



Department  
for Business  
Innovation & Skills

Department for Business Innovation and Skills  
Enterprise Directorate, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
2 St Paul's Place, 125 Norfolk Street  
SHEFFIELD S1 2FJ

6 March 2015

*James T. Walsli*

To: **Michael Tomlinson**, Section 151 Officer  
Walsall Council  
Civic Centre, Darwell Street  
Walsall WS1 1DB

Dear Mr Tomlinson

**GROWTH HUB FUNDING TO LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIPS (LEPs)  
2015-16: Black Country LEP**

1. I am pleased to inform you that subject to the terms and conditions of this Grant Offer Letter the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills ("BIS") is prepared to pay **Walsall Council** (the "Accountable Body") **£400,000 (four hundred thousand pounds)** in accordance with the proposal contained at **Schedule 3** for the period from **1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016**, under section 11 of the Industrial Development Act 1982.
2. The Grant is specifically for the giving of advice to business by **Black Country LEP** ("the LEP") by supporting the establishment or further development of growth hubs, which are aligned to Government's ambition for business support (simplifying and rationalising business support in local areas and ensuring that national and local support offers are joined up for businesses) ("the Project"). The aim and deliverables of the Project are set out in accordance with the detailed proposal submitted to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills ("the Department") contained in **Schedule 3**.

**Conditions of the Offer**

3. This offer is conditional on BIS receiving within two weeks of the date of this letter (that is by **11.59 pm on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2015** the Grant offer acceptance duly signed by the Accountable Bodies authorised signatory, and where legally required, state aid clearance from the European Commission. If this condition is not met, the grant offer will lapse automatically. The grant offer may be renewed or extended at the discretion of BIS.

## Financial

4. The Grant will be **100%** of the net eligible costs (as defined and detailed in **Schedule 1**) incurred and defrayed on or after **1 April 2015** and will be payable quarterly in advance on submission by the Accountable Body of a statement of monies to be expended (as defined in **Schedule 1**) by the Accountable Body on the Project in the next quarter. Any overpayment of the Grant, whether disclosed by a report or otherwise, must be refunded forthwith to BIS on its first demand or upon the Accountable Body becoming aware that Grant has been overpaid, whichever first occurs.
5. Unless BIS otherwise agrees, claims for payment of the Grant must be submitted on a quarterly basis (i.e. at intervals of not more than three calendar months) commencing from the Project start date and returned to BIS by no later than the **20<sup>th</sup> March 2015 (Quarter 1); 7<sup>th</sup> July 2015 (Quarter 2); 7<sup>th</sup> September 2015 (Quarter 3) and 7<sup>th</sup> January 2016 (Quarter 4)** to allow advance payments to be released. Claims must be accompanied by the following documentation:
  - (i) A report on the Project covering:
    - (a) Progress made against the project deliverables as set out in the **Schedule 3**, including evidence of net expenditure for the purpose of delivering this project and any adjustments to future Quarters forecast spend (from Quarter 2).
    - (b) If applicable, any change in the nature or scale of the Project including an assessment of any change in the prospects of technical success.
    - (c) If applicable, any change in the ownership of or beneficial interest in any asset provided for the Project.
    - (d) Supported by copies of two sample invoices for expenditure incurred in the previous quarter as validation of spend on the project as set out in **Schedule 2** (from Quarter 2). BIS reserves the right to request further supporting documentation and exercise this request each quarter, with evidence of spend for review being identified by BIS.
6. In addition, confirmation is required that the in the course of the Project, the Accountable Body has expended the sums in respect of which claims are made. For this purpose a report from an independent accountant must follow the final claim only for the Grant. The accountant's report unless in exceptional circumstances must be submitted in **Schedule 2** format and must be made by an independent accountant who is qualified under the terms of Section 1211 of the Companies Acts 2006 for appointment as auditor of the Accountable Body. Alternatively, an accountant from a Local Authority within the LEP area is also permissible, as long as assurance is provided to BIS that the accountant is professionally qualified and that they provide a written statement declaring their independence. For this purpose the report must be submitted to BIS by no later than the **27<sup>th</sup> May 2016**.
7. BIS may also require a report relating to the Grant, from an independent accountant to be submitted in exceptional circumstances including:-
  - (i) Termination of the Project;
  - (ii) A claim disclosing expenditure substantially greater than was anticipated for the period in question;

