

**Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration**

11 December 2019

**Name of Cabinet Member:** Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration - Councillor J O'Boyle

**Director Approving Submission of the report:** Deputy Chief Executive (Place)

**Ward(s) affected:** All

**Title:** Department for Business Energy Industrial Strategy (BEIS) 2019-2020 Funding to the EU Exit Business Readiness Engagement Project

---

**Is this a key decision?** No

---

**Executive Summary:**

The purpose of the report is to seek retrospective approval for a decision taken by Coventry City Council to act as accountable body and release the grant in the sum of £223k to Coventry & Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership LEP Growth Hub to deliver the EU Exit Business Readiness Engagement Project. Coventry City Council acts as accountable body for the previous and current Growth Hub funding allocations, which are awarded from Department for Business Energy Industrial Strategy (BEIS)

**Recommendations:**

The Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration is requested to;

- (1) Give retrospective approval to the grant payment in the sum of £223k to Coventry & Warwickshire Growth Hub for the delivery of the EU Exit Business Readiness Engagement Project

**List of Appendices included:**

None

**Background papers:**

None

**Other useful documents**

Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership Growth Hub Funding 2019-2022

**Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?**

No

**Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body**

No

**Will this report go to Council?**

No

**Report title:** Department of Business Energy Industrial Strategy (BEIS) 2019-2020 Funding to the EU Exit Business Readiness Engagement Project

## **1. Context (or background)**

- 1.1** Coventry City Council (CCC) is currently the Accountable Body for the Coventry & Warwickshire LEP programmes. This includes being Accountable Body for funds to finance CWLEP Growth Hub activities (i.e. being the central co-ordination point for publicly-funded business support in the area).
- 1.2** BEIS have released additional funds as part of the EU Exit Business Readiness Engagement Project. The purpose of this fund is to raise awareness and support businesses nationally to make the necessary preparations for Brexit.
- 1.3** The Growth Hub was established in 2014 as part of the Coventry & Warwickshire five-year City Deal agreement. It has grown to become the agreed “one-stop shop” for businesses, providing a single point of contact and has supported thousands of business across the region to access funding, to protect and create jobs, tap into supply chains, increase production and reach their full potential.
- 1.4** CWLEP Growth hub has been successful in negotiating and securing additional grant of £223k of BEIS funding. CWLEP (Growth Hub) has been selected as the cluster lead for this region and will be co-ordinating project activity on behalf of the other cluster members:
  - Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP
  - Black Country LEP
  - The Marches LEP
  - Worcestershire LEP
  - Stoke and Staffordshire LEP

## **2. Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 2.1** Option 1 - Retrospectively approve the committal of the full financial commitment of £223k to support the EU Exit Business Readiness Engagement Project – CWLEP Growth Hub

This option would see the Council commit to the full ask of £223k for the funding period. This is the option that has been implemented as this additional funding will play an important role in helping Coventry and Warwickshire businesses to address the challenges and opportunities associated with Brexit. It also raises the area's profile and reputation through a strong business support infrastructure. The Growth Hub is instrumental in providing support to local businesses and creating new jobs within the City.

## **3. Results of consultation undertaken**

- 3.1** The Growth Hub regularly surveys and consults with its users. Customer satisfaction ratings from local businesses are included in the bi-annual reports to their core funders including the Department for Business, Enterprise and Industrial Strategy and Coventry City Council.
- 3.2** The Annual Business Festival requests workshop and activity ideas from the local business community to ensure that the event is tailored to local business need. The event also benefits from significant stakeholder and attendee engagement and a report is produced following the festival summarising key outputs and feedback from users. This in turn helps to shape future focus of Growth Hub work.

#### **4. Timetable for implementing this decision**

- 4.1** The decision on granting the funding has been affected and this report seeks to retrospectively note the decision which will allow the Growth Hub to confirm its programme of activity. The award and subsequent reporting will be managed from within the Economic Development Service.

#### **5. Comments from Director of Finance and Corporate Services**

##### **5.1 Financial implications**

There are no financial implications for the Council. The costs of this additional activity will be funded in full by BEIS.

##### **5.2 Legal implications**

There are no direct legal implications associated with the contents of this report

#### **6. Other implications**

None apart from not being able to service to the need and demand of the Businesses within the region

##### **6.1 How will this contribute to the Council Plan ([www.coventry.gov.uk/councilplan/](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/councilplan/))?**

The request for funding contributes to the Council Plan by '*supporting business to grow through attracting inward investment; helping businesses expand and encouraging businesses to create jobs*' Within increased support and offering over the challenging months ahead around Brexit.

##### **6.2 How is risk being managed?**

The award of the funding would be direct to the CWLEP Growth Hub, which is a fully owned subsidiary of the CWLEP. As such financial and operational concerns are delivered under the CWLEP'S own robust arrangements for governance and scrutiny. All funding decisions and financial issues are overseen by the CWLEPs Finance and Governance Group, which reports to each meeting of the main CWLEP Board. The Growth Hub has its own subsidiary Group which reports regularly into main CWLEP Board

##### **6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?**

The Growth Hub would have a substantial gap within its funding therefore a reduced offer of support to local businesses. The Growth Hub is also a partner in the current ERDF Programmes and as such contributes to its overall performance. Without this funding, the Growth Hub may be unable to deliver quality long-term business support within Coventry.

##### **6.4 Equality and Consultation Analysis (ECA)**

The Growth Hub provides support to all businesses within Coventry and Warwickshire. They have completed their own equality and access statements to ensure the service is accessible to all. As such there is no wider need for the Council to conduct any further equality impact assessments. The Growth Hub will be expected to provide an annual report on their activity to Coventry City, this will include further breakdowns of client groups

accessing the service and the results of any stakeholder and wider engagement information about the work of the Growth Hub.

## 6.5 Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment

There are no direct implications on climate change or the environment.

## 6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

This funding award will strengthen the Growth Hub's offer of business support during the Brexit transition, and as they are leading a cluster of other Growth Hubs, this will also a wider impact around the region.

### Report author(s):

**Name and job title:** Clare Ireland – Programme Manager

**Directorate:** Place

**Tel and email contact:** [Clare.ireland@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:Clare.ireland@coventry.gov.uk)

Enquiries should be directed to the above person.

Contributor/approver name	Title	Directorate or organisation	Date doc sent out	Date response received or approved
<b>Contributors:</b>				
Steve Weir	Head of Economic Growth	Place	11.11.19	11.11.19
Suzanne Bennett	Governance Services Co-ordinator	Place	13.11.19	13.11.19
Other members				
<b>Names of approvers for submission: (officers and members)</b>				
Finance: Phil Helm	Finance Manager	Place	11.11.19	12.11.19
Legal: Oluremi Aremu	Major Projects Lead Lawyer	Place	11.11.19	12.11.19
Director: Andy Williams	Director Business Investment and Culture	Place	16.11.19	16.11.19

Martin Yardley	Deputy Chief Executive (Place)	Place	16.11.19	16.11.19
Members: Name				
Councillor J O'Boyle	Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration		02.12.19	02.12.19

This report is published on the council's website:

[www.coventry.gov.uk/councilmeetings](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/councilmeetings)