

Minutes of Marches Business Support (MBS) Steering Group 2 September 2021

Present		
Yasmin Sulaman	YS	Marches LEP Business Support Lead
Kathryn Jones	KJ	Marches LEP Partnership Manager
Jo Grivell	JG	Marches LEP Business Support Admin
Ilia Bowles	IB	Marches LEP Deputy CEO and Director of Corporate Services
Amy Bould	AB	Marches LEP PR and Marketing - Director Be Bold Media Ltd
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
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)
Gary Spence	GS	Shropshire Council, Economic Growth
Steve Havins	SH	Department for International Trade - Head of Business Development and Partnerships
Colin Preece	CP	Marches Skills Provider Network - Executive Officer
Elwyn Turner	ET	Director, Dyke Yaxley
Richard Sheehan	RS	Shropshire Chamber of Commerce, CEO
Mike Goodall	MG	Federation of Small Businesses, Development Manager

Apologies:

- Hollie Whittles - Federation of Small Businesses West Midlands Regional Chair, Director Purple Frog Systems Ltd, Director FragglesWorks.
- Maisy Owen - Chair of Members Committee, Director MO Management Consultancy.
- Sharon Smith - Herefordshire & Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce - Chief Executive Officer.
- Beth Heath - Chair of Shropshire Business Board, Director, Shropshire Festivals, Director, Shropshire Think Tank.
- Matt Potts - Head of Business Growth and Inward Investment, Shropshire Council.
- Graham Guest - Telford Business Board Representative, Principal Telford College.
- Dave Courteen – MBS Steering Group Chair & Managing Director - Mosaic Group, Marches LEP Small Business Champion.

Not Present:

Oliver Hindle – Marches Area Lead – Cities and Local Growth Unit, BEIS
Richard Nicklin - Deputy Director, Business Engagement - University of Wolverhampton

ITEM		ACTION
1.	<p>Welcome and Introductions YS welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were given including that of Chair, DC who was unable to join the meeting due to technical issues. YS agreed to chair on his behalf.</p> <p>An introduction was made to guest speakers Emma Chapman and Gary Spence and to Ilia Bowles, Marches LEP Deputy CEO and Director of Corporate Services who is attending the next 2 meetings as an observer.</p> <p>Members agreed for the meeting to be recorded to support minute taking and to share with DC. YS to share the recording with DC.</p>	YS
2.	<p>Declarations of Member Interest No conflicts were declared before the meeting. YS asked for hands to be raised if any conflicts should arise during the meeting.</p>	
3.	<p>Guest Speakers:</p> <p>Presentation: Growth Hub and Business Support Updates (April to August 2021) progress and forward plan.</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nick Webster, Economic Development Manager, Herefordshire Council • Emma Chapman, MGH Shropshire Manager & Gary Spence from Shropshire Council Economic Growth Team • Kathy Mulholland, Inward Investment & Business Support Service Delivery Manager, Telford & Wrekin Council <p>Speakers delivered a very informative presentations followed by Q&A from the group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NW to share 10th September Herefordshire Council Business Summit event booking link for distribution to the group. - KM to provide details of ARG grant packages, full terms of the grants and timeline for the projects once finalised to enable coordinated communications. - Speaker presentations to be circulated with the minutes. 	NW/YS KM YS
4.	<p>Minutes of the last meeting and actions 3/6/2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Members approved the draft minutes. Actions were reported as being complete with some being covered during this meeting. 	
5.	<p>PR/Marketing Update - April to July 2021 report including forward plan</p> <p>AB provided the following update:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PR/Marketing tender was awarded to Be Bold commencing 1 September. MGH support days reduced to 5 days per month. - Update provided to group on activities and successes. - Be Bold to provide a new ongoing report that will more easily show the linkage between the work of communications and the signposting and interactions, to the impact of the business support that is taken up. AB to share new report at next meeting. - Be Bold is developing a new campaign strategy which aims to boost the signposting to business support and interactions with businesses. In addition, they will continue promoting individual activities, events, programmes and projects, but the strategic focus needs to be on building and increasing the awareness of the MGH as the gateway to all of the support that is on offer. - KJ requested an action to ask the steering group for their opinion on what the priorities should be for PR activities, in view of so many competing programmes and activities. PK 	AB

	suggested a short survey could be sent to all group members. AB agreed to put together a short survey.	AB
6.	<p>LEP Update</p> <p>KJ provided the following update: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No further update on the LEP Review. - Half of the LEP core funding has now been received. - New CEO, Rachel Laver will join the team on 14 September, part time initially and then full time from mid-October. Rachel will be invited to all sub-group meetings to help orient her with the various groups and activities. - Peer Network update – now recruiting for the first cohort in September. - KAM project is ongoing. - July LEP Board – DC attended the LEP Board and shared MBS Steering group progress. The presentation was well received. Two actions came out of the meeting 1) to confirm who we are engaging with and if we are engaging with rural businesses. 2) how we can use the data that we have to demonstrate the spread and scale of activity being done by the LEP and Growth Hubs. 	KJ
7.	<p>MGH Update</p> <p>YS provided the following update: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2020/21 Contract Feedback – awaiting September meeting date with BEIS and LEP to discuss year-end report and progress to date this financial year. - 2021/22 Contract - spend position as of end of July is £66,000. - Data moving forward will be presented in a new interactive report that is currently being developed in Power BI with the support from Black Country Consortium. - Growth Hub Network Evaluation remains at stakeholder stage. YS will share report once issued. - Business Support Reform – no further update and likely to hear the same time as LEP review outcome. - WM Growth Hub Cluster - Importing and VAT clinics continue in Q2 with promotion in August newsletter and via social media. Made Smarter sponsored social media activity to start in September. Marches lead Barry Jones is working with Chambers and Growth Hubs. - Business Support Helpline – Two digital campaign managers are on hand to help push MGH messaging. A free service to LEPs. 	YS
8	<p>Any other Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SH confirmed that John Wigley has been appointed as DIT Strategic Partnership Manager and will attend future meetings. SH will attend when John is not available. YS thanked SH for his contributions. - YS confirmed the date of the next virtual meeting as 9 December. - There was no other business and the meeting closed at 18.35. 	