- (iii) A claim being made which covers an unusually long period or relates mainly to monies expended in a previous financial year;
  - (iv) A change in the accounting reference date or accounting practice of the Accountable Body.
8. All claims must be accompanied by full documentation as specified at 5(i) above. BIS shall be under no obligation to make any payment on claims for the Grant received after **29 January 2016** and there will be a general presumption against paying claims for the Grant received after this date, unless BIS has previously agreed in writing to an extension.
9. Once a fully documented claim has been received, the relevant part of the Grant will normally be posted, or the claim rejected, within 30 days, unless it is necessary for BIS to seek further information to support the claim.

### **Changes affecting the Project**

10. BIS may vary or withhold any or all of the payments and/ or require repayment of Grant already paid to the Accountable Body together with interest from the date of payment, if BIS is required to so as a result of a decision by the European Commission or as a result of any obligation arising under EU law and if in its absolute discretion there may be occasions where BIS considers that the payment of the Grant should cease or that any part of the Grant already paid should be reclaimed. BIS shall be under no obligation to pay the Grant, already paid may become repayable, in whole or in part, if in the absolute discretion of BIS:
- (i) it considers that the future of the Project is in jeopardy;
  - (ii) it considers that progress towards completion of the Project is unsatisfactory or if the part of the Project funded by the Grant is not completed by **31 March 2016** or, BIS considers there is no longer any reasonable prospect of the part of the Project funded by the Grant being completed by that date,
  - (iii) there is a change in the nature or scale of the Project which BIS considers is substantial;
  - (iv) an asset, the cost of which has been included in the net eligible costs, is not used for the purpose of the Project or otherwise not in accordance with the detailed proposal submitted to the Department contained in **Schedule 3**;
  - (v) the Accountable Body does not comply with or observe any condition of this Grant Offer Letter;
  - (vi) within the period commencing on the date specified in paragraph 3 and ending 5 years after the date on which the final payment of grant is made, the LEP becomes the subject of a proposal for a voluntary arrangement or has a petition for Administration Order or a petition for a winding-up Order brought against it or passes a resolution for a winding-up or makes any composition, arrangement, conveyance or assignment for the benefit of its creditors, or purports to do so, or if a receiver or any other person is appointed in respect of its undertaking or of all or any of its property or if the LEP does or suffers anything substantially equivalent to any of the foregoing.

11. The Accountable Body shall inform BIS promptly in writing of any cessation of work on the Project and of any event or circumstance likely to affect significantly the satisfactory completion of the Project.
12. The Accountable Body shall also inform BIS promptly in writing if any of the events referred to in paragraph 10 takes place.

### **General**

13. In relation to the Grant, BIS and his \ her representatives and advisers shall have the right to inspect the Project at any time and from time to time and to require such further information to be supplied as he or they see fit. Such further information may include but is not limited to information concerning the financial position of the Accountable Body. In addition BIS and his \ her representatives and advisers shall have the right to call meetings with the Accountable Body if necessary.
14. BIS shall be entitled to withhold payment and/or claim repayment of the Grant under this letter to the extent of the amount of any grant or other payment which has been received, or is, in the opinion BIS, likely to be received, from any public authority and which BIS considers is payable towards the Project. For the purposes of this paragraph "public authority" includes any of the European Communities or their Institutions, any government department, research council, local authority, or body wholly or partly supported by public funds or charitable contributions. The terms of this paragraph do not apply to grant or other payment whose availability has been disclosed by the Accountable Body to BIS before the date of this letter and which has been taken into account in making this offer.
15. Notwithstanding the provision of paragraph 14 BIS may:
  - (i) withhold payment of the Grant and/or reclaim any part of the Grant paid to the extent necessary to ensure that any assistance given under this offer letter taken together with any other assistance which, in the opinion of BIS, has been or is likely to be received towards the Project is within the aid limits laid down by the European Communities;
  - (ii) withhold or reclaim part of the Grant if required to do so by a decision of the Commission of the European Communities;
16. No amendment to the terms of this Grant Offer Letter will be effective unless and until agreed in writing by BIS.
17. Nothing in this Grant Offer Letter and the Schedules to it shall prevent BIS from disclosing any information whether or not relating to the Project which BIS in our absolute discretion consider that we are required to disclose in order to comply with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or any other statutory requirements.
18. BIS normally publishes the amount of grant offered with the name of the Accountable Body concerned and a brief description of the project. By accepting this offer, you are indicating your agreement to BIS publishing the offer of the Grant.

