



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 – 17 September 2014

BLACK COUNTRY GROWTH PLAN / DEAL – ACCOUNTABLE BODY RECOMMENDATION

Key Decision:	YES
Forward Plan:	YES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To request that the Joint Committee approves Walsall Council in the role of: Accountable Body / Managing Authority for the Black Country Growth Plan / Deal.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Joint Committee:

- 2.1 Accept the offer from Walsall Council to act in the role of Accountable Body / Managing Authority, approving their appointment in this role for Growth Plan / Deal funding.
- 2.2 Agrees that funds are held by Walsall Council in line with their Treasury Management Policies and Procedures, with all attracted interest utilised to support the effective programme management of the Growth Plan by the Accountable body.

3. REPORT DETAIL

- 3.1 The Government has approved significant levels of financial resources for the Black Country, with the LEP securing £138.7m from the Government, with £25.8m of new funding confirmed for 2015/16 and £77.6m from 2016/17 onwards.
- 3.2 Its anticipated that this funding will be paid through a route similar to previous arrangements, which will require a Local Authority acting in the role of funding recipient and Accountable Body / Managing Authority for the Growth Plan / Deal funding.
- 3.4 With a significant level of resources expected to flow through this route, it is also recommended that the funding is held by the Accountable Body in an account that attracts the highest available levels of interest. With interest accrued utilised to support the effective programme management of the Growth Plan / Deal.

- 3.3 Walsall Council has a track record of administering such funding arrangements and has offered to act in this role on behalf of the LEP.
- 3.4 This report asks for the Advisory Board to accept this offer and to make the appropriate recommendations to the Joint Committee should they agree.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 It is essential that we are in a position to accept and manage effectively all funding approved by Government for use by the LEP board and the Joint Committee, this report assist with the delivery of this ambition.
- 4.2 Walsall Council will if appointed work on the development of the appropriate processes and procedures required to competently deliver this role on behalf of the LEP. These together with any cost implications will be presented in subsequent reports for consideration.
- 4.3 Walsall Council will also account for and place the funding in an account that attracts the highest possible rates of interest, with interest accrued utilised to support the effective programme management of the Growth Plan.
- 4.4 Transparency on the contracting process, timelines for specific stages, turn round times, along with clarity on evidence required to instigate claims for project sponsors and ultimately payments, needs to be documented and communicated to the project sponsors by the Accountable Body. At this stage it is anticipated that this information will be available post October 2014. The need to manage expectations through correspondence to projects at this stage is essential.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Walsall MBC will seek the appropriate legal advice and input as part of the development and delivery of this role, again reporting on any costs and how these could be met.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 The key risk being managed is the Black countries ability to respond to the delivery requirements and timeframes, this report begins the process of managing / mitigating this risk.

7. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 None at the time of drafting.

**Back Ground papers
BC SEP**

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