



**BLACK COUNTRY EXECUTIVE JOINT COMMITTEE**

**Wednesday 9 March 2016, 11.15am**

To Be Held at:

**Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council,**  
**The Council House, Committee Room 1**

**MINUTES**

**VOTING MEMBERS**

Councillor Peter Lowe, Dudley MBC  
Councillor Darren Cooper, Sandwell MBC  
Councillor Mike Bird, Walsall MBC (Chair)  
Councillor Roger Lawrence, Wolverhampton CC

**NON VOTING MEMBERS**

Stewart Towe, Black Country LEP Board

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Sarah Norman, Dudley MBC  
Jan Britton, Sandwell MBC  
Paul Sheehan, Walsall MBC (Secretary)  
Keith Ireland, Wolverhampton CC  
Sarah Middleton, The Black Country Consortium Ltd

**INVITED GUESTS**

Alan Lunt, Dudley MBC  
Paul Mountford, Sandwell MBC

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1. **Apologies**

Stewart Towe, Black Country LEP Board.

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2. **Notes of Previous Meeting held on 20 January 2016**

**16/0013 It was resolved that:**

The notes of the meeting held on 20 January 2016 be confirmed as a true record.

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3. **Matters Arising from the notes of the previous meeting**

None.

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4. **Declarations of Interest**

None.

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5. **Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended):**

To agree that the public be excluded from the private session during consideration of the agenda items indicated for the reasons shown on the agenda.

None.

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6. **Black Country Local Growth Deal – M6 Junction 10 Resilience Package – Phase 2 – Approval to Amend the existing Accessing Growth Grant Agreement**

Stuart Everton was present for this item and presented the report to the Committee. Stuart advised that the M6 J10 Resilience Package Phase 2 (£1.25m in 16/17

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Accessing Growth) is an Accessing Growth funded scheme that would add value to the existing M6 J10 Transport Major scheme. M6 J10 Resilience Package includes improvements to three junctions, which will compliment the major improvements planned for junction 10 of the M6 motorway. The three junctions included in the package are located less than 2 miles north of M6 J10 and form part of a strategic route to the motorway for key employers in the Leamore, Bloxwich and Bentley areas of Walsall. As the construction of M6 J10 will cause disruption to the local road network, it is essential to support alternative routes during the works. The local road network to the south of M6 J10 is currently benefiting from improvements as part of the Darlaston Strategic Development Area Access Project.

Phase 1 of the package enabled carriageway widening for the junction of Bentley Lane/Bloxwich Lane.

Phase Two of the project to be completed during 2016/17 will involve civil engineering and traffic signal works at the following three junctions (with full details contained in the report):

Junction A: Bentley Lane/Bloxwich Lane

Junction B: Churchill Road/Bloxwich Lane

Junction C: Stephenson Avenue/A34 Green Lane

- 16/0014** It was resolved that the BCJC grants approval for the Accountable Body for the Growth Deal (Walsall Council) to proceed to amend the existing Accessing Growth Grant Agreement to the value of £1.25m to deliver the Local Growth Fund (LGF) elements of Phase 2 - M6 J10 Resilience Package project with delivery to commence in the 2016/17 financial year.

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7. **Black Country Local Growth Deal – Growing Priority Sectors – Individual Project Decisions – Approval to move to Contracting**

Paul Mountford was present for this item and presented the report to the Committee. Paul advised that Growing Priority Sectors was one of 14 projects approved to commence delivery in 2015/16 with an annual funding profile awarded of £2.0m for 3 consecutive years commencing April 2015–March 2018.

In January 2016 the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) agreed an expansion to its Growth Deal with the Government to enable an additional £23.9m of grant funding to be invested in the Black Country between 2016 and 2021. Growing Priority Sectors was one of the projects recognised in the expansion profile with £500k of top-up funding allocated to the existing programme - with delivery to commence in the 2016/17 financial year.

Paul advised that three further Schemes seeking Joint Committee approval for 2015/18 delivery were Chamberlain & Hill requesting funding for machinery, Superior Sections and Pascon requesting funding for new buildings.

- 16/0015** It was resolved that the BCJC grants approval for Sandwell MBC to move to contracting and award grant funding to Chamberlain and Hill for £330,000, Superior Sections for £240,000 and Pascon for £180,000 from the Growing Priority Sectors programme of works £6.5m 2015/16 allocation for delivery to commence in the 2015/16 financial year. Details of each individual project are

detailed in the report.