19. We may be obliged to give the European Commission information on this offer. You may be required to co-operate with BIS in the provision of such information.
20. The use of grant funding by the Accountable Body for beneficiaries must comply with Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. The Accountable Body must ensure that if an exemption is relied upon, the relevant requirements of the exemption are met, and that the use of the exemption is properly recorded and documented.

### **Acceptance of Offer**

21. Acceptance of this offer constitutes agreement in full to the terms and conditions set out in this Grant Offer Letter. This Grant Offer Letter and the schedules to it constitute the entire agreement and the understanding between BIS and the Accountable Body with respect to all matters which are referred to and shall supersede any previous arrangement(s) between the Accountable Body and BIS in relation to the matters referred to in this Grant Offer Letter.
22. The offer should be accepted by the Section 151 Officer of the local authority or their authorised representative signing the duplicate copy of the offer letter on behalf of the LEP and returning it to me.
23. This offer letter shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the law of England and Wales, the Company irrevocably submit to the jurisdiction of England and Wales and your address for service in England is **Walsall Council, Civic Centre, Darwell Street, Walsall WS1 1DB**
24. If this offer is accepted, the Project will be monitored on behalf of BIS by the following official or other nominated individual.

**Karen Leigh**  
**Assistant Director, Growth Hub Policy and Implementation**  
**Business Support Delivery**  
**Enterprise Directorate**  
**Department for Business, Innovation and Skills**  
**2 St Paul's Place, 125b Norfolk Street, Sheffield S1 2FJ**

**Email: [Karen.L Leigh@bis.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Karen.L Leigh@bis.gsi.gov.uk) Tel: 020 7215 1414 Mobile: 07768 270 815**

Yours faithfully

Signed:



**Name: Adam Micklethwaite**  
**Deputy Director on behalf of the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS)**

**Date: 6 March 2015**

**Walsall Council** accepts the offer set out above and in the Schedules

**Signed:**  .....

**Name:** JAMES T. WALSH .....

Section 151 Officer of the local authority or authorised representative on behalf of **Black Country LEP**

**Date:** 18 . 3 . 15 .....

## RESTRICTED - COMMERCIAL

### Schedule 1

- The provisions of this Schedule are subject to the terms and conditions of the offer letter and apply to the BIS Grant.
- The BIS Grant will be **100%** of the net eligible costs (as defined in paragraph 5 below) in respect of which monies have been expended (as defined in paragraph 4 below) by the Accountable Body on the Project between **1 April 2015 and 31 March 2016**, the estimated costs of which are set out below:-

Period	Deliverable	Estimated Amounts
<b>Quarter 1</b>	Deliverables in this quarter	£
April - June-2015  (Note: 1 <sup>st</sup> advance payment issued following receipt of signed grant offer letter)	via existing WAVE2 funding	£
	via Lancaster University	£
		£
		£
		£
<b>TOTAL ESTIMATED AMOUNT FOR QUARTER 1</b>		<b>£0</b>
<b>Quarter 2</b>	Growth Hub Management & Monitoring (Inc. premises costs)	£103,706.28
July – September 2015	Growth Hub Marketing	£12,434.00
	Supply Chain Development Activity	£6,279.57
<b>TOTAL ESTIMATED AMOUNT FOR QUARTER 2</b>		<b>£122,419.85</b>
<b>Quarter 3</b>	Growth Hub Management & Monitoring (Inc. premises costs)	£103,856.07
October - December 2015	Growth Hub Marketing	£12,434.00
	Supply Chain Development Activity	£20,000.00
<b>TOTAL AMOUNT FOR QUARTER 3</b>		<b>£136,290.07</b>
<b>Quarter 4</b>	Growth Hub Management & Monitoring (Inc. premises costs)	£103,856.07
January – March 2016	Annual Accountant's Report	£5,000.00
	Growth Hub Marketing	£12,434.00
	Supply Chain Development Activity	£20,000.00
<b>TOTAL AMOUNT FOR QUARTER 4</b>		<b>£141,290.07</b>
<b>TOTAL AMOUNT FOR 2015-16 PROGRAMME</b>		<b>£400,000.00</b>

