access to meeting rooms, event space and hot desking facilities. The hot desking facility in Shropshire has been sponsored by the FSB and the private sector. MGH - Telford & Wrekin has a high-tech video conferencing suite available to both partners and businesses and provides hot desk facilities for local entrepreneurs.

BBB

The MEIF Senior Relationship Manager is a member of the MGH Operations Group. This helps support the delivery of the MEIF Funds resulting in greater take up, outputs and impact.

The LEP BSO and Growth hub leads attend the Growth Hub 8 (GH8) meetings (includes West Midlands Growth Hubs) coordinated and chaired by the MEIF Senior Relationship Manager. The aim of the meetings is to share best practise and support the delivery of the MEIF Funds.

IPO

The IPO contact Sophie Walker continues to actively work with the growth hub teams. We will continue to encourage Sophie to hot desk and deliver events at each of the 3 physical Hub locations to ensure that local businesses are able to tap into relevant patent, trademark and intellectual property support.

Collaboration

All local partners have access and are encouraged to hold regular clinics/workshops/seminars (free of charge) at the three physical hubs to help increase the opportunity for local businesses and business intermediaries to access the support and advice available. In addition, local networking groups including Women in Rural Enterprise, Shropshire Constructing Excellence, Business Environmental Support Scheme for Telford, use the facilities to encourage their members to access other business support initiatives.

15. What steps are being taken to collaborate flexibly with other LEPs and Growth Hubs, BEIS, other government departments and agencies, national and regional services (e.g. Investment Funds) 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 Northern Powerhouse, Midlands Engine, rural networks, natural clusters etc)?

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

- West Midlands ERDF funded business support and innovation projects such as Business Growth Programme as well as supporting extensions of projects such as Manufacturing Growth Programme
- Three other LEPs on Cyber Security (Cyber Resilience Alliance)
- Three other LEPs on Agri Tech (Agri Tech West Alliance) which signpost SME's to Growth Hubs
- 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.

16. How will the LEP through the Growth Hub continue to simplify the local business support landscape, building on previous work undertaken to map, streamline and join-

up the ecosystem 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 officers work with the Marches European Structural Investment Funds (ESIF) Committee to ensure that any new applications for business support funding are discussed at the Growth Hub Operations Group to ensure that they compliment current business support rather than duplicate.

A member of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) technical team is a MGH Operations Group member and helps keep the group informed.

Principle 4 - Triage, diagnostic and signposting

Encourage more businesses (particularly SMEs) to take up external advice (public and private) by providing access to a free and impartial local 'single point of contact' prioritising those businesses with the opportunity, ambition and greatest potential to grow.

17. What type of Growth Hub delivery model will be used by the LEP in 2020-21 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 includes a virtual growth hub and website www.marchesgrowthhub.co.uk that is supported by three physical growth hubs situated in Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and Herefordshire. Telephone enquiries are handled by the National Business Support Helpline (NBSH) via the virtual hub telephone line 0345 6000 727.

Partners from the three local authorities have confirmed their continued support towards the operation of the three physical hubs. As well as hosting a programme of events and outreach activity, the three physical hubs offer a drop-in service and the opportunity to have face to face appointments. The face to face activity intervention tends to be light touch to medium intensity both of which is reported to BEIS.

University of Wolverhampton provides premises, equipment and covers all rent, heat and lighting costs at Marches Growth Hub Telford & Wrekin and Marches Growth Hub Herefordshire. The university is currently carrying out a review of its business engagement activity. As a key MGH partner, we await the outcome of this review to understand possible implications to the MGH service in Telford & Wrekin and Herefordshire.

At present, our generic advisory teams in the three growth hubs, comprise local authority staff, who work with businesses to identify their key needs and opportunities for signposting to appropriate in-depth support, including our 22 EU funded programmes. Information on referrals is captured on the MGH CRM to ensure that MGH retains an overview of brokerage undertaken and recommended next steps. Additional 2019/20 funding has allowed the growth hubs to broker in skilled Business Advisors. Part of the 2020/21 funding will be used to do the same. This will enable in-depth account management to help support businesses to grow.

