



Meeting of the City Council

16 July 2014

Report title	Economic Development Grants to Third Parties – Black Country Growth Hub	
Referring body	Cabinet – 14 May 2014	
Councillor to present report	Cllr Peter Bilson	
Wards affected	All	
Cabinet Member with lead responsibility	Cllr Peter Bilson Economic Regeneration and Prosperity	
Strategic director	Tim Johnson Education and Enterprise	
Originating service	Democratic Support	
Contact employee(s)	Dereck Francis Tel Email	Democratic Support Officer 01902 555835 dereck.francis@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	Cabinet	14 May 2014

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Council is recommended to:

1. Approve the payment of grants to third party providers for the delivery of products as part of the Black Country Growth Hub externally funded scheme and as detailed below:

Remaining grant to be allocated to provider	Provider
£130,000	University of Wolverhampton
£158,309	Black Country Chamber of Commerce (UKTI contractor)

£207,000	Pera Consulting (Growth Acceleratory contractor)
£47,910	Manufacturing Advisory Service (MAS)
£30,000	Sandwell MBC
£150,910	Manufacturing Advisory Service (MAS)
£1,682,414	Delegated authority sought for the allocation to individual businesses

2. Delegate authority to the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration and Prosperity in consultation with the Strategic Director, Education and Enterprise, to agree business grants from the £1,682,414 Business Grant product and any other grants to third parties to deliver the scheme.
3. Authorise the Chief Legal Officer to approve the execution of the contracts.

1. Purpose

- 1.1 On 14 May 2014 Cabinet considered a report on the issue of grants to third parties to deliver the Regional Growth Fund funded Black Country Growth Hub. The report also aims to raise awareness of the opportunity to bid for European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) resources to extend and expand the remit of the project. The report can be accessed online on the Council's website by following the link:

<http://wolverhampton.moderngov.co.uk/uuCoverPage.aspx?bcr=1>

2. Background

- 2.1 The first phase of the Growth Hub is funded through City Deal. City Deal is a Government initiative where certain powers, such as the ability to set and spend budgets, are devolved from Central Government to local authorities in a bid to increase growth. The Black Country sub-region was successful in its application to be included in the City Deal. The focus of the City Deal is addressing the barriers to growth in the high value manufacturing sector, in order to create jobs, alongside support to local people to upskill and gain employment within the sector. The business strand involved developing the Growth Hub as a single portal to all business support services (both national and regional) and a specialist package of support to high value manufacturing Small Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) in recognition of their key role in growing the local economy.
- 2.2 Black Country Growth Hub is funded by £3.1 million from Regional Growth Fund (RGF) as part of City Deal. Cabinet (Resources) Panel agreed on 26 November 2013 for Wolverhampton to act as accountable body for the Black Country Growth Hub for the first phase. Cabinet (Resources) Panel has delegated authority to issue grants to third parties under £50,000 on 11 March 2014.
- 2.3 Cabinet recommended:
1. That Full Council be recommended to approve the payment of grants to third party providers for the delivery of products as part of the Black Country Growth Hub externally funded scheme and as detailed below:

Remaining grant to be allocated to provider	Provider
£130,000	University of Wolverhampton
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£1,682,414	Delegated authority sought for the allocation to individual businesses

2. That Full Council be recommended to delegate authority to the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration and Prosperity in consultation with the Strategic Director, Education and Enterprise, to agree business grants from the £1,682,414 Business Grant product and any other grants to third parties to deliver the scheme.
3. That that the Chief Legal Officer be authorised to approve the execution of the contracts.
4. That the opportunity to bid for external funding to expand and extend the Black Country Growth Hub be noted, the concept proposal for outline bid be endorsed and authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration and Prosperity in consultation with the Strategic Director, Education and Enterprise to submit a full application should the outline application proceed to the next stage.
5. That the Council act as accountable body for the larger project should the bid be successful and authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration and Prosperity in consultation with the Strategic Director Education and Enterprise and Assistant Director - Finance to sign off a bid for funding at full application stage.
6. That it be noted that the Council is already the accountable body for the first phase of the Growth Hub funded between December 2013 until June 2015.

3.0 **Financial, legal, equalities, environmental, human resources and corporate landlord implications,**

3.1 The implications are detailed in the Cabinet report on 14 May 2014.

4.0 **Background papers**

4.1 14 May 2014 Cabinet report – Economic Development Grants to Third Parties – Black Country Growth Hub