



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

## **BLACK COUNTRY EXECUTIVE JOINT COMMITTEE**

**Wednesday 3 December 2014, 11.15am**

**To Be Held at:**

**Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council**

### **MINUTES**

#### **VOTING MEMBERS**

Councillor David Sparks, Dudley MBC (Sub)  
Councillor Darren Cooper, Sandwell MBC (Chair)  
Councillor Sean Coughlan, Walsall MBC  
Councillor Roger Lawrence, Wolverhampton CC

#### **NON VOTING MEMBERS**

#### **IN ATTENDANCE**

John Polychronakis, Dudley MBC  
Jan Britton, Sandwell MBC  
Paul Sheehan, Walsall MBC  
Keith Ireland, Wolverhampton CC  
Sarah Middleton, The Black Country Consortium Ltd

#### **INVITED GUESTS**

Simon Neilson, Walsall MBC  
Nick Bubalo, Sandwell MBC  
Tim Johnson, Wolverhampton CC

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1. **Apologies**

Stewart Towe, Black Country LEP Board  
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Councillor Peter Lowe, Dudley MBC

2. **Notes of Previous Meeting held on 17 September 2014**

**14/0035 It was resolved that the BCJC:**

Approve the notes of the meeting held on 17 September 2014 as a true record.

3. **14/0036 Matters Arising from the notes of the previous meeting**

There were no matters arising.

4. **14/0037 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

5. **14/0038 Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended):**

**It was resolved that the BCJC::**

agree that the public be excluded from the private session during consideration of the agenda items indicated for the reasons shown on the agenda.

**6. Black Country Local Growth Deal – Programme Introduction**

Simon Neilson, Walsall MBC was present for this item and presented the report to the Committee. Simon explained that to ensure that these Red, Amber, Green (RAG) Ratings are as accurate as possible, each projects business case has been further scrutinised by specialists (GENCON) and officers (October 2014).

The City Deal and Growth Deal Advisory Board had met on 10 November 2014 and undertaken a Star Chamber where representatives from 13 of the 15 projects were questioned by members of the Advisory Board and the Working Group. The remaining two projects were scrutinised at the Advisory Board on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2014. The Grant Agreements are drafted and in place ready for the announcement of the Government funding.

**14/0039 It was resolved that the BCJC:**

note this briefing prior to the consideration of the 15 individual projects placed before it for consideration.

**7. BC Local Growth Deal – Project Approval Recommendation – CABtech Centre For Advanced Building Technologies And Construction Skills**

John Polychronakis, Dudley MBC referred to this project and presented the report to the Committee and gave a brief description of the project as follows:

- Construction of a new centre comprising 4,427m<sup>2</sup>, leading in Building Information Modelling. The centre will up skill over 3,250 people in the first 5 years.
- Creates additional capacity to meet skills needs identified by businesses and enables the construction sector to benefit from opportunities presented, including HS2.
- Strong business backing including companies such as Carillion, Stepnell, Skanska & Interserve

John confirmed that the Overall rating for this project was Green. The Economic Outputs remains at Amber for the following reasons:

- The target market of the project is clear in terms of BIM skills for technicians, supporting construction sector supply chain companies to grow in the Black Country. This is a major market opportunity to address a recognised market gap.
- The College is reviewing its systems for recording outputs in terms of jobs, business assists and learner outcomes – business assist and learner projections appear achievable.
- The basis for the job outputs claimed from the project requires further definition given the scale proposed.

**14/0040 It was resolved that the BCJC:**

grants approval for the Accountable Body for the Growth Deal (Walsall Council) to proceed to a Grant Agreement with Dudley College to deliver the Local Growth Fund (LGF) funded elements of the CABTech Centre for Advanced Building

Technologies & Construction Skills project – with delivery to commence in the 2015/16 financial year.

8. **BC Local Growth Deal Project Approval Recommendation  
– Advanced Science, Engineering And Technology Centre**

John Polychronakis, Dudley MBC referred to this project and presented the report to the Committee and gave a brief description of the project as follows:

- Modification of existing premises through a £3.18m overall investment to develop a 1,300 m2 training centre to create 250 new higher level apprenticeship places.
- This proposal meets identified skills gaps and has the backing of major local businesses including: Exova, Eurofins Scientific & Caparo Precision Strip (JB and S Lees), 3 of which have practical training facilities that will be utilised to complement the new facility.
- It will see the introduction of integrated employer training methods and techniques, including the training of employers & staff as trainers and assessors and the use of a wide range of venues.