- The grant to be paid will be reduced by the amount of any Regional Development Grant received or receivable on any goods or buildings the costs of which are properly included in the net eligible costs.
- For monies to have been expended liabilities must have been incurred and defrayed. No claim can be accepted for liabilities which have been incurred but have not yet been defrayed.

5. The net eligible costs shall be the costs which are properly attributable exclusively to the Project excluding and deducting (as may be appropriate) from the amount of such costs:-
- (a) Input Value Added Tax
  - (b) Any other grant from any public authority (as defined in paragraph 13 of this Grant Offer Letter) received or receivable in respect of the Project;
  - (c) Interest, service charges and interest arising from hire purchase, leasing and credit arrangements;
  - (d) Any addition for profit by the Accountable Body and profit earned by any company in the Accountable Bodies group as a result of work relevant to the Project undertaken or sub-contracted to such company by the Accountable Body. For the purposes of this sub-paragraph “group” means any holding company of the Accountable Body and any subsidiary of such holding company or of the Accountable Body, and “holding company” and “subsidiary” have the respective meanings assigned to them in Section 1162 of the Companies Act 2006.





- (d) not in excess of overhead rates applicable to similar work carried out by the Accountable Body;
- (v) The amount claimed has been reduced by the amount of any Regional Development Grant received or receivable by the Accountable Body in respect of the Project;
- (vii) The totals at (ii) above exclude input Value Added Tax and interest and service charges arising from hire purchase, leasing and credit arrangements;
- (viii) The totals at (ii) above exclude any addition for profit by the Accountable Body and profit earned by any company in the Accountable Bodies group (as defined in Schedule 1) as a result of work relevant to the Project undertaken by the Accountable body or sub-contracted to such company by the Accountable Body.
- (ix) The Accountable Body has maintained adequate records to enable me/us to report on this claim for payment of grant.

I/We certify that except for the grants mentioned above or specified in my/our accompanying letter dated no grants from any public authority as defined in paragraph 13 of the Grant Offer Letter have been received or are receivable by the Accountable Body in respect of the Project.

Name for enquiries

[insert name and contact details]

## **Growth Hub Schedule 3 - Schedule of Work**

### **Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)**

#### **STRATEGIC CONTEXT**

Despite the benefits of using external support to help start and grow a business, less than 50% of businesses do so. In *Small Business: GREAT Ambition* (December 2013), Government committed to making it easier for businesses to get the right support at the right time.

Following a review of national business support, there are now two simple, easy to understand offers from Government to business:

- Government's offer to all small and medium sized businesses: the [GREATbusiness.gov.uk](http://GREATbusiness.gov.uk) website together with the Business Support Helpline, providing a one stop shop for all business support. This includes a diagnostic tool (My Business Support) helping businesses find the support they need, and the opportunity to webchat with advisers from the Helpline.
- Government's offer targeted at businesses with the greatest potential to contribute to economic growth: the **Business Growth Service**, which brings together the right expertise to help businesses fulfil their growth potential.

Ministers have identified a central role for growth hubs, being established by LEPs and their partners, in simplifying and rationalising business support in local areas, and ensuring that national and local support offers are joined up for businesses. Growth hubs will provide in each LEP area a single access point for business support, bringing together both Government offers and local offers, so businesses get what they need wherever they start their journey. Growth hubs will also bring together public and private sector support, for example that offered by local authorities, universities, chambers of commerce and enterprise agencies.

BIS will fund LEPs to deliver a schedule of work in 2015-2016 which will support the establishment or further development of growth hubs, in line with a set of principles which ensure that growth hubs meet Government expectations and achieve policy objectives.

