

Delivering 1-2-1 advice and support to eligible businesses and enterprises, supporting productivity boosts, the local economy through improving performance and safeguarding jobs



Project Overview

Funded by UKSPF, V4 has supported Herefordshire Council and the Marches Growth Hub in delivering 1-2-1 advice and support to a range of businesses, supporting performance improvement.

V4 have delivered business diagnostics and advice and mentoring, focusing on agreed priorities identified through a bespoke, tailored business plan per business supported.

Across 24 diverse businesses from a children's bookstore and a dog groomer to a tree surgeon we have delivered in excess of 400 hours targeted support with business owners demonstrating high levels of engagement.

Business Support Programme

The purpose of the support was to help those businesses and enterprises improve their performance either through costs reduction or increased turnover/profit.

Each business was allocated a minimum of 16 hours support, typically receiving 20 hours, delivered virtually at the request of the business owner.

The support was targeted/focused interventions to help business owners refine their strategies, improve their performance and build capacity.



Project Goals

These interventions enabled Herefordshire Council to meet their core objectives to support local businesses and enterprises to:

- improve performance, enable businesses to become more resilient, more productive, more diverse, more efficient, more informed, and better positioned by providing them with the knowledge, tools and techniques to support them through this process;
- support the local economy by helping businesses and enterprises to improve their performance;
- implement business support to businesses and enterprises at least six months old, for a minimum of 16 hours per each business/enterprise

This project was delivered by V4 Business Advisory Team, who have delivered a range of business support interventions across a range of diverse programmes since 2020.

Project Scope

V4 provided business advisors to the Herefordshire Council (HC) programme and collated business insights and management information to report back to HC and to support evidence submitted to UKSPF to validate the grant funding evaluation reports.

The business sectors included retail, creatives, wellness, education and sustainability.

Each owner was provided with intensive, tailored support, advice and mentoring/coaching for at least 16 hours; where there was a business case – such as multiple priorities or complex issues to resolve – an additional number of hours was provided.

Across 24 diverse businesses from a children's bookstore and a dog groomer to a tree surgeon we delivered 460+ hours of targeted business advisory support, with business owners demonstrating high levels of engagement and made practical changes that position them for future growth.

Outcomes

Jobs Safeguarded

Jobs protected across the businesses (a mix of full-time, part-time and self-employed roles)

New Services Launched

Introducing new income streams or expanded offerings

Productivity Improvements

All businesses adopted new tools or systems including AI, Shopify and CRM

Growth Confidence

All businesses owners reported greater control, clarity and commercial focus

Sustainability & Inclusion

Support delivered to women-led and purpose-driven businesses, many with local community impact

Impact

Improve Business Performance

Achieved through tailored business plans and structure follow-up

Drive Productivity

Realised via tech adoption and clearer workflows

Safeguarded Jobs

Clear evidence across businesses supported

Explore New Markets

Multiple businesses now operating in new sectors or channels

Build Owner Confidence

Universally reported as a key gain

Examples

- A retail business repositioned with a new B2B service offer, safeguarding three jobs and launching a new product line.
- A health and wellbeing provider expanded their service by over 200%, adding new markets such as retreats and corporate wellness.
- A cultural venue strengthened its business model, adopted digital tools and repositioned for tourism and online sales.
- An independent education retailer is now building partnerships with schools and has introduced performance measurement for long-term sustainability.
- A design studio developed a global growth strategy for a new low-carbon product, supported by a targeted influence campaign.

