

Report to the Greater Birmingham & Solihull Supervisory Board

8th February 2017

BUSINESS RATES POOL FUNDING TO DELIVER THE STRATEGIC ECONOMIC PLAN

Purpose of the report

To approve spend from the Business Rates Pool on key strands of work to deliver the Strategic Economic Plan.

Recommendations

The Supervisory Board is recommended to:

1. Approve an allocation of up to £179,000 over two years from the element of the retained levy of the Business Rates Pool allocated to GBSLEP to deliver the following activities:
 - Foreign direct investment up to £50,000 per annum for two years to fund lead generation with large companies and advanced manufacturing and automotive firms, led by Marketing Birmingham
 - Skills - £30,000 (plus expenses and equipment) in 2017/18 to contribute towards the salary of an interim Executive Manager for People, plus £14,500 per annum for two years to support the Southern Staffordshire Employment & Skills Board
 - Creative Economy Strategy - £20,000 to map sector businesses and provide an evidence base for future investments
2. Delegate authority to the Chair of the Supervisory Board, in consultation with the Chair of the LEP Board, to approve a further allocation of funding to support the development of a bid for the relocation of Channel 4 to Birmingham.

Background

3. In November 2016, GBSLEP published its Strategic Economic Plan 2016-30 (SEP), with the overarching vision for Greater Birmingham to be a top global city region and the major driver of the UK economy outside of London. The SEP focuses on thr08.02 261.29 Tm w,E

effect. The Board agreed that, subject to the approval of the Supervisory Board, the funds should be drawn from the Business Rates Pool.

12. The Supervisory Board is therefore recommended to agree that £50,000 per annum is allocated from the Pool to support this activity, and that the LEP Director is asked to proceed in making the agreement with Marketing Birmingham.

Skills

13. In 2015, the Supervisory Board approved an allocation of £220,000 of Business Rate Pool funding to provide on-going and additional resource capacity for the employment and skills provision in the LEP Executive team. This funding has been matched with SMBC partner contributions and a successful application to the European Social Fund. The £220,000 funding is forecast to be fully used by the end of the 2017/18 fiscal year.

14. Whilst this funding has increased capacity and the team is working hard to support the agenda, there is not yet sufficient resource in place to make the step change that the Board rightly wants to see.

15. It was not possible to appoint an Executive Manager for People through the recent recruitment exercise. The intention is to try and appoint a permanent individual to the role, but in the meantime it has been agreed that an interim will be appointed for a nine month period. The funding allocated to the post will support two days a week of
felt that three days would be optimum to give the
agenda the increased leadership capacity and capability that it requires.

16. At its meeting on 31st March 2017, the LEP Board agreed to ask the Supervisory
retained levy in the Business
Rates Pool. It is anticipated that c£30,000 is required plus any expenses / equipment (excluding travel to and from work).

17. The Supervisory Board is recommended to agree that £30,000 is allocated in 2017/18 for the interim Executive Manager for People.

18. In addition, it has recently become clear that adusio ap 0 0 1 105.26 271p 2nined foreca-3(ce)8(cap

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