



WEST MIDLANDS
COMBINED AUTHORITY

Board Meeting

Date	12 May 2017
Report title	Responding to the Government's Consultation on Increasing the Regional Impact of Channel 4 Corporation
Cabinet Member Portfolio Lead	Councillor John Clancy – Economic Growth
Accountable Chief Executive	Martin Reeves, West Midlands Combined Authority Chief Executive Email: martin.reeves@coventry.gov.uk Tel: 024 7683 1383
Accountable Employee	Neil Rami, Chief Executive, West Midlands Growth Company Tel: 0121 202 5011
Report to be/has been considered by	

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Combined Authority Board is recommended to:

1. Welcome the publication of the Government's consultation on *Increasing the Regional Impact of Channel 4 Corporation*.
2. Agree that the WMCA should submit a regional response to the consultation on behalf of the West Midlands and commission the West Midlands Growth Company to lead on the preparation of the response.

3. Welcome the funding of a feasibility study by a number of partners including the Black Country and the Greater Birmingham & Solihull (GBS) LEAs, Coventry City Council and the Coventry & Warwickshire LEA, subject to their Board's approval.
4. Note the next steps and agree to receive a further report at the CA Board meeting on 23 June 2017 where delegated authority for sign-off of the final submission will be sought.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To inform the Board of the consultation document that the Government has recently launched on the future of Channel 4.
- 1.2 To seek agreement to the WMCA developing a response and the commissioning of the West Midlands Growth Company to lead on this work.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 On 12 April 2017, the Government launched a consultation on *Increasing the Regional Impact of Channel 4 Corporation*. They are seeking views on how Channel 4 can most effectively contribute to regional economic growth, stimulate regional creative industries and better serve regional audiences. Specifically they would like to look at:
 - To what extent should Channel 4 be based outside London, potentially including moving its headquarters;
 - Whether more programmes shown on Channel 4 should be made outside London; and
 - Whether Channel 4 should be able to make larger investments in production companies to support the development of emerging talent, including that from the regions, and help bolster Channel 4's future financial position.
- 2.2 The Government is seeking responses to a series of questions set out in the consultation document. The deadline for submissions is 5 July 2017.
- 2.3 Considerable work has been undertaken to date across the region, including engagement across Government on regional policy in this area, and it is considered that the West Midlands is well positioned to make a strong case for the relocation of Channel 4.
- 2.4 Birmingham City Council, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council and GBSLEP have been promoting the relocation of Channel 4 over a number of months with Birmingham city centre and UK Central (Solihull) highlighted as potential locations. Coventry City Council has registered its interest in the Friargate development in Coventry city centre being considered. There are also other potential interests being expressed associated with Enterprise Zones in the Black Country. All sites would be considered on an equal basis during the development of the bid.

3.0 Next Steps

- 3.1 Given the likely strong competition from across the country, it is clear that the West Midlands will need to produce a compelling proposition if Channel 4 is to re-locate here. It is proposed that the West Midlands Growth Company will be best placed to lead on this work on behalf of the WMCA, reporting into a 'commissioning group'. This will need to include representatives from across the three LEP geography who will collectively develop the proposal, drawing on the expertise of other partners and stakeholders as appropriate. It will be this group's responsibility to keep relevant members of the CA Board briefed on developments and engaged with the process.

3.2 If the Board agrees to a joint response, early actions will be to develop a project plan and formulate a stakeholder engagement plan. A number of partners have agreed to co-fund a feasibility study to support the preparation of a bid, including the Black Country and GBS LEPs, Coventry City Council and the Coventry & Warwickshire LEP, subject to their Board's approval.

4.0 Financial implications

4.1 There are no financial implications for the WMCA arising from this report at this stage of the consultation process.

5.0 Legal implications

5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report

6.0 Schedule of background papers

6.1 Government Consultation: *Regional Impact of Channel 4 Corporation*.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/608416/Increasing the Regional Impact of Channel 4 Corporation - Consultation 1 .pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/608416/Increasing_the_Regional_Impact_of_Channel_4_Corporation_-_Consultation_1_.pdf)