John confirmed that the Overall rating for this project was Green. The Economic Outputs remains at Amber for the following reasons:

- The new facility will enhance the breadth and depth of curriculum to support progression for higher level STEM students and specialist apprenticeships.
- The College has an established CRM system for monitoring involvement with local companies and will be appointing a monitoring officer to gather data but the College focus in on building in-depth dialogue with local companies to provide direct information on business impacts. The Employers Forum has been established.
- An updated outputs table was included in the report.

**14/0041 It was resolved that the BCJC:**

grants approval for the Accountable Body for the Growth Deal (Walsall Council) to proceed to a Grant Agreement with Halesowen College to deliver the Local Growth Fund (LGF) funded elements of the Advance Science, Engineering and Technology project – with delivery to commence in the 2015/16 financial year.

9. **BC Local Growth Deal Project Approval Recommendation  
– Goscote Lane Corridor (Housing) Programme**

Simon Neilson, Walsall MBC was present for this item and presented the report to the Committee and gave a brief description of the project below:

- The Investment of £87.39m in a transformational programme to bring forward a residential development of 735 houses on three related vacant brownfield sites, totalling 21 hectares within the Goscote Lane Corridor regeneration area in Blakenall, Walsall.

- Evidence of a strong market interest exists with whg having a contractual relationship with Keepmoat for Phases 1 and 2.

Simon confirmed the the Overall rating for this project was Green.

**14/0042 It was resolved that the BCJC:**

grants approval for the Accountable Body for the Growth Deal (Walsall Council) to proceed to a Grant Agreement to deliver the Local Growth Fund (LGF) funded elements of the Goscote Lane Corridor project – with delivery to commence in the 2015/16 financial year.

**10. BC Local Growth Deal Project Approval Recommendation – Bentley Lane Remediation Programme**

Simon Neilson, Walsall MBC was present for this item and presented the report to the Committee and gave a brief description of the project as follows:

- Aims to create 11 hectares of high quality employment land in a key location for industrial development, by undertaking essential (viability) site remediation works.
- The site has known interest from a locally based national end occupier with an option to purchase in place , who is planning significant business expansion within the timeframes of this programme.
- Will create needed quality employment land for development and jobs for local people.

Simon confirmed that the Overall rating for this project was Amber. The Funding had remained at Red throughout the process as:

- The project is dependent on improvements to Bentley Lane to deal with traffic impacts, currently included in the 'Accessing Growth' LGF project. If this funding is not approved then these works will need to be borne by the end user. There also remains the risk that the site investigations indicate that the £8m LGF allocation is insufficient to address viability gap.

Simon explained that the Funding column on the RAG rating for this project was still red as the developer was undertaking an appraisal of the site. The site needs a lot of stabilisation work. Simon explained that it is hoped that this project will be brought back to the February Joint Committee meeting.

Jan Britton raised the point that there is no longer such thing as the "derelict land fund" and felt this should be addressed by Government.

Simon Neilson clarified that DWF/KPMG are looking at joint funding secured in different ways.

Councillor Sparks commented that he felt there may be a need for a strategic change as the issue of "derelict/reclamation land" seems to have been lost and felt it needed a dedicated programme as commercial funding would never be available.

Councillor Sparks agreed to feed this back to the LGA.

**14/0043 It was resolved that the BCJC:**

grants in principle approval for the Bentley Lane Remediation Programme, asking the Advisory Board to present its recommendations once the revised financial viability assessment of the site has been completed and assessed.

11.

**BC Local Growth Deal Project Approval Recommendation  
– M6 Junction 10 Improvement Programme**

Simon Neilson, Walsall MBC was present for this item and presented the report to the Committee and gave a brief description of the project as follows:

- To deliver a major motorway junction congestion scheme that will: significantly reduce congestion; aid traffic movement, across and onto / off the M6 Motorway network; and support the active development of the Black Country Enterprise Zone in the Darlaston area.
  - This will be complemented by improvements to the principal adjacent local road, the A454 (Black Country Route), and the congested adjacent junction of A454 (Wolverhampton Road-Bloxwich Lane). This project is jointly designed and funded with the Highways Agency, who are aligning significant resources to realise up to £221m of journey time benefits.

