

Cabinet (Resources) Panel

28 March 2017

Report title	External Funding Update – BEIS Benchmarking and Low Carbon ERDF Review		
Decision designation	AMBER		
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor John Reynolds City Economy		
Key decision	No		
In forward plan	No		
Wards affected	All		
Accountable director	Keren Jones, City Economy		
Originating service	Planning		
Accountable employee(s)	Ric Bravery	Sustainability Officer	
	Tel	01902 552177	
	Email	Ric.Bravery@wolverhampton.gov.uk	
Report to be/has been considered by	Place Leadership Team	6 June 2017	
	Strategic Executive Board	14 March 2017	

Recommendations for action or decision:

The Cabinet (Resources) Panel is recommended to:

1. Agree in principle that the City of Wolverhampton Council acts as accountable body for the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and City Region benchmarking and European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) low carbon and energy review.
2. Approve grant funded revenue budgets totalling £95,000 to undertake this work.
3. Delegate authority to the Cabinet Member for City Economy in consultation with the Strategic Director for Place, to approve any agreements or contracts required to formally agree to manage the project, should they consider them satisfactory.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To provide an overview of two pieces of work to be grant funded by the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and to agree that the City of Wolverhampton Council act as Accountable Body for the work.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The City of Wolverhampton Council is proactively driving the sustainability and low carbon agenda on behalf of the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), supporting the development of European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) low carbon outline applications and implementing its own Sustainability Strategy and Implementation Plan which aims to:

- Provide effective support to deliver a green economy and achieve sustainable economic development
- Address the causes and effects of climate change and support the move to renewable & low carbon energy
- Promote social inclusion and equal opportunities
- Protect and enhancing the natural and built environment

3.0 BEIS benchmarking and ERDF Review

- 3.1 The Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) wish to fund two pieces of work commissioned by a Local Authority as accountable body (under Section 31 of the Local Government act which enables Ministers to pay grants to local authorities towards expenditure incurred or to be incurred by them) as set out below:
- 1) LEP and City Region Benchmarking & National Event (£25,000) – an update and extension of previous work undertaken in 2016 by Sustainability West Midlands including the holding of a national dissemination event.
 - 2) ERDF Review and Regional Workshops– a national economic review and analysis of delivery of ERDF activity on low carbon and energy. This will involve working with BEIS and all LEPs, exploring the economic advantages of ring-fencing funding for these areas, and holding a series of regional workshops.
- 3.2 BEIS have approached the City of Wolverhampton Council to act as Accountable Body for the work. It would receive funding to resource the commissioning of this work, manage the resulting contracts and work closely with BEIS to ensure outputs are achieved.
- 3.3 It is a recognition of the Council's work in promoting the low carbon agenda that it has been asked to manage this high profile national initiative on behalf of BEIS and an excellent opportunity to enhance the Council's reputation in this area. The Council has been offered an additional £10,000 to help cover the costs of commissioning, managing the contracts and monitoring and would therefore be able to recover its costs in managing the contract.

- 3.4 To meet their own budgetary requirements, BEIS proposes to pay the Council the £95,000 in advance of Cabinet (Resources) Panel with the understanding that the sum will be repaid should this report not be agreed.

4.0 Financial implications

- 4.1 BEIS are to provide the City of Wolverhampton Council with a grant of £85,000 to fund the two pieces of work plus an additional £10,000 to cover the costs of commissioning, managing the contracts and monitoring. Approval is therefore sought to establish a £95,000 revenue budget within Planning to cover this work.
[ES/09032017/E]

5.0 Legal implications

- 5.1 The Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) are requesting the City of Wolverhampton Council to act as accountable body under Section 31 of the Local Government Act which enables Ministers to pay grants to local authorities towards expenditure incurred or to be incurred by them.
- 5.2 The Council has yet to have sight of any Memorandum of Understanding or other agreements which it may be requested to sign by BEIS; therefore delegated authority is sought to formally agree to the project and sign any agreements, subject to them being considered satisfactory. Legal advice would be needed in respect of any contracts or agreements. [TS/08032017/V]

6.0 Equalities implications

- 6.1 Wolverhampton's Sustainability Strategy and Implementation Plan includes a specific priority around promoting social inclusion and equal opportunities. An equalities impact assessment was undertaken when it was developed.

7.0 Environmental implications

- 7.1 This project will have positive environmental implications given its focus on low carbon and sustainability.

8.0 Human resources implications

- 8.1 There are no human resource implications.

9.0 Corporate landlord implications

- 9.1 There are no corporate landlord implications.

10.0 Schedule of background papers

- 10.1 None.