



**BLACK COUNTRY EXECUTIVE JOINT COMMITTEE**

**Wednesday 5 August 2015, 11.15am**

**To Be Held at:**

**Wolverhampton City Council,**  
**Committee Room 3**

**VOTING MEMBERS**

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

**NON VOTING MEMBERS**

Ninder Johal, Black Country LEP Board (sub)

**IN ATTENDANCE**

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

**INVITED GUESTS**

Simon Neilson, Walsall MBC  
Rupert Dugdale, Dudley MBC

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1. **Apologies**

Councillor Roger Lawrence, Wolverhampton CC  
Sarah Norman, Dudley MBC  
Stewart Towe, Black Country LEP Board

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2. **Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair for 2015-16**

**15/0041** It was resolved that Councillor Darren Cooper, Leader of Sandwell Council be the Chairperson for the municipal year 2015/16.

**15/0042** It was resolved that Councillor Mike Bird, leader of Walsall Council be the Vice-Chairperson for the municipal year 2015/16.

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3. **Notes of Previous Meeting held on 17 June 2015**

**15/0043** It was resolved that the notes of the meeting held on 17 June 2015 be confirmed as a true record.

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

None.

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5. **Declarations of Interest**

None.

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6. **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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7. **Black Country Local Growth Deal - Managing Short Trips Additional Schemes – Grant Agreement Approval – Sarah Middleton**

Sarah Middleton was present for this item and presented the report to the Committee. Sarah advised that the Managing Short Trips Programme was first identified as one of the 16 strategic priorities in the BCSEP back in March 2014, before receiving government approval and subsequent investment of £4.2m as part of the LGF Round 1. As an extension of the existing programme, Centro, in collaboration with the relevant districts, are proposing to deliver a number of additional schemes for which LGF capital grant is requested.

The Managing Short Trips (MST) programme will continue to regenerate active travel in the region to enable greater accessibility in the Black Country by improving cycling and walking infrastructure in targeted areas of the region. This tranche of four additional schemes will build on the current MST schemes being delivered, to support the reduction of congestion on the network and economic aspirations to unlock further investment at key economic sites including the four Black Country Strategic Centres (Wolverhampton, Walsall, Brierley Hill and West Bromwich) and Black Country Enterprise Zone.

**15/0044** It was resolved that the BCJC grants approval for the Accountable Body for the Growth Deal (Walsall Council) to proceed to a Grant Agreement with Centro to deliver the Local Growth Fund (LGF) elements of the 'Managing Short Trips – Additional Schemes' project - with delivery to commence in the 2015/16 financial year. This project is already in delivery and the additional grant of £715,000 will be awarded via a contract variation to the existing approved scheme.

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8. **Black Country Local Growth Deal - Walsall Waterfront Lex Site Remediation – Project and Funding Approval – Simon Neilson**

Simon Neilson was present for this item and presented the report to the Committee. Simon advised that Walsall Council acquired the Lex site from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) in January 2015 in order to secure its redevelopment as the final phase of the Walsall Waterfront project. The site has been vacant for around 10 years and is subject to ground contamination due to previous industrial uses. The remediation of the site will create greater certainty and reduce risk for any developer interest.

Walsall Waterfront has already been identified as one of the projects to be delivered as part of the additional £24m expansion to its Growth Deal that the LEP agreed earlier this year with Government, to be invested in the Black Country between 2016 and 2021.

Walsall Council is currently working with a serious occupier interest in the site and it will be important to ensure that remediation costs do not impact on the

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viability of the project. The nature of this interest, however, involves a development programme that would require early site remediation to commence in 2015/16 and a re-profiling, therefore, of the LGF already identified for this project post-2016.

To complete site remediation works, which are required to de-risk the site in order to facilitate the delivery of a commercial mixed use development supporting local economic growth and creating jobs. The remediation of the Lex site would create 2.2 acres of readily available development land, the delivery of which would effectively complete the redevelopment of the Waterfront area.

Ninder Johal asked if there was a confirmed interested party in the land.

Simon Neilson advised that there is a Planning Application being actively progressed by the interested party who were keen to commence.