Simon confirmed that the Overall rating for this project was Amber. The Funding remains at Amber due to the following:

- HA has yet to secure approval from DfT to the transfer of its £32m maintenance budget into the project to match fund LGF.
- No confirmed date for DfT approval but may arise in Autumn Statement as part of Roads Investment Strategy.
- Maintenance work must commence by the end of 2016 if this project is not confirmed.

**14/0044 It was resolved that the BCJC:**

grants in principle approval for the M6 Junction 10 Improvement Programme, asking the Advisory Board to present its recommendations to a future meeting once confirmation of the transportation funding from government has been received.

12. **BC Local Growth Deal Project Approval Recommendation – Growing Priority Sectors**

Nick Bubalo, Sandwell MBC was present for this item and presented the report to the Committee and gave a brief description of the project as follows:

- Strengthens the capacity of Black Country businesses to take advantage of new market opportunities.
- Will provide Access to Finance via the Regional Growth Fund to grow Priority Sectors through capital investment in plant, machinery & property.

Nick confirmed that the Overall rating for this project was Green.

**14/0045 It was resolved that the BCJC:**

grants approval for the Accountable Body for the Growth Deal (Walsall Council) to proceed to a Grant Agreement with Sandwell Council to deliver the Growing Priority Sectors Regional Growth Fund – with delivery to commence in the 2015/16 financial year.

13. **BC Local Growth Deal Project Approval Recommendation – Woods Lane (Housing) Programme**

Nick Bubalo, Sandwell MBC was present for this item and presented the report to the Committee and gave a brief description of the project as follows:

- LGF investment will enable a new road junction to be created, facilitating access to an allocated development site for up to 358 new homes, together with the relocation and demolition of at least three key manufacturing businesses and environmental improvements to the River Stour.
- This project will lever £49.16m of private sector funding, regenerate 9.43 hectares of low quality and underused industrial land and create 0.6 km of new open space along the River Stour Corridor.

Nick confirmed that the Overall rating for this project was Amber. This was due to the following:

**Project Management**

Remained at Amber throughout the process, governance and PM arrangements are being established, together with an agreement in principle (3 year option agreement) has been reached with the landowner of a major part of the site to work in collaboration with the Council's landholdings. Relocation strategy for existing businesses across the site is still being finalised.

**Economic Output**

Remained at Amber throughout the process, a market appraisal and viability study is being commissioned to determine demand levels and potential values and sales rates for the project. At present it remains unclear whether this project can deliver the projected housing outputs within the current level of LGF support. Business relocation strategy will seek to retain existing levels of employment.

**Funding**

Remained at Amber throughout the process, current level of LGF support is based on previous site assessment by Halcrow (2010). The revised viability study is intended to update this assessment and provide a revised position on intervention requirements and delivery strategy.

**14/0046 It was resolved that the BCJC:**

grants in principle approval for the Woods Lane (housing) Programme, asking the Advisory Board to present its recommendations once the revised financial viability assessment of the site has been completed and assessed.

14.

**BC Local Growth Deal Project Approval Recommendation – FAB Kit**

Nick Bubalo, Sandwell MBC was present for this item and presented the report to the Committee and gave a brief description of the project as follows:

- Three separate projects which involve capital investment in high tech equipment for three local training organisations, increasing their capacity to deliver high value manufacturing training that meets the skills needs of local businesses. Through:
  - (1) The creation of a 'Fab Lab' in West Bromwich by Sandwell College (part of a Fab Lab project across the UK), to turn ideas into new products and prototypes through a venue offering prototype development and models through 3D printing;
  - (2) In-Comm Training providing enhanced training resources including CNC machines, for the training of apprentices and the up-skilling of existing employees; and
  - (3) Performance Through People (PTP), the provision of CNC machines, lathes and milling equipment to meet the training needs of local businesses and to deliver Bite Sized Training for employers/staff.

Nick confirmed that the Overall rating for this project was Green.

**14/0047 It was resolved that the BCJC:**

grants approval for the Accountable Body for the Growth Deal (Walsall Council) to proceed to Grant Agreements to deliver the Local Growth Fund (LGF) funded elements of the FAB Kit programme with Sandwell College, In-Comm Training and Performance Through People (PTP) – with delivery to commence in the 2015/16 financial year.

15.

**BC Local Growth Deal Project Approval Recommendation – Regeneration Of Bilston Centre**

Tim Johnson, Wolverhampton CC was present for this item and presented the report to the Committee and gave a brief description of the project as follows:

- Working together the HCA and Wolverhampton City Council have committed investment to provide further infrastructure, services and remediation to facilitate the release of further viable residential and employment development

sites, generating a total of 580 houses.

