

**Report to the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Supervisory Board**

**30<sup>th</sup> July 2014**

**Delivering the GBSLEP Growth Hub**

**1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1. To seek endorsement from the Supervisory Board following agreement by the LEP Board on 16<sup>th</sup> July to spend up to £200k Business Rate Pool on the proposals outlined in the report below and subject to accountable body

3.6. The GBS LEP Board received a report at their meeting of the 16<sup>th</sup> July which included the following recommendations:

- Agree to spend up to £200k Business Rate Pool on the proposals outlined in the report below and subject to accountable body requirements;
- Note all activities will be externally procured through an external competitive process, as per the accountable body requirements;
- Note future funding allocation through the GBS Growth Deal;
- To receive a further update on longer term Growth Hub proposals at September Board

3.7. All recommendations were agreed, subject to endorsement from the GBS LEP Supervisory Board.

#### 4. Key Issues

##### PHASE 1 – SHORT TERM IMMEDIATE START

4.1 Through the work of a Task and Finish Group set up by the Enterprise Board to consider the implementation of two key components of a Growth Hub, they recently concluded that funding from the GBSLEP Business Rates Pool should be prioritised for the development of an IT based customer relationship management (CRM) solution and the development of an online interactive information “Knowledge Bank”, seen as the essential infrastructure that will underpin the Hub.

4.2 **Funding to develop a common CRM System** will allow partners, subject to data sharing protocols to:

- Share basic company information and interactions that are being held / undertaken by different delivery partners to allow the exchange of information, to limit duplication of collecting information and to be more joined up.
- To interact on different aspects of the same project by different delivery partners.

4.3 This activity is seen as a crucial step in aligning and co-ordinating the support we provide to our businesses. Currently businesses can be approached by a number of organisations from across the LEP and wider, these meetings are recorded by the visiting organisation along with the intervention/support provided, this data is not shared any further. The proposed CRM platform will, for the first time, gather this key high level data and make it accessible to all stakeholders. It will begin to provide us with a clearer understanding of our businesses, we will know who they are engaging with and why and we will also be able to identify those businesses that are not engaged at all. This new knowledge will help provide us with a greater understanding of the businesses in the LEP area and help us shape future provision accordingly.

4.4 **Funding to develop an online interactive information “knowledge bank”** to provide a range of important information to businesses as well as details of business events etc. and having the following characterises:

- Be accessible by multi devices and services to an interactive web portal
- Have social media networks and functionality
- Have dynamic content to show that it is alive
- Provide a large front end presence of information based on a modular layout giving

them access to relevant and up to date information on a range of matters with the heavy use of digital / video content, diagnostic tools so that businesses can help themselves.

- 4.5 Whilst the LEP does have its current portal this was set up as a basic signposting site whereby a postcode search provides an extensive list of every key provider of business support in their area. It is somewhat out of date and is not sophisticated enough to deliver desired outcomes The proposed online interactive knowledge bank will completely supersede the LEP portal with an advanced on line support system that is managed and maintained to ensure it is up to date and accurate.
- 4.6 In addition to this, BIS are keen for us to utilise the business information and tools that are contained within the national business support site called GOV.UK and through a dedicated GBSLEP 0300 telephone number for the national contact centre to handle all enquiries free of charge. A visit was arranged to the national contact centre and we are in further discussions around how we can best utilise the national offer.