



Black Country Executive Joint Committee
Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton

REPORT OF THE CITY DEAL AND GROWTH DEAL ADVISORY BOARD

TO

BLACK COUNTRY EXECUTIVE JOINT COMMITTEE

ON

WEDNESDAY 17 JUNE 2015

Black Country EU Programme – Black Country Technical Assistance Team
Accountable Body Continuation

Key Decision: YES
Forward Plan: YES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present the recommendations of the Advisory Board of the Joint Committee in relation to the role of the EU Technical Assistance Team and to request permission to continue with the current Accountable Body arrangements through Walsall Council.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Joint Committee grants approval for the continuation of Walsall Council (as the Accountable Body for the Black Country Technical Assistance team) to host and line manage the Technical Assistance support services across the Black Country.

3. REPORT DETAIL

- 3.1 For both European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and European Social Fund (ESF) programmes a call for bodies to submit their bids for Technical Assistance (TA) support was launched by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), with the first round closing in May 2015. Prior to this all LEP areas were asked in February 2015 to set out their TA “Ambition” which will be used as part of the assessment criteria of local project submissions coming through the TA Call to make sure they meet local needs.
- 3.2 For the Black Country, this included continued delivery of the BCTA team to support development of projects and compliance with EU audit and governance requirements, Low Carbon specific intervention support and FEI ex-anti assessment. We have also

requested the opportunity for wider funding for feasibility activity to support potential new development opportunities.

- 3.3 The current TA service is being delivered by the Black Country TA (BCTA) team, hosted by Walsall council but available to all ESF / ERDF bidders and deliverers throughout the Black Country. The Working Group to the Joint Committee agreed at its March 2015 meeting to commit the funding required to support an ERDF bid as part of the new DCLG call. This is estimated at £64,318 per council, which together with the £200k already approved by the LEP board, provides a match for an ERDF bid of £457,273.
- 3.4 If successful in securing the equivalent in ERDF funding, the bid will continue the BCTA service throughout the Black Country through to December 2020 and include: support in the development of successful projects, compliance guidance, establishing records and the maintenance of successful EU procedures, EU audit and governance preparation and requirements. We have also requested the opportunity for wider funding for feasibility activity to support / develop our collective potential to access new EU funding opportunities.
- 3.5 The BCTA bid was submitted before the 16th May deadline and aims to continue to provide a quality service through to the end of December 2020. It will also look to extend these services to include the ESF programme through additional TA support available through DCLG and matching funding from partners, which is being considered by the Working Group to the Joint Committee. Should the bid/s prove successful and gain approval from DCLG (Department for Communities & Local Government), Walsall Council will accept these bid/s and continue to act in the role of Accountable Body, host and line managers for this service on behalf of the Black Country.
- 3.6 Its anticipated that there will be opportunities moving forward to apply for additional Technical Assistance support released through DCLG, if so the appropriate responses will be considered by the Working Group, with appropriate requests made through the Advisory Board to the Joint Committee.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Working Group (Heads of Regeneration) and Advisory Board will consider and appraise each application accordingly and make the appropriate recommendations to allocate resources or the ability to locate existing matching funding as appropriate, with the necessary reports submitted to the Joint Committee.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 In their role as Accountable Body for the BCTA bid, Walsall Council will seek the appropriate legal advice in relation to this application and apply it accordingly.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

6.1 In their role as Accountable Body for the BCTA bid, Walsall Council will utilise their Risk Assessment processes and procedures.

7. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The EU Strategic Investment Framework proposals, will deliver an economic growth agenda which is pro-actively inclusive of disadvantaged communities. Equality Monitoring will form part of routine monitoring procedures; however this will be within the context that individual projects are working. Equal Opportunities are a major cross cutting theme for all EU programmes and are closely monitored for effective delivery.

Back Ground papers

Black Country EU Strategic Investment Framework (ESIF)

Attachments

None

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