Tim confirmed that the Overall rating for this project was Amber. This was due to the following:

**Economic Outputs**

Remained at Amber throughout the process. Preferred developers identified for Phase 1 of 77 houses (Kier), providing good market evidence. Property advisers are reviewing development appraisals for future phases to confirm the anticipated numbers and timing of housing development across the scheme. Developers of the commercial centre are progressing advanced discussions with occupiers.

**Funding**

Remained at Amber throughout the process. Confirmation of project viability is still subject to updated development appraisals, currently being prepared by Jones Lang LaSalle. On this basis, it remains unclear whether the level of LGF support will be sufficient to address cost/value gap in the scheme.

**14/0048 It was resolved that the BCJC:**

grants in principle approval for the Bilston Centre Regeneration Programme, asking the Advisory Board to present its recommendations once the revised financial viability assessment of the site has been completed and assessed.

16.

**BC Local Growth Deal Project Approval Recommendation  
– Growing The Wolverhampton City Centre Cultural And Events Offer**

Tim Johnson, Wolverhampton CC was present for this item and presented the report to the Committee and gave a brief description of the project as follows:

- A £6.6m investment supporting an overall £18.8 million investment to transform Wolverhampton city centre's Cultural and Events offer.
- A major refurbishment and extension of the Civic Halls, coupled with adaptations to the Grand Theatre.
- The project will address the barriers to the growth and viability for both of these key venues.

Tim confirmed that the overall rating for this project was Green.

**14/0049 It was resolved that the BCJC:**

grants approval for the Accountable Body for the Growth Deal (Walsall Council) to proceed to a Grant Agreement with Wolverhampton City Council to deliver the Local Growth Fund (LGF) funded element of the 'Growing the City Centre Cultural and Events Offer' – with delivery to commence in the 2015/16 financial year.



17. **BC Local Growth Deal – Project Approval Recommendation – Wolverhampton Interchange**

Tim Johnson, Wolverhampton CC was present for this item and presented the report to the Committee and gave a brief description of the project as follows:

- PM arrangements have continued to be refined and appear robust across all aspects of the project.
- Construction of Block 10 has commenced, supported by a head lease to WCC and pre-lets to ground floor leisure uses.
- Project partners have continued to progress design work across the scheme.

Tim confirmed that the Overall rating for this project was at Amber due to the following:

**Economic Outputs**

- Agents for Neptune have indicated interest from potential office occupiers for Blocks 9 & 10.
- It is not clear what delivery milestones are specified in the Master Development Agreement, including any commitments to development delivery beyond Block 10.

**Funding**

- Status of £9m approved by the former Strategic Transport Board remains unclear – Advisory Board/Transport Director to clarify

This is an important strategic project in the Growth Deal not least given the scale of projected job outputs. Achieving these outputs will be dependent on the take up of commercial development, and existing market analysis indicates that successful early phases could help to establish the Interchange as a key business location and drive further commercial demand. However, further detailed information on output forecasts is required and this project will require close monitoring in terms of the timing of the delivery of outputs.

Councillor Sparks felt that consideration should be given to more strategic involvement in Wolverhampton Rail Station as it is a key Station for connectivity to North Wales and London.

Councillor Sparks asked if consideration could be given to more signage at the Station referring to Wolverhampton City being in The Black Country.

**14/0050 It was resolved that the BCJC:**

grants in principle approval for the Wolverhampton Interchange project, asking the Advisory Board to present its recommendations to a future meeting once confirmation of the £9million of transportation funding from government has been received.

18. **BC Local Growth Deal – Project Approval Recommendation  
– Science, Technology And Prototyping Centre**

Tim Johnson, Wolverhampton CC was present for this item and presented the report to the Committee and gave a brief description of the project as follows:

- LGF investment will enhance the capacity of Black Country businesses to innovate and exploit new opportunities, through a new £10m centre based in the University of Wolverhampton Science Park. Providing 4,293sqm gross of high quality managed office space and laboratory / workshop / testing space to support science and technology based companies, providing a type of infrastructure for prototype and R&D activity not available elsewhere in the region. Linkages to identify strategic demand have been established through the Science Park expansion study and additional opportunities identified to be a central contributor to the EU concept of Smart Specialisation.

Tim confirmed that the Overall rating for this project was Green.