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.

18. 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?

The transfer of the virtual growth hub helpline to the National Business Support Helpline has enabled generic questions to be answered promptly and those clients with more complex issues to access more in-depth support from staff at the relevant physical hub.

A structured telephone or face to face diagnostic enables growth hub staff to identify key issues and relevant areas of support. These may include referrals to 22 different EU funded programmes which are designed to support those businesses with the ambition to grow and create jobs. These programmes provide the opportunity for businesses to access in depth face to face support, grant funding towards consultancy/capital investment and/or to work with a mentor.

Information on the EU funded programmes and the economic growth programmes delivered by the 3 local authority partners is shared regularly to ensure that the network is kept up to date of support that is available to growth-oriented businesses.

19. 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.

20. 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).

We transferred the virtual hub helpline to the National Business Support Line in July 2018.

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 to assist with pre-start and start-up enquiries.

21. 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?

Website - 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.

The website also includes an Employer Skills Search Facility. This was developed by the LEP and its Skills Board (which includes 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, through e-marketing campaigns and advertorials.

To note, the MGH website will be upgraded to WordPress, re-designed and re-launched during 2020/21.

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. The DIT information on the MGH website was recently updated following an audit carried out by the DIT team.

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 held in the 3 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 regularly held at each of the 3 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 again 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.

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 and LEP website.

In addition, events are held at the 3 physical growth hubs to highlight opportunities and increase awareness of good practice in tendering. MGH Shropshire delivered a high-profile procurement event in partnership with Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Council in February 2019.

22. What steps will the Growth Hub take to work in partnership with the BBB, banks, 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 firms?

We have excellent working relationships with the BBB and local business professionals (accountants and solicitors) through the Business Professionals Network. The lead from the Business Professionals Network is the Chair of Shropshire Business Board and a LEP Board Member.

The LEP Board has an Access to Finance Champion Paul Kalinaukas, who raises the profile of finance support available to businesses.

As previously mentioned in this report, following the successful Access to Finance Summit events and Strategy Workshops across the Marches, the Marches LEP Access to Finance Strategy was approved by the LEP Board on 24 September 2019. 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. An Access to Finance Group (yet to be formed) will act as a sub-group of the LEP Board and will support the Access to Finance Strategy delivery plan.

The MEIF Senior Relationship Manager from the BBB is a member of the MGH Operations Group

Principle 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).

23. What steps with the LEP take in 2020-21 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 hubs will be asked to further develop their scale-up plans considering any identified growth challenges faced by businesses in their area. The scale-up plans will be aligned with their local authority strategic economic plans which will tie into the LEP SEP and LIS.

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.

24. 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 use data sources such as the MINT/FAME (MGH funding support this) 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.

At present, our generic advisory teams in the three growth hubs, comprise local authority /University of Wolverhampton staff, who work with businesses to identify their key needs and opportunities for signposting to appropriate in-depth support, including our 22 EU funded programmes. Information on referrals is captured on the MGH CRM to ensure that MGH retains an overview of brokerage undertaken and recommended next steps. Additional 2019/20 funding has allowed the growth hubs to broker in skilled Business Advisors. Part of the 2020/21 funding will be used to do the same.

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

25. 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).

BEIS 2019-2020 additional core Growth Huh Funding for use to provide advice to Businesses on EU Exit has allowed the three growth hubs to broker/introduce high quality face-to-face Account Managers with the right experience and skill set to support business growth.

Each of the three growth hubs will be asked to do the same during 2020/21. Internal induction sessions for new broker/account managers will ensure all involved fully understand business support and reporting requirements.

Level of resource is not known at this stage as the three growth hubs are busy putting their spend profiles together in line with their 2020/21 allocation of £16,581.72 (each).

Growth hubs are also required to cover the cost of CRM Licence/development work (for reporting purposes), costs associated with growth hub events and PR/Marketing costs (printing and business cards).

We would welcome additional funding to support the ability to broker/introduce more high-quality face-to-face Account Managers and welcome BEIS Business Advisor training to support businesses through the EU Exit implementation period.

26. 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.