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8. **Black Country Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) Programme Funding – Approval for the four Black Country Local Authorities to receive EU Funding**

Alan Lunt was present for this item and presented the report to the Committee. Alan advised that these programmes are designed to specifically tackle youth employment from ages 16 to 29. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is responsible for the 'Call for Proposals' and the allocation, based on the current exchange rate, is £51m (£17m YEI. £17m EU funding, £17m match funding provided by the applicants). The timeframe for spending these EU resources includes the 2018 period, creating the opportunity for a three year programme, subject to being able to claim retrospective eligible expenditure.

The funding has to be targeted at supporting 16-18 year-olds NEETs and 19-29 unemployed into positive outcomes such as mainstream education and training, employment, Apprenticeships and Traineeships.

The BCJC have already given approval for Dudley Council to become the Accountable Body for the YEI proposal and for Dudley Council to accept EU funding on behalf of the Black Country Local Authorities and Talent Match for all eligible Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) activity.

This report seeks approval for the EU funding to be passed from Dudley Council, the Accountable Body to the other three Local Authority delivery partners, Walsall Council, Wolverhampton City Council, Sandwell Council and BC Talent Match. This will be subject to rigorous monitoring claim, checks and assessment to ensure that activity adheres to EU compliance and is YEI eligible expenditure.

**16/0016 It was resolved that the BCJC grants approval** for the four Black Country Local Authorities of Dudley, Sandwell, Wolverhampton and Walsall to receive EU funding for the Black Country Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) programme.

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9. **Black Country Local Growth Deal – Approval of Resources for Programme Management, Development and Support**

Sarah Middleton was present for this item and presented the report to the Committee. Sarah advised that the BCJC are requested to allocate Local Growth Fund (LGF) programme resources to develop a Team Black Country capacity through funded staff and activities dedicated to the future development of the LGF pipeline, together with its support and effective contract and programme management.

This request will approve an initial allocation up to a maximum of £5.267m of LGF Programme Capital funding to be made available to support activities within the 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18 financial years as set out in table 3.7.1 of the report.

**16/0017 It was resolved that the BCJC :**

2.1 **Approve** the initial allocation **of up to £5.267m of LGF Capital funding** to be granted to the Black Country Consortium and the four Black Country Local Authorities (as indicated in the report) to develop capacity within Team Black Country to support the effective programme development, delivery and

programme/contract management through 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18 financial years as set out within table 3.7.1.

- 2.2 **Approve** the use of the **Change Control Process** authority delegated to the **Executive Director for Economy & Environment within Walsall Council** on 17 June 2015 to vary/move individual allocations within this fund as long as they stay within approved overall financial year limits for each financial year and with prior agreement of all affected parties including the LEP Board.
- 2.3 **Request** each Local Authority to identify, for the 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18 financial years, any revenue funding that could become available as a result of this capital allocation to form a Black Country Proposition Funding Pot that can be used to underwrite speculative capital expenditure.
- 2.4 **Approve in advance** a Pipeline of projects that will be supported by this funding, to comply with the LEP Assurance Framework.

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10. **Black Country Local Growth Deal – Progress Update and Output changes – Approval of project expenditure and outputs**

Sarah Middleton was present for this item and presented the report to the Committee. Sarah advised that the report gives an update on the progress made in the further development of the Growth Deal projects (following the Progress Update and Output change report considered by the Joint Committee on the 20<sup>th</sup> January 2016).

The report also gives a summary of the current estimated known position for project funding and outputs, showing the associated change recommendations to the required projects.

**16/0018 It was resolved that the BCJC :**

- 2.1 **notes and approves** the updated project expenditure and outputs for the Growth Deal projects and agrees the changes as set out in Appendix 1.
- 2.2 **notes** the changes to Cashflow Forecasts as outlined at 3.4.

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11. **Black Country Local Growth Deal - Revised LEP Assurance Framework**

Sarah Middleton was present for this item and presented the report to the Committee. Sarah advised that the original LEP Assurance Framework has been revised - to reflect developments in the processes of both the Programme Management Office in relation to bid assessment and the Accountable Body in relation to due diligence and contract award.

The revised Framework reflects the process outlined and approved by the Joint Committee in the 'Revised Process for the Evaluation of LGF Bids' report and supporting documentation. The revised version also reflects the incorporation into the process of the LEP funding sub-group who make funding recommendations to the LEP Board.

The assurance framework for Transport Projects, is attached at appendix 3 of the report, will form a separate appendix to the LEP Assurance Framework.

