



Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership Delivery Plan 2023-24

1. Foreword

This Delivery Plan will be the last for the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP). Since GBSLEP was established in 2011, it has successfully delivered a wide range of functions and programmes, with the purpose of driving inclusive and sustainable economic growth in the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP geographic area.

This includes revenue, capital, and Enterprise Zone projects. GBSLEP has delivered £832m of capital programmes which have leveraged £820m of additional investment from the public and private sectors. GBSLEP has provided business support to over 3,000 local businesses through our Growth Hub and supported the creation of over 4,800 apprenticeships for local people. To date, the work that GBSLEP has done has added £12.7bn of additional GVA and 187,000 jobs into the city-region.

The Levelling Up White Paper, which was published in February 2022, set out the Government decision for LEPs to integrate into local democratically elected institutions. As such, GBSLEP over the course of this delivery year (2023/24), will integrate part of its Growth Hub function into the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and several other functions into Birmingham City Council (BCC). Any functions that are not specifically named as transferring across, will be wound down in an orderly manner.

This Delivery Plan reflects the commitment from the GBSLEP's Board and Executive to approach its final year of operations with a steadfast focus on being professional



and efficient, and on making the maximum impact in challenging circumstances. We are encouraged by the prospect that much of the good work done by GBSLEP over the years, will continue in some way after we have closed our doors, for the ongoing benefit of the businesses and communities we serve.

Our sincere thanks go to the Board Directors for their vision and unwavering support for what GBSLEP stands for, and to the GBSLEP staff team who continue to meet ambitious standards and targets in very challenging circumstances.



Anita Bhalla, GBSLEP Chair



Henriette Breukelaar, GBSLEP CEO

2. Introduction

The GBSLEP geography during this delivery year will be different from what it has been since its inception. The Government's LEP Integration guidelines stipulate that 'LEP overlaps' – with Local Authorities being members of more than one LEP, are no longer accepted. As such, from April 2023 the districts¹ within the GBSLEP geography in Staffordshire and Worcestershire will fall solely within their respective county LEPs. GBSLEP functions and roles relating to the districts are expected to be taken on by those separate institutions. This does not affect GBSLEP activity in the districts that is funded by existing European Funding, such as our ERDF-funded business support (until the end of June) and our ESF-funded skills support (until the end of December). GBSLEP will amend its constitution and legal structure to reflect this as soon as possible after March 2023.

GBSLEP does not expect to receive any funding from Government or from the WMCA for the delivery of its LEP core functions or the Growth Hub core business

¹ Lichfield, Tamworth, East Staffordshire, Cannock Chase, Wyre Forest, Redditch, and Bromsgrove.



support functions. Further to the WMCA's decision not to fund LEPs/sub regional partnership working from funding they may in the future receive, any sub regional arrangements will be the discretion of the local authorities, who will be expected to fund these arrangements from their own resources.

The process of integration is led by the WMCA, who have submitted the LEP Integration Plan to Government for review and approval. Appended to the LEP Integration Plan were the transition plans for each of