

**Black Country Growth Deal Update**

**Ward(s)** All

**Portfolios:** Regeneration

**Executive Summary:**

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1. The Government has proposed to capitalise on the current growth in the economy by inviting all 39 LEP's to prepare and submit proposals for how targeted funding can enable economic opportunities to be realised to deliver growth in their local economies.
- 1.2. To help secure these economic opportunities, the Black Country LEP submitted its Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) based on its uniquely well placed position to deliver jobs in high value manufacturing sectors, presented as the Growth Deal. Included within, the case was made for a number of capital projects that would unlock growth for the area, for the coming years. It also contained a number of non-fiscal 'asks' of Government, focused around the management of the projects, requesting greater freedom and flexibility.
- 1.3. The Black Country Growth Deal, 'Made in the Black Country, Sold around the World,' agreed with Government, is worth over £138 million and will generate an additional £310 million in public and private investment, totalling £450 million
- 1.4. The Black Country LEP has secured £138.7m from the Government's Local Growth Fund which will provide £35.4 million in 2015 -16 to deliver 14 of the capital projects submitted, with a further provision to be made available 2016 -17, for 2 more projects. The Government have also given an indication that the Black Country LEP will receive a further £103.4 million of funding from 2016-17.
- 1.5. For the Black Country, the Deal covering the period 2015 - 2021 will create up to:
  - 6,000 new jobs
  - Over 1,000 new homes
  - 3,200 additional businesses helped to grow
  - 7,000 additional learners supported to develop skills needed by businesses

1.6. A summary of the Growth Deal has been attached, Appendix 1 with details of all of the projects for 2015-17, grouped against one of the 4 objective below. It also outlines the freedoms and flexibilities we have secured.

- Raise Employability, Education and Skills
- Improve Business Competitiveness
- Transform Infrastructure and Environment
- Improving Transport Infrastructure

1.7 For Walsall, the Growth Deal means we have secured the following:

### **Employment and Skills**

- *Specialist Equipment for High Value Manufacturing* £0.2m  
Investment in high tech high value manufacturing capital equipment to meet current gaps in training. Two training providers in Walsall; Incomm and PTP will provide CNC machines to enhance the training meets the demands from businesses.

### **Infrastructure and Environment**

- *Goscote Lane Corridor* £2.5m  
To bring forward the residential development on the vacant brownfield site, in Blakenhall; providing improvements in local infrastructure and raising the quality of the local environment to contribute to the overall investment being made in new homes and within the Goscote Lane corridor.
- *Bentley Lane* £8.8m  
Bentley Lane Remediation project: creating 11ha of high quality employment land through site remediation works and off site road improvements to draw in over £40m of private sector investment.

### **Transport**

- *Improving Junction 10 of the M6* £0.7m  
Contribute to a major congestion-busting scheme by building new wider bridges over the motorway which will increase the capacity of the circulatory carriageway and allow the junction to operate efficiently. This will improve both national traffic flows (on and off the motorway) and local flows (on adjacent main roads). This improvement is also key to the development of the Darlaston Black Country Enterprise Zone sites and two regeneration corridors

### **Business**

- *Access to Finance* £5m  
Covering all of the Black Country, the access to finance schemes will strengthen the capacity of Black Country businesses to take advantage of new market opportunities. This will provide access to finance via the Regional Growth Fund to grow priority sectors via capital investment in plant, machinery and property. A £15m fund will be available over three years, leveraging in over £17m of private sector investment and generating 600 jobs.

## **Next Steps**

Key for the Black Country will be the effective programme management that ensures project spend and economic outcomes as set out in the SEP are delivered. The following key areas are being developed and put in place to assist with these arrangements:

- A Black Country Joint Committee governance structure is now in place to ensure we bring consistency to the management of the City Deal, Growth Deal and EU programmes
- A dedicated Joint Committee Secretariat role has been established that will ensure that members of the Committee are kept updated on the programme development and progress of projects
- Specialist Advisors have been appointed to make recommendations on how we can improve future planning through strengthening the SEP 2015/16 Programme, how we can improve and strengthen systems & processes, and finally how we can strengthen the capacity, roles and responsibilities of the teams working across the Black Country through the 'Team Black Country' approach.
- Individual project teams are being set up between the Council and our delivery partners who will operate locally and report progress to the Black Country governance structures, including the Black Country Joint Committee. Elected Members, local stakeholders and residents will have the opportunity to engage in projects such as Goscote Lane Corridor, Bentley Lane and Junction 10 through arrangements being put in place over the coming months by our delivery partners to consult and develop the projects further, as they work towards delivery from 2015 onwards.

In future it will be important to have a robust approach to governance arrangements, programme management, and ongoing work to establish a comprehensive pipeline of projects capable both of delivery and attracting any additional funding in 2016-17.

## **2. Reason for scrutiny:**

To update Members on the Black Country Growth Deal

## **3. Recommendations:**

That Scrutiny Panel members;

- I. Note the contents of this report and the attached Appendix, commenting and scrutinising as appropriate.
- II. Note and support the proposed next steps as set out above.

## **4. Background papers:**

Report to be presented at the Scrutiny Panel Meeting – Attached as Appendix 1

**5. Resource and legal considerations:**

None arising from this report

**6. Citizen impact:**

As detailed in section 1 of this report, there are significant benefits for the Black Country as a whole and Walsall specifically through the jobs opportunities the Local Growth Deal creates.

**7. Environmental impact:**

None arising from this report

**8. Performance management:**

None arising from this report

**9. Equality Implications:**

None arising from this report

**10. Consultation:**

None

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