

Marches Business Support Steering Group Terms of Reference

Roles and Responsibilities:

A sub-group of the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Board which will operate under the following delegations from the Board. The Group will be responsible for:

- Championing small and medium sized businesses across the Marches and shaping business support policy to meet local needs.
- Working collectively to design, develop and deliver business support projects to meet recognised strategic priorities where new funding opportunities become available.
- Working strategically to influence and inform the Government's proposed business support reform programme.
- Providing oversight of Marches Growth Hub (MGH) performance, including:
 - Monitoring implementation of activity plans and reviewing six-monthly Growth Hub progress reports against KPI's set by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).
 - Monitoring six monthly expenditure to ensure it remains on profile, represents value for money and is spent in accordance with the funding agreement with BEIS and the Accountable Body Finance Section 151 (S151) Officer.
 - Monitoring legal compliance and risk and, where, appropriate, escalating issues to the LEP Board, via the LEP's Project Risk and Monitoring Committee.

Members must act in the interests of the Marches area and not in the interest of their sector or geographical area.

Democratic/Financial Accountability:

This sub-group will:

- Be a sub-group of the LEP Board and the Chair will present six monthly reports to the LEP Board, on business support priorities and Marches Growth Hub performance.
- The Chair will act as the LEP's Small Business Champion.
- Meet quarterly and will be deemed quorate if the Chair, at least 3 private sector representatives and one public sector representative attend the meetings. Attendance will be monitored, and it is expected that members make every effort to attend all meetings; repeated non-attendance may result in a request to step down from the group.
- The Chair and Membership will be reviewed every two years (please see Chair and Rotation of Membership below).

- Have a geographical/gender balance and representation of those with protected characteristics amongst its membership.

Membership

The Group should have up to fifteen members consisting of Private Sector members, Voluntary & Community Sector member and three local authority members representing the three Growth Hubs within the Marches Growth Hub partnership. Each member organisation is only permitted to nominate one named member for the term of office.

The current group comprises:

Sector	Name	Job Title and Organisation
Chair (Private Sector)	Dave Courteen	Managing Director - Mosaic Group, Marches LEP Small Business Champion
Business Board Representatives	Frank Myers MBE	Chair of Herefordshire Business Board, Director - MCP Systems Consultants Ltd
	Beth Heath	Chair of Shropshire Business Board, Director - Shropshire Festivals, Director - Shropshire Think Tank
	Graham Guest	Telford Business Board Representative - Principal Telford College
Business and Professional Sector Representatives (minimum 2)	Elwyn Turner	Director, Dyke Yaxley
Shropshire Chamber of Commerce	Maisy Owen	Chair of Members Committee, Director - MO Management Consultancy
Herefordshire & Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce	Sharon Smith	Chief Executive Officer - Herefordshire & Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce
Federation of Small Businesses	Hollie Whittles	Federation of Small Businesses West Midlands Regional Chair, Director - Purple Frog Systems Ltd, Director - FragglesWorks
Skills Representative	Colin Preece	Executive Officer - Marches Skills Provider Network, Business Consultant - SBC Training
Access to Finance Representative	Paul Kalinauckas	Marches LEP Board – Access to Finance Champion, Midlands Engine Investment Fund Strategic Oversight Board Member
University of Wolverhampton	Richard Nicklin	Deputy Director, Business Engagement - University of Wolverhampton
Department for International Trade	John Wigley	Strategic Partnership Manager, Department for International Trade

Public Sector Representative	Kathy Mulholland	Inward Investment & Business Support Service Delivery Manager, Telford & Wrekin Council
	Nick Webster	Economic Development Manager, Herefordshire Council
	Matt Potts	Head of Business Growth and Inward Investment, Shropshire Council
BEIS Local	Oliver Hindle	Assistant Director, Cities & Local Growth Unit, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
Marches LEP	Kathryn Jones	Partnership Manager
	Yasmin Sulaman	Business Support Lead

Attendance at Meetings

Meetings will be attended by:

- Members as detailed in the table above.
- Where expert input is required for a discussion item, a suitable representative will be invited at the request of the Chair.
- If a member is incapacitated by illness or has been absent from meetings for more than four meetings in any twelve-month period, without the agreed consent of the Chair, the Group may resolve that the member has vacated the office.

Apologies for Absence

- Members who cannot attend a meeting should give their apologies to the LEP Business Support Lead.
- Local Authority members who cannot attend a meeting may be represented by a named substitute from the Growth Hub or wider economic development team.

