



**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  
20 JANUARY 2016**

**BLACK COUNTRY LOCAL GROWTH DEAL - ACCESSING GROWTH FUND TOP UP  
Amending the existing Accessing Growth Fund Top Up Grant Agreement**

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<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Forward Plan:</b>	<b>Yes</b>

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**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To request that the Joint Committee grants the approval, contracting and subsequent amendment of an existing Grant Agreement by the Accountable Body for the Growth Deal (Walsall Council) for the 'Accessing Growth' programme of works from within the Local Growth Fund (LGF) Programme.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That the Joint Committee approves the Accountable Body for the Growth Deal (Walsall Council) to proceed to amend the existing Accessing Growth Fund Top Up Grant Agreement with Wolverhampton City Council to the value of £2.8m (as recognised by BIS in the LGF expansion profile) to deliver the Local Growth Fund (LGF) elements of the Accessing Growth programme of works with delivery to commence in the 2016/17 financial year.

**3. REPORT DETAIL**

- 3.1 On the 7th July 2014 the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) secured £138m from the Government's Local Growth Fund to support economic growth in the area. £24.35m of funding was confirmed for 2015/16 with approval for 14 projects submitted within the LEP's Strategic Economic Plan. Growing Priority Sectors was one of the 14 projects approved to commence delivery in 2015/16 with an annual funding profile awarded of £2.0 for 3 consecutive years commencing April 2015 – March 2018.
- 3.2 In January 2015 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 commence in the 2016/17 financial year.

3.3 Accessing Growth is a fund designed to help deliver smaller schemes (above £500,000 but less than £5,000,000) which improve access to employment sites and strategic centres. Schemes include highway efficiency improvements, sustainable transport, and interchange improvements.

3.4 **Accessing Growth top up from DCLG – earmarked additional £2.8m for 2016/17, a total of £5.8m for the 2016/17 year.**

Approval is sought to allocate additional funding to Transport schemes for 2016/17 following confirmation from DCLG that the additional £2.8m earmarked funding is available to Accessing Growth schemes. The Black Country Transport Director will be guiding the prioritisation process and presented initial plans to the LEP Board at the Planning day in December.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The costs associated with these proposals form part of the LGF programme and will be covered by allocations from government associated with this programme. This includes the use of any interest accrued by the Accountable Body to cover costs associated with the delivery of Accountable Body functions, as approved by its (Walsall Council) Cabinet on the 29th October 2014.

4.2 The applicant (Wolverhampton City Council) will utilise its processes and procedures to ensure that best value is achieved.

#### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The appropriate Grant Agreements are in place and will be utilised by the Accountable Body (Walsall Council), and include all conditions passed onto the LEP by Government, together with all terms, conditions, performance measures and sanctions as required by the approvals/conditions received from Government or approved by the LEP Board or the Joint Committee.

#### **6. RISK MANAGEMENT**

6.1 Risk is being managed through the on-going assessment of individual projects and their ability to deliver the required spending profiles and outcomes for the programme as required or agreed with Government and set into place by the LEP Board or the Joint Committee.

#### **7. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 None at the time of drafting.

**8. CONSULTATION**

8.1 The funding decision outlined in this report for Joint Committee consideration is for a programme of works. Individual schemes seeking grant funding will be evaluated, scrutinised and prioritised on a case by case basis and subsequently put forward to the LEP Board and Joint Committee for a decision. It is anticipated that appropriate consultation will be carried for each of the identified schemes before approval to proceed is sought.

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