



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 April 2016

Black Country Local Growth Deal – ACCESSING GROWTH - SPRINGFIELD CAMPUS
INTERCHANGE CONNECTIVITY PROJECT (Phase 1)
Amending the Existing Accessing Growth Fund Grant Agreement

Key Decision: Yes
Forward Plan: Yes

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To request that the Joint Committee approves contracting and subsequent amendment of an existing Grant Agreement by the Accountable Body for the Growth Deal (Walsall Council) for the Springfield Campus / Interchange Connectivity Project from within the Accessing Growth element of the Local Growth Fund (LGF) programme.
- 1.2 The project has been endorsed by the Working Group, the Advisory Board and has received LEP Board approval on 25 February 2016.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Joint Committee 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.

3. REPORT DETAIL

- 3.1 The University of Wolverhampton bought the derelict Springfield Brewery site in the centre of Wolverhampton in May 2015, with a vision to create a Centre of Excellence in the Built Environment.
- 3.2 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).

- 3.3 The first operational phase of this Campus will be the newly formed West Midlands Construction UTC, which opened in a temporary building in September 2015, and will move to the Campus for the 2016/17 Academic year. Contractors are already on site, and approximately 300 14-19 year old students will be on roll by the start of the 2016/17 Academic year. Half of these pupils will be of secondary school age (14-16), and as such, their safety and security in accessing the site is a critical success factor for the UTC. The new Elite Centre for Manufacturing Skills hub will open shortly after in the Spring of 2017.
- 3.4 A high quality public realm was identified as an important element of the City Centre Regeneration Strategy in the 2012 Prospectus, aiming to enhance the connection of the various parts of the City Centre. This bid enables the first of 3 phases of the Springfield/Interchange Connected Places project and enables time urgent works to be commissioned and carried out prior to the opening of the new UTC on the Springfield site.
- 3.5 This project forms an important initial phase of the delivery of the Connected Places project which seeks to incorporate the design, implementation, management and maintenance of new and improved public spaces within the City Centre, creating improved connectivity between strategic regeneration developments whilst improving safety and security and integrating with new and improved car parking.
- 3.6 The aim of this project is to substantially enhance and create a sustainable access from the Wolverhampton Interchange to the new campus. This will enable students from the wider area to safely access the new learning opportunity. The project will considerably revitalize this part of the City centre and help unlock previously unattractive and unviable adjacent sites. These works are required not only to ensure the safety and security of 14 – 19 year old students to the new campus, but to visibly demonstrate public sector commitment to the regeneration of the campus and legibility within and around the Canalside Quarter.
- 3.7 Phase 1 covers the area from Cambridge Street (outside the main entrance to the campus), along Grimstone Street, to the Victoria Halls development. This first phase has been designed to deliver the essential works to Grimstone Street, Cambridge Street and Culwell Street to improve pedestrian safety by removing parking, widening footways, introduction of a cycle lane, reducing vehicular movement to one way and providing additional lighting, whilst maintaining access to adjacent sites (see attached plan.) It will also include the pedestrianization of the section of Cambridge Street between the main entrance and Grimstone Street. This will create a new square marking the main pedestrian access to the campus and delivering a much improved public realm area outside the historic gateway to the old Brewery site.
- 3.8 The second and third phases of the project, which will seek to improve the pedestrian linkage to the Interchange and wider City Centre destinations, is currently being designed for immediate delivery following the completion of phase 1. Detailed master planning and necessary land negotiations are also on-going in order to facilitate these further improvements to connectivity to the campus.
- 3.9 Phases 2 and 3 will improve the remaining stretch along the route from the Railway underpass to Victoria Halls. As part of this, an options appraisal is currently being undertaken to look at alternative crossings at Wednesfield Road, as well as DDA compliant routes from Lock Street (adjacent to the Network Rail land to the east of

Victoria Halls). Way finding and signage are a key part of the works to be incorporated. Discussions on land ownership, a possible acquisition to facilitate footway widening, and alterations to pedestrian crossings in the area still need to take place, and as such these phases of work are not yet in a position to be commissioned. 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.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The total cost to deliver phase 1 of the project is £600,000. These cost include all supply and installation of the improved public realm and lighting. Design and masterplanning of this phase has been met from Wolverhampton City Council's revenue budget.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The appropriate Grant Agreements are in place and will be utilised by the Accountable Body (Walsall Council) and includes all conditions passed onto the LEP by Central Government, together with all terms, conditions and performance measures and sanctions as required by the approvals / conditions received from Government or approved by the LEP Board or Joint Committee.
- 5.2 City of Wolverhampton Council will comply with State Aid Regulations and does not envisage any issues on this project.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 Risk is being managed through the standard ongoing project management process. This includes the projects ability to deliver the required spending profiles and outcomes for the programme as required and set in place by the LEP Board or the Joint Committee.

6.2 Key risks identified include:

- Timely procurement of Public Realm Works in order to complete Phase 1 LGF works by end May 2016
- Delivery of Phase 1 Works prior to the opening of the UTC on the Springfield Campus in Academic year 2016/17
- Management of the Public Realm Works to budget, ensuring Phase 1-3 works are containable within Council Resources and grant awards
- Cohesive interface of Phase 1 and Phase 2/3 Works (programme and specification)
- Secure further funding from ERDF (Low Carbon)

7. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 As part of the project development and initiation an Equalities Analysis has been undertaken and all proposed public realm improvements are consistent with statutory requirements.

8. CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Prior consultation has been undertaken with adjoining land owners and key stakeholders in the area. Further consultation will be undertaken as part of the statutory Highways approvals.
- 8.2 Internal to Wolverhampton City Council the following teams have been involved with the project planning, design and delivery; Traffic Management, Highways maintenance, Road Safety and the City Development Team. A project working-group has been established which includes representatives from the University of Wolverhampton. The Portfolio Holders for City Economy and City Environment have both been consulted and are supportive of this strategically important regeneration project.
- 8.3 Wolverhampton City Council's Cabinet received and approved a report on 16 September 2015 for the development of the project as part of the wider City Centre Connected Places Strategy.

Attachments – Springfield Campus Interchange Connectivity Project Plan

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