Agenda and Papers

- The Chair will be responsible for managing the size of the agenda for each meeting.
- In addition to oversight of Marches Growth Hub performance, it is anticipated that each meeting will cover discussions/briefings on a minimum of 2 of the following matters to be led by the following nominated members:
 - Access to Finance – Marches LEP A2F Champion
 - Impact of EU Exit on local SMEs – Chamber and FSB representatives
 - Impact of Covid-19 on local SMEs – Business Board representatives
 - International trade priorities – Department for International Trade
 - Business support products and services – Marches LEP Business Support Lead

- BEIS business support reform programme – Marches LEP Partnership Manager
- Marketing and Communications – Marches LEP PR and Marketing consultant.
- Papers for the meetings will be kept electronically and be made available to members at least five working days before the meeting.

Minutes

- Action oriented minutes of meetings will be drawn up and kept electronically.
- The names of the members present at a meeting shall be recorded in the minutes. If any other body or organisation attends the meeting, the name shall be recorded as being in attendance.
- The draft minutes shall be made available to members within five working days of the meeting and be submitted to the next meeting for approval as to their accuracy.
- The minutes as approved by the group shall be received as conclusive evidence of the facts stated therein and that the meeting had been duly convened and validly held.
- Approved minutes will be open to the public via the LEP and MGH websites.

Chair

- The Private Sector Group Chair, who will also act as the Marches LEP Small Business Champion, will be recruited by open and fair recruitment, which will include adverts on social media, in the local press and on the LEP and MGH websites.
- The Chair will be selected by an appointments panel, members of which will be agreed by the LEP.
- The Chair's initial appointment will be for two years. At the end of two years in office, the Chair can seek re-election by the group members. Election of the Chair shall be undertaken by vote. The Chair can seek re-election only once, so can serve a maximum of four years.
- The Chair shall preside over any meetings of the group. If the Chair is absent, the Marches LEP Business Support Lead will chair the meeting.

Recruitment of Members

- The representatives of the three Area Business Boards will be elected by their own Business Board Chair. They can serve on the group for a maximum of two years.
- Other members will be invited by the Chair to join the group.
- The Chair and the LEP will review:
 - the experience and knowledge in the existing group members and whether this addresses the needs of the group.
 - the diversity of the group, including gender balance and the geographical representation.

- The Chair and the LEP will also take account of any members who have indicated they wish to stand down in the coming year to manage succession planning and members' rotation.

Rotation of Members

The initial term of office for members is two years. At the end of their two-year office, the Chair, in consultation with the LEP, may re-invite members to serve a further two years. They can serve a maximum of four years on the group.

Members' Conduct

Members of this Group are expected to act in accordance with The Seven Principles of Public Life (known as the Nolan Principles), as defined by the Committee for Standards in Public Life. They are:

- **Selflessness:** Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.
- **Integrity:** Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organizations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.
- **Objectivity:** Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.
- **Accountability:** Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.
- **Openness:** Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for doing so.
- **Honesty:** Holders of public office should be truthful.
- **Leadership:** Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Declarations of Interest

Other than local authority group members, members have a duty to declare their interests (direct or indirect) in transactions or arrangements involving the Marches or this Group in the Register of Interests. The information gathered is intended to constitute a standing declaration of interests by members in respect of any of the matters disclosed in it, which will accordingly be disclosed to the Chair for this purpose. LEP Board members complete this form as part of their LEP Board membership.

If a member subsequently becomes interested (directly or indirectly) in a transaction or arrangement with the LEP or this Group, and the nature of that interest is not disclosed on this form, it is the responsibility of that member to ensure that he/she makes a separate and specific declaration of that interest to the Chair either prior to the proposed transaction being entered, or as soon as practicable thereafter.

A declaration of interest is also required at the beginning of each meeting by any Member who has an interest in any item on the agenda on which a decision will be made.

Members' Conflicts of Interest

In addition to the duty to declare interests in actual or proposed transactions, members have a duty to avoid a situation whereby their personal or other interests and the interests of the LEP or this Group conflict, or have the potential to conflict, unless such conflict or potential conflict of interest is authorised by the other members. An example might be where a member is also a member of another LEP Group that is competing for the same funds, or where he/she or his/her spouse or his/her business is able to exploit an opportunity that the Marches LEP also wishes to exploit.

Members whose personal or other interests conflict with those of the LEP must therefore take steps to seek the authorisation of the Group for such conflict.

The information collected will be placed into a register which the LEP will use to monitor its compliance, and the compliance of the individuals completing it, with the law relating to conflicts of interests.

The Register of Interests will not be placed on the LEP website and will not be open to inspection. Group members will be asked to review and update as necessary their interests on an annual basis.

Review of this Document

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually.

These Terms of Reference were last updated on 3rd September 2021.