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The new Appendix to the LEP Assurance Framework, 'Local Growth Deal Roles and Responsibilities' outlines the activities of the Programme Office and the Accountable Body in relation to assessment of Growth Deal bids and contracting with projects to deliver.

**16/0019 It was resolved that the BCJC :**

- 2.1 **notes** the changes contained within the LEP Assurance Framework (Attachment 1) which have been approved by the LEP Board and the Section 151 Officer at the Accountable Body, as well as endorsed by the Working Group.
- 2.2 **approves** the revised LEP Assurance Framework.

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12. **Delegated Authority – Black Country Local Growth Deal – PTP IT Academy – Grant Agreement Approval**

Paul Sheehan was present for this item and presented the report to the Committee. Paul advised that the bid is seeking to build upon the success of the FAB KIT Project within the PTP Engineering Training Centre in Walsall. It would develop a further learning offer to deliver engineering ICT based qualifications and courses. The basis of this bid is focused consultation with local employers to establish their ICT Training requirements, which has revealed that local businesses need additional skills to those currently offered by PTP in the Engineering and manufacturing sector. The PTP offer in terms of Apprenticeships and short courses will be extended to include:

- ICT based Estimating and quotation systems
- Stock control/MRP systems
- Additional CNC modules for the sheet metal and fabrication industry and Press-brake forming modules.

This bid would fund the additional software and hardware required to train on these systems and applications.

The project will target outputs of 150 Business assists, 150 Learner Assists and 80 Apprenticeship starts predominantly at Level 3 by 20/21.

**16/0020 It was resolved that the BCJC :**

- 2.1 **notes** that the Executive Director for Economy and Environment within Walsall Council in his role of Chair of the City Deal and Growth Deal Working Group has used his Delegated Authority to approve for the Accountable Body (Walsall Council) to proceed to a Grant Agreement **to the value of £40,000** with Performance Through People (PTP) to deliver the Local Growth Fund (LGF) elements of the 'PTP IT Academy' project - with delivery to commence in the 2015/16 financial year. Approval of this approach was achieved at the January 2016 LEP Board meeting.
- 2.2 **notes** that the need to use delegated authority was identified as the project was time critical and waiting for approval by the Black Country Joint Committee in March would have impacted on deliverability and was not suitable for approval using existing Special Urgency or General Exemption mechanisms.

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13. **Delegated Authority – Black Country Local Growth Deal – Very Light Rail Development Funding – Grant Agreement Approval**

Alan Lunt was present for this item and presented the report to the Committee. Alan advised that

The creation of an Innovation Centre and Test Track in Dudley, will support the development of the very light rail sector and potential growth of a new UK industry supplying domestic and international rail schemes. Its facilities will also provide companies with a significant opportunity to develop new very light rail solutions. The Very Light Rail Innovation Centre and Test Track project could support a wider programme of transport improvements in the Black Country including helping to tackle some of the congestion problems facing both businesses and visitors to the area; providing access to key employment sites; and developing a supply chain to this new sector.

Development funding of £300,000 is requested to support the further development costs of this project, including design, development studies and planning. These costs are planned over 2 financial years:

- I. Phase 1: January – March 2016 £150,000
- II. Phase 2: April – June 2016 £150,000

The Development funding bid of £300,000 is being underwritten by Dudley Council, during the interim period up to the full VLR scheme commencing. This satisfies the S151 Officer requirement for underwriting.

**16/0021 It was resolved that the BCJC :**

- 2.1 **notes** that the Executive Director for Economy and Environment within Walsall Council in his role of Chair of the City Deal and Growth Deal Working Group has used his Delegated Authority to approve for the Accountable Body (Walsall Council) to proceed to a Grant Agreement **to the value of £150,000** with Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council deliver the Local Growth Fund (LGF) elements of the 'Very Light Rail (VLR) Development Funding' project - with delivery to commence in the 2015/16 financial year. A further £150,000 will be requested in the 2016/17 financial year via the standard approval route. Approval of this approach was achieved at the January 2016 LEP Board meeting.
- 2.2 **notes** that the need to use delegated authority was identified as the project was time critical and waiting for approval by the Black Country Joint Committee in March would have impacted on deliverability and was not suitable for approval using existing Special Urgency or General Exemption mechanisms.

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**Date of future meetings**

- Wednesday 20 April 2016, 11.15am at Dudley MBC
- Wednesday 22 June 2016, 11.15am at Sandwell MBC
- Wednesday 7 September 2016, 11.15am at Wolverhampton CC
- Wednesday 23 November 2016, 11.15am at Dudley MBC