**14/0051 It was resolved that the BCJC:**

grants Approval for the Accountable Body for the Growth Deal (Walsall Council) to proceed to a Grant Agreement with the University of Wolverhampton to deliver the Local Growth Fund (LGF) funded elements of the Science, Technology and Prototype Centre project – with delivery to commence in the 2015/16 financial year.

19. **BC Local Growth Deal Project Approval Recommendation  
– Managing Short Trips Programme**

Tim Johnson, Wolverhampton CC was present for this item and presented the report to the Committee and gave a brief description of the project as follows:

- The Managing Short Trips programme encompasses a range of improvements which includes innovative ‘interconnect’ way finding, and signage supported by physical walking and cycling routes across the Black Country, to form an attractive Active Travel Network.

Tim confirmed that the overall rating for this project remains as Amber due to the following:

**Economic Outputs**

Moves from Red to Amber as a result of the October review, as Centro acknowledge that the scheme does not generate new job outputs (other than via construction). Therefore no job outputs are to be claimed and other output metrics to be reviewed and confirmed with BIS to justify the scheme.

**Funding**

Remains at Amber throughout the process as the on-going uncertainty continues relating to the availability of European Union funding for the scheme. Even though it's included in the EU Investment Strategy, it will need to compete against other applicants for this funding as all ERDF projects must be procured through an open market call. A reduced programme of fewer schemes, focussed on cycle ways has been identified as an alternative based on LGF funding only and can therefore proceed. Section 106 funding contributions have been confirmed, but are time

limited to 2015/16 delivery only, and there is potential for bringing forward LGF spend into the 2015/16 period.

**14/0052 It was resolved that the BCJC:**

grants in principle approval for the Managing Short Trips Programme, asking the Advisory Board to present its recommendations once the proof of alternative outputs being agreed, and revisions to contributory funding streams has been received.

20.

**BC Local Growth Deal Project Approval Recommendation  
– Accessing Growth Programme**

Tim Johnson, Wolverhampton CC was present for this item and presented the report to the Committee and gave a brief description of the project as follows:

- A fund designed to help deliver smaller schemes (above £500,000 but less than £5,000,000) which improve access to employment sites and strategic centres. Schemes include highway efficiency improvements, sustainable transport and interchange improvements.

Tim confirmed that the overall rating for this project remains as Amber due to the following:

**Economic Outputs**

Moved from Red to Amber, the basis for the job output projections still needs to be clarified given that the impacts will be indirect, and the need to avoid double counting must be made. Further analysis is being undertaken of the 'sites of impact' in relation to each scheme based on Government guidance. The specific sites of impact for each scheme need to be confirmed (avoiding double counting with other LGF interventions) to identify the nature, scale and timing of development that the 'Accessing Growth' projects will unlock.

**14/0053 It was resolved that the BCJC:**

grants in principle approval for the Accessing Growth Programme, asking the Advisory Board to present its recommendations once the proof of the acceptance of alternate outputs or clarification of the resolved job outputs linked to identified sites has been received.

21.

**BC Local Growth Deal Project Approval Recommendation  
– Elite Centre For Manufacturing Skills**

Sarah Middleton, Black Country Consortium Ltd was present for this item and presented the report to the Committee and gave a brief description of the project as follows:

- To complete a feasibility study for the Elite Centre for Manufacturing to lever in the LGF funding allocated for future years of £7.6m. This will look at how to sustainably fill the gaps in provision in niche areas of manufacturing skills

based on an employer led approach. This will involve complementing the existing FE & private provision with a combination of new and industry based provisions with support from the Manufacturing Technology Centre, so that it truly meets the needs of the Manufacturing sector.

Sarah confirmed that the Overall rating for this project was Green. The Economic Outputs remained at Amber as they are to be determined by the Feasibility Study.

**14/0054 It was resolved that the BCJC:**

grants approval for the Accountable Body for the Growth Deal (Walsall Council) to proceed to a Grant Agreement with Black Country Consortium to deliver the Local Growth Fund (LGF) funded elements for the Elite Centre for Manufacturing Skills Feasibility Study only – with delivery to commence in the 2015/16 financial year.

**Date of future meetings**

- Wednesday 18 February 2015, 11.15am at Sandwell MBC
- Wednesday 22 April 2015, 11.15am at Wolverhampton CC
- Wednesday 17 June 2015, 11.15am at Dudley MBC
- Wednesday 16 September 2015, 11.15am at Walsall MBC
- Wednesday 2 December 2015, 11.15am at Sandwell MBC