



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

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR REGENERATION, WALSALL MBC

TO

BLACK COUNTRY EXECUTIVE JOINT COMMITTEE – 26TH MARCH 2014

BLACK COUNTRY STRATEGIC ECONOMIC PLAN

Key Decision: NO

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise the Black Country Executive Joint Committee that on Monday 24 March 2014, the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Board are being recommended to approve the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) and agree that it be submitted for consideration by Government as part of the Single Local Growth Fund process at the end of March 2014. The Black Country Executive Joint Committee are being asked to receive verbally the LEPs decision and note any subsequent comments from the LEP Board.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Black Country Executive Joint Committee are asked to support the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Boards decision and any subsequent comments from the Black Country LEP Board prior to submission of the Strategic Economic Plan to Government.

3. REPORT DETAIL

- 3.1 Following the publication of Lord Heseltine's Report, 'No Stone Unturned' on the UK's approach to wealth creation, the Secretaries of State for Business, Innovation and Skills and Communities and Local Government wrote to the Chairs of all Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) stating their support for his case for "increased devolution of economic powers away from central government" and to the creation of a Single Local Growth Fund. They confirmed that funding streams of over £2 billion would be transferred into the Single Local Growth Fund (SLGF)

for 2015-16 and a further commitment to at least £2 billion for the SLGF in each year of the next Parliament.

3.2 The Government subsequently published further guidance on Strategic Economic Plans which would provide the basis for determining SLGF allocations. Government would be, “looking for an approach which brings together the Local Enterprise Partnership and its partners across the Local Enterprise Partnership area around a common growth agenda. We expect these plans to be based on the drivers and barriers to growth specific to each Local Enterprise Partnership area, but to have regard to national policy on growth, including for example housing, transport, skills, industrial strategy, flooding and rural economies.”

3.3 An Executive Summary of the proposed Black Country Strategic Economic Plan is attached to this report. The full version of the Plan will be circulated separately to LEP Board members prior to the LEP Board meeting on 24 March 2014. The Plan has been developed through LEP policy planning sessions with Board members in July and December 2013. The final version of the Plan will be considered by the LEP Board at its meeting on 24th March 2014 and an update on its decision will be given to the Black Country Executive Joint Committee at its meeting on 26 March 2014.

3.4 The Plan and proposed local growth deal builds on a track record of effective delivery and a strong strategic context. This includes:

- Our evidence-based, long term vision for the future of the Black Country;
- A pro-growth core strategy which covers all four councils and is underpinned by a business-friendly planning service;
- One of the most successful Enterprise Zones which is acting as a catalyst for growth for the national and local economy, most notably in relation to aerospace and automotive sectors;
- A number of other programmes including our City Deal with the Growth Factory and Skills Factory.

3.5 Delivering our growth ambitions requires on going action to:

- Meet the requirements of businesses in those high growth sectors for high quality, well-connected sites and premises and access to a skilled workforce; enabling businesses in our growth sectors to grow and deliver our contribution to the implementation of the UK Industrial Strategy;
- Ensure that the Black Country is a good place in which to live, work, visit and invest, including more houses and improved schools; ensuring that the Black Country has the economic, social and physical infrastructure to enable those companies to grow.

3.6 Further details of the specific projects to be submitted within the Plan will be available at the meeting.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 As stated above, the Government has confirmed that funding streams of over £2 billion would be transferred into the Single Local Growth Fund (SLGF) for 2015-16 and a further commitment to at least £2 billion for the SLGF in each year of the next Parliament. This includes funding from skills, housing and transport budgets

and includes £500m of funding for skills, the most significant new element of funding in the SLGF on top of significant transport resources beyond existing indicative funding for majors schemes through to 2020.

- 4.2 The City Deal and Growth Deal Working Group will receive regular monitoring reports on funding streams and or individual projects upon the effectiveness and performance of delivery by the Lead and/or Accountable Body. The Working Group will in turn produce regular monitoring reports to the City Deal and Growth Deal Advisory Board. The Black Country Executive Joint Committee will receive at least a yearly report from the City Deal and Growth Deal Advisory Board upon the effectiveness and performance by the Lead and/or Accountable Body in delivering the City Deal and or Growth Deal initiatives, programmes and for funding streams for which they are responsible.
- 4.3 In order to ensure that the project participants are at the heart of this process, financial information will be available in an understandable and accessible format to ensure transparency and scrutiny.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The requirement to prepare a SEP and bid for Single Local Growth Fund was established by Government following the Publication of Lord Heseltine's Report, 'No Stone Unturned' on the UK's approach to wealth creation and a subsequent letter from the Secretaries of State for Business, Innovation and Skills and Communities and Local Government in June 2013. Further guidance on Plans and Growth Deals was published by Government in July 2013 and the Plan has been developed in accordance with this guidance.
- 5.2 Projects and proposals funded from the Growth Fund will be managed in accordance with the terms of reference, collaboration agreement and other regulations and protocols introduced pursuant to the establishment of the Joint Committee and to comply with any requirements of the accountable body.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 The SEP contains a Risk Register that identifies the key threats at this point. Describing them, classifying their potential probability and impact, outlining existing controls, any action required and rating the risk based on those characteristics. It is likely that other risks will be identified as the programme develops while others will recede. Awareness and swift action will be key. This register will be regularly updated and initially reported on a quarterly basis, subject to review at the end of the first year. Its oversight will be the responsibility of the Accountable Body supported by the Programme Manager.

7. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Black Country Single Local Growth Fund, in conjunction with the City Deal and 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.

7.2 To try and avoid repeated and unnecessary “form filling”, therefore the approach to be used will be based on a continuing development of the relationship between a range of partners. There will be data sharing protocols that need to be developed, consulted upon and implemented in order to ensure that duplicative and uncoordinated monitoring systems are streamlined and linked.

7.3 A variety of tools will be used to undertake equalities impact assessments of programmes. Equality analysis reports will be factored into the monitoring returns and quarterly equalities updates will be prepared. The Programme Manager will ensure that this information is analysed and any gaps identified or issues resolved to ensure that the overall programme is inclusive and effective at targeting a representative cross section of participants.

Back Ground papers

Draft Black Country Strategic Economic Plan
Black Country European Structural and Investment Fund Strategy
Black Country City Deal Agreement
Black Country Draft Green Growth Plan
Black Country Core Strategy

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