#### **SCHEDULE OF WORK**

As part of the wider offer for Growth Deals, Government is providing funding to LEPs in 2015-16 to support the establishment or further development of growth hubs in a way which is aligned to Government's ambition for business support. This schedule of work will enable LEPs to meet the Government principles attached to funding for their growth hubs, which are as follows:

- a) developing strong, inclusive partnerships with local stakeholders;**
- b) putting in place robust governance arrangements to oversee growth hub activity and ensuring alignment with the LEPs strategic economic plan;**
- c) ensuring plans for growth hubs are deliverable and sustainable beyond 2015-16 when government funding ends;**

- d) **joining up national and local business support and simplifying the local offer;**
- e) **applying a common evaluation framework to identify what works and measure impact.**

The **Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS)** will make grant funding available to **Black Country LEP** to deliver the following schedule of work which will form “Schedule 3” of the grant offer letter. The LEP will be monitored for delivery against this schedule of work on a quarterly basis.

## **LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS**

***Principle:** All key local bodies involved in business support (which will typically include the LEP, local authorities, business bodies such as local Chambers of Commerce and the Federation of Small Business (FSB), universities, enterprise agencies and others) will have been engaged in discussions and are involved as partners in the growth hub. In practice, this means LEPs should establish through their growth hub strong working links between all of the institutions involved in providing business, innovation and trade support in their area (national, local, public and private), with effective leadership under the strategic governance of the LEP and formal agreements with the partners.*

- a) The Black Country LEP with private and public sector agencies and the four Black Country local authorities were involved in the development of the original business plan and funding bid leading to the creation of the Black Country Growth Hub. The project has been designed to assist in achieving the outcomes set out in the Black Country Strategic Economic Plan. This partnership provides full geographical coverage across the Black Country. The Hub has been operational since late June 2014.
- b) These partners have, and will continue to be involved in the development and delivery of Growth Hub services and the governance of the Hub via the continuation of the monthly Steering and Operational Groups which link into the LEP via the Competitiveness Board. It is envisaged that additional key partners, National and Local, and private sector providers and businesses will be engaged and encouraged to buy into the Growth Hub concept and model as we progress. Together these partners will focus on delivering a sustainable Growth Hub.
- c) This proposal and its associated costs have been developed by Steering Group Partners and is based on retaining the current core functions of the Growth Hub as well as increasing the Hub’s account management activities to further improve diagnostic activity and business support.
- d) The Business Competiveness Sub Board of the Black Country LEP recognises the importance of our focus on High Value Manufacturing in key sectors but is also supportive of our ambitions to develop a universal service to ensure that any business with growth potential can be supported by the Growth Hub and its network of partners.

This proposal is based on the assumption that the current governance and management arrangements continue, which are subject to Steering Group and LEP approval prior to the end of the current Wave2 contract and agreements.

## **GOVERNANCE, SUSTAINABILITY AND DELIVERABILITY**

***Principle:** The LEP should have clear and inclusive governance arrangements for its growth hub under the oversight of the LEP, with appropriate representation from businesses, and a clear plan for delivering and sustaining the growth hub, including other sources of funding and match funding where possible.*

- a. The Black Country Growth Hub governance arrangements are in place and comprise
  - Private Sector leadership through the Business Competitiveness Sub Group of the BCLEP Board. This group leads the development of the Business Competitive priorities set out in the BCLEPs Strategic Economic Plan of which the Growth Hub is a key focus for delivery. Established February 2015
  - A Growth Hub Steering Group comprising partners and chaired by the Project Director. Since June 2014
  - An Operational Group comprising delivery partners chaired by the Growth Hub Development Manager since June 2015.
- b. Consultants are being commissioned to assist in the development of a strategy and business model for sustaining the Black Country Growth Hub. It is anticipated that initial recommendations on an Action Plan will be provided by May 2015. Thereafter partners will focus on securing resources and implementing the findings with the aim of having a resourced sustainable operation in place by March 2016.
- c. During this funding period, the Growth Hub will explore additional funding opportunities via both private sector support and European Structural and Investment Funds to position the Growth Hub as the key pivot and access point for all local and National business support in line with the outcomes of the sustainability exercise and the LEP's Strategic Economic Plan and EUSIF Strategy.
- d. The Growth Hub will continue to operate from the Business Solutions Centre on the University of Wolverhampton's Science Park which is a convenient location for businesses. Space is available for partner staff to hot desk and the management team are based alongside the contact desk and local authority business support staff.

