



BLACK COUNTRY EXECUTIVE JOINT COMMITTEE

Wednesday 20 April 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 (Chair)
Councillor S Eling, Sandwell MBC (sub)
Councillor Adrian Andrew, Walsall MBC (sub)
Councillor Roger Lawrence, Wolverhampton CC

NON VOTING MEMBERS

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

Phil Coyne, Dudley MBC
Mark Lavender, Walsall MBC

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1. **Apologies**
Councillor Mike Bird (Walsall)
Stewart Towe, Black Country LEP
Tim Johnson, Wolverhampton CC

 2. **Notes of Previous Meeting held on 9 March 2016**

16/0022 It was resolved that:

The notes of the meeting held on 9 March 2016 be confirmed as a true record.

 3. **Matters Arising from the notes of the previous meeting**
None.

 4. **Declarations of Interest**
None.

 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

 6. **Black Country Local Growth Deal – Accessing Growth - Springfield Campus Interchange Connectivity, Phase 1**
– Approval to Amend the existing Accessing Growth Grant Agreement

Mark Lavender, Joint Committee Programme Manager (Walsall) was present for this item and presented the report to the Committee. Mark advised that the University of Wolverhampton bought the derelict Springfield Brewery site in 2015, with a vision to create a Centre of Excellence in the Built Environment.

The aim of the Springfield Campus is to stimulate economic regeneration in Wolverhampton and the Black Country through the creation of a regional, national and international Centre of Excellence in Construction and the Built Environment, bringing together school level education, higher education and employer training provision on one site. This will act as a smart specialisation hub in the region, bringing a GVA benefit to the Black Country of £314.5m over a 30-year project lifecycle (Springfield Campus Economic Impact Assessment, November 2015).

There are three Phases to the Project and all phases of the project support the existing Managing short Trips transport priority investment programme. The delivery of Phase 1 can be delivered independently of Phases 2 and 3.

16/0023 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 with Wolverhampton City Council **to the value of £600,000** to deliver the Local Growth Fund (LGF) funded element of the Accessing Growth Springfield Campus /Interchange Connectivity Project with the delivery to commence in the 2016/17 financial year.

7. **Black Country Local Growth Deal – Accessing Growth – Pinfold Bridge, Wednesfield Road Wolverhampton**
– Approval to Amend the existing Accessing Growth Grant Agreement

Mark Lavender, Joint Committee Programme Manager (Walsall) was present for this item and presented the report to the Committee. Mark advised that the Pinfold Bridge carries High Street/Lichfield Road over the Wyrley and Essington Canal north of Wednesfield centre, Wolverhampton. This is a strategic traffic route for access to Wednesfield Centre, which carries a high frequency bus service that connects the Wednesfield Corridor.

The existing road bridge structure has failed its structural assessment due to corrosion of the main girders. The adjacent footbridge deck is also in a poor condition. The structure requires replacing to increase the load capacity to meet current standards.

16/0024 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 Fund Grant Agreement with Wolverhampton City Council **to the value of £675,000** to deliver the Local Growth Fund (LGF) funded elements of the Pinfold Bridge, Wednesfield, Wolverhampton project – with delivery to commence in the 2016/17 financial year.

8. **Black Country Local Growth Deal - Growth Hub – Additional Funding**
- Grant Agreement Approval

Mark Lavender, Joint Committee Programme Manager (Walsall) was present for

this item and presented the report to the Committee. Mark advised that the Department of Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) awarded funding of £400,000 through the Local Growth Fund (LGF) towards the development of the Black Country Growth Hub for the 2015/16 financial year. The Black Country Joint Committee approved the development of a legal agreement between Walsall Council as the Accountable Body for LGF funding and the City of Wolverhampton Council as the lead body for the Growth Hub to ensure Governance of this funding. At that stage BIS also announced that they would not provide additional funding for the Growth Hub in future years. The City of Wolverhampton Council has applied for ERDF funding on behalf of the Black Country to ensure the sustainability of the Growth Hub.

However, following the Comprehensive Spending Review BIS recently announced that they would continue to support Growth Hubs in 2016/17 and 2017/18. In February 2016, the Black Country were informed that this would amount to £328,000 in each financial year. The allocations will provide continuation revenue funding to LEPs, and can be spent on growth hub related activities (building capacity, capability and self-sustaining models) but cannot be used to make grants to businesses (in the style of RGF).

We are required to confirm growth hub development plans for 2016-17 against Key principles and these are contained in the report. BIS have approved the funding submission as described in the report.

16/0025 It was resolved that the BCJC:

2.1 grants approval for the Accountable Body for the Growth Deal (Walsall Council) to proceed to a Grant Agreement with the City of Wolverhampton Council **to the value of £328,000** for 2016/17 financial year to deliver the Black Country Growth Hub Funding for 2016/17.

2.2 notes the offer from government relating to the Black Country LEP Growth Hub Interim Funding 2016/17, and the associated Programme of Work.

9. **Black Country Local Growth Deal – Accessing Growth – A459 Dudley Road/Coombs Road, Halesowen, Junction Improvement**
– Approval to Amend the existing Accessing Growth Grant Agreement

Phil Coyne (Dudley) was present for this item and presented the report to the Committee. Phil advised that the Coombs Wood Business Park is home to 445 businesses whilst the wider surrounding area includes 1415 businesses.

The main highway access to the Business Park is via the A459 Dudley Road/Coombs Road traffic signal junction, which suffers from significant queuing and delays, particularly at peak times, and therefore acts as a barrier to growth and constrains access to the local, regional and national highway networks (via M5 junction 3). The proposal to improve the junction will improve efficiency and reduce delays thereby improving access and journey times to the Business Park from the surrounding local and strategic highway network. The proposal will also improve safety and access to the site by sustainable modes, including walking, cycling and public transport.

16/0026 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 Fund Grant Agreement with the

City of Wolverhampton Council **to the value of £360,000 in 2016/17** to deliver the Local Growth Fund (LGF) elements of the A459 Dudley Road/Coombs Road, Halesowen, Junction Improvement project with delivery to commence in the 2016/17 financial year.

10. **Black Country Local Growth Deal – Very Light Rail Innovation Centre, Development Funding Phase 2 – Grant Agreement Approval**

Phil Coyne (Dudley) was present for this item and presented the report to the Committee. Phil 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.

16/0027 It was resolved that the BCJC:

- 2.1 grants approval for the Accountable Body for the Growth Deal (Walsall Council) to proceed to a Grant Agreement with Dudley Metropolitan Council **to the grant value of £150k** to deliver the Local Growth Fund (LGF) elements of the Very Light Rail Development Funding (Phase 2) project - with delivery to commence in the 2016/17 financial year.
- 2.2 notes the full request for Development Funding was £300k. The Joint Committee are reminded that at their previous meeting on 9 March 2016 the Executive Director for Economy and Environment within Walsall Council in his role of Chair of the City Deal and Growth Deal Working Group reported that he had used his Delegated Authority to approve £150k for 2015/16.

Date of future meetings

- 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