- 15/0045** It was resolved that the BCJC grants approval for Walsall Council as the Accountable Body for the Growth Deal to proceed to an appropriate form of internal Agreement to the grant value of £415,000 to deliver the Local Growth Fund (LGF) elements of the 'Walsall Waterfront Lex site remediation' project - with delivery to commence in the 2015/16 financial year.

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9. **Black Country Local Growth Deal - Fab Kit – Performance Through People (PTP) – Increase of Grant Award – Simon Neilson**

Simon Neilson was present for this item and presented the report to the Committee. Simon advised that the project is providing capital investment in high-tech equipment increasing Performance Through People's (PTP) capacity to deliver high value manufacturing training that meets the skills needs of local businesses. Specifically the provision of CNC machines, to meet the training needs of local businesses and to deliver Bite Sized Training for employers/staff.

The original bid was to support investment in manual Press Brakes as advised by PTP's Engineering Manager of the time. Since recruiting a new (more experienced) Engineering Manager it has been evidenced that the manual machines are not fit for purpose and do not fit with the organisation's High Value Manufacturing strategy. Colin Parker (Skills Factory – Expert) has visited PTP and endorsed the recommendation to replace the manual machine for an Amada CNC Press Brake; aligning with market demand whereby currently 80% of Black Country Companies are using this brand. This request is seeking an additional £23k grant to upgrade the offering and purchase the Amada CNC Press Brake.

- 15/0046** It was resolved that the BCJC grants approval for the Accountable Body for the Growth Deal (Walsall Council) to increase the grant awarded to Performance Through People (PTP) to deliver the Local Growth Fund (LGF) elements of the 'Fab Kit – PTP' project. This project is already in delivery and the additional grant of £23,000 will be awarded via a contract variation to the existing approved scheme.

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**10. Black Country Local Growth Deal - Specialist Equipment for Advanced Manufacturing Technology Training – Grant Agreement Approval**

Sarah Middleton was present for this item and presented the report to the Committee. Sarah advised that there is recognised demand to raise employability skills within the manufacturing industry in the Black Country SME supply chain, re-skill and retrain employees to meet current demand from industry and increase competitiveness within key sectors of industry. Sandwell Training Association (STA) are looking to deliver bespoke training in high end manufacturing to enable the local manufacturers to compete in a global market and support the next generation of engineers through additional training.

Sandwell Training Association (STA) are working with these SME's, identifying skills gaps, multi-skilling existing workforce with new and enhanced technologies and now looking to move their manufacturing processes forward in key areas of engineering. This investment will allow Sandwell Training Association to buy in new equipment and software for a range of design, manufacturing and inspection software which provides complete, automated CAD/CAM solutions, CNC training, and product development. This new software and equipment will allow an increase of apprentice numbers on both the intermediate and advanced apprenticeship programme offered to member engineering companies. The advanced software and equipment will also help develop STA to offer higher apprenticeships to its students in 2016/2017 academic year. As part of the offering STA plan to deliver short bite size courses to local engineering companies, bringing their current manufacturing processes up to date, increasing competitiveness and outputs but more importantly re-skilling and up skilling the workforce in areas for improving efficiency and reducing skill shortages across the local area.

**15/0047 It was resolved that the BCJC grants approval for the Accountable Body for the Growth Deal (Walsall Council) to proceed to a Grant Agreement to the value of £30,000 with Sandwell Training Association to deliver the Local Growth Fund (LGF) elements of the 'Specialist Equipment for Advanced Manufacturing Technology Training' project - with delivery to commence in the 2015/16 financial year.**

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**Date of future meetings**

- Wednesday 16 September 2015 – Walsall MBC
- Wednesday 25 November 2015 - Sandwell MBC
- Wednesday 20 January 2016 – Wolverhampton CC
- Wednesday 9 March 2016 – Walsall MBC
- Wednesday 20 April 2016 – Dudley MBC
- Wednesday 22 June 2016 – Sandwell MBC
- Wednesday 7 September 2016 – Wolverhampton CC
- Wednesday 23 November 2016 – Dudley MBC