## **SIGNPOSTING AND DIAGNOSIS**

**Principle:** *The LEP should ensure that its growth hub actively promotes all forms of business support available in the local area, aligning with the Business is GREAT campaign. The hub should provide a diagnostic and signposting service for all businesses which covers all available business support across the LEP area (national, local, public and private). This should help businesses understand what support would help them most and connect them to that support. This function should wherever possible make use of existing national assets, such as content and tools from GOV.UK, GREATbusiness.gov.uk and the Business Support Helpline; ensuring businesses receive consistent information whether they look nationally or locally.*

- a. The Black Country Growth Hub will continue to operate and develop its website and social media communications which advertise a range of business support events, activities and programmes in one place, and to maintain its newsletter to businesses. This includes links to, and features on the national programmes, tools and support available. The business support helpline and GREATbusiness.gov.uk are fully accessible through the Growth Hub. The Growth Hub marketing and communication plan will be continuously updated to reflect the changes proposed post June 15.
- b. From July 15 the Growth Hub is proposing to strengthen the diagnostic process to be more effective for both businesses and the Growth Hub by having one Enquiries Officer who will process the initial enquiry and a dedicated business account management function (3 roles proposed) to actively engage, following up and manage the business relationship having conducted the initial business diagnostic. This function will complement and enhance the existing roles within each of the 4 local authorities and other partners by providing additional support whilst ensuring cross partner working. We will also focus on achieving greater traction with local private sector providers drawing on the expertise and networks of a key partner - the Black Country Chamber of Commerce.
- c. We will draw from the existing pool of diagnostic experience available nationally to help formulate our approach. (This proposed model is subject to the discussions and outcomes of the sustainability exercise).
- d. To ensure the maximum impact from this it is essential that we re-new our existing Memorandum of Understanding and Data Sharing agreement with BIS and the Business Support Helpline to maximise the impact of the service locally. This will be in place by the end of April 2015.

## **LOCAL/NATIONAL INTEGRATION**

**Principle:** *The LEP should support the integration of national and local business support through its growth hub so that it works seamlessly together; removing duplication and simplifying access. This will require growth hubs working with Grant Thornton UK LLP for the Business Growth Service to enter into bespoke working agreement setting out how the*

*growth hub and the Business Growth Service will work together to ensure ease of access for customers, including: two-way information sharing about services, joint working between teams/advisers (including through events/workshops), two-way data referrals (contingent on implementation of data sharing protocols) and other actions to enhance the experience of businesses with growth potential as required.*

Increased traction with and delivery of the newly refined National Business Growth Service and other National providers will be a key element of BCGrowth Hub activity moving forward. As stated above data sharing is critical to maximising the interaction of the Growth Hub with the national provision.

- a. Business Growth service has been accessible via the Growth hub website since January 2015
- b. To maximise the benefit for our local businesses it is essential that local and national providers are able to cross refer businesses to additional business support. Initial discussions have taken place with Grant Thornton LLP. These will now be accelerated with a view to learning from the experience of the Trailblazer projects. We will aim to enter into a bespoke working agreement by August 2015 at the latest.
- c. Discussions are underway in a similar vein with UKTI

## **RATIONALISATION AND SIMPLIFICATION**

***Principle:** The LEP should demonstrate that through its growth hub it is intending to create a more coherent and simpler local landscape for business, by mapping business support in its area, gathering data on the performance and targeting of local schemes, and, working with its partners, reviewing and rationalising schemes. There is no target for % reductions in local schemes nor target date by which simplification should be achieved, but there should be a focus on removing duplication, closing under-performing schemes and promoting schemes which are proven to be most effective at helping businesses to grow in line with the model set down in 'Simplifying the Local Business Support Landscape - Guide for Cities and LEPs' (issued by BIS 17 October 2014).*

- a. The Black Country Growth Hub has been working with the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP to map out the local business support provision since December 2014. This work has identified 221 business support programmes and products. The focus is now on undertaking an assessment of this provision to identify value added activity and where possible to rationalise and simplify the offer. This could, for example, be the introduction of a single expression of interest form across multiple products or a coordinated approach to marketing similar product ranges.
- b. The initial mapping and simplification process has been funded through Wave 2 funding but we see the need for this to be a continuous process throughout the period to March 2015 and staff resource funded through this schedule will continue to focus on this area. The results of our simplification activity will be reported to BIS on a quarterly basis

- c. Within the Black Country, where Partners receive project funding directly from other sources and are committed to the simplified approach, it is planned that multiple products will be brought together under one banner and have a single point of access via the Growth Hub. There is commitment amongst partners to offer seamless access to funding/grants programmes via the Hub whereby the business approaches the Hub with its issue /challenge and is supported in accessing the most appropriate source of funding. This will show a step change in the current approach of directly selling individual products to actively advising on a focussed business support package tailored to the individual business needs. This business support package will include maximising the uptake of the newly refined National Business Growth Service ensuring that it is effectively integrated with local programmes. Our aim is to develop a truly relationship based model in our approach to business support. It is intended to have formal arrangements in place by August 2015
- d. Another key element of the SEP is to help develop the supply chain across the Black Country and the Growth Hub plans to support additional work in this area. One proposal is to extend the development of an online portal for its key sectors. The Black Country Bullet has already been developed for the automotive sector and a construction sector portal is also under development. Through the next phase of the Growth Hub it is proposed to contribute to the development of aerospace and rail/HS2 strands. This will help develop local business skills and awareness of opportunities. The portal allows local businesses to highlight areas of expertise relevant to the sector along with specific contracts / experience they have gained. The portal allows OEMs and Tier 1 suppliers to post opportunities for contacts and allow for searches of the business database for companies with the skills required.

## **PERFORMANCE AND EVALUATION**

*The LEP is asked to commit to a **common framework of metrics and evaluation** to measure performance, customer satisfaction and impact of its growth hub, which will be in line with the framework already in place for Wave 2 City Deal growth hubs. This includes publication of an annual review of growth hub performance, in which the LEP will pull together the data collected on LEP and growth hub owned programmes and other aspects of growth hub performance (e.g. economic impact, jobs created, take up of support, customer satisfaction, removing duplication, and closing underperforming schemes). The annual review will need to be published by **31 March 2016** and shared with BIS in advance.*

*LEPs will also be required to submit a **Quarterly Progress Monitoring Reports (QPMR)** at the end of each quarter (details will accompany the grant offer letter). The QPMRs will be reviewed by an evaluation panel, which will make recommendations to the BIS Local Delivery Programme Board and Local Growth Deal Programme Board on payment of grant which will be contingent on the evaluation panel's assessment of progress as set out in the grant offer letter and this schedule of work.*



- a. The Black Country Growth Hub is committed to providing metrics data and quarterly claim information as it has during Lancaster's management phase. The business data and performance statistics will continue to be collected and processed and will be reported on as required to BIS in September 2015 and quarterly thereafter.
- b. The initial phase will also produce a full evaluation report due to be delivered by an external consultant before the end of June 15.
- c. The Black Country Growth Hub will publish a first Annual Report at this stage and thereafter by March of each year.
- d. A data function, maintenance of the business database and provision for monitoring have been included in the funding proposal for this interim period.
- e. As required the Growth Hub will use this data and information to contribute to the LEPs annual review.

### ***OTHER GROWTH HUB COORDINATION ACTIVITY***

The Black Country Growth Hub is committed to working with other Growth Hubs to learn from their experiences and to maximise the impact of scarce resources through joint working.

This will also include where appropriate developing joint initiatives with other LEPs and Growth Hubs particularly across the West Midlands to develop supply chains to larger companies.

The Black Country Growth Hub will continue to market and support partners' business events and seminar programmes both at the Hub and other venues as this is a significant element of work done to date. This will include the provision of business start-up workshops for those wishing to, or just embarking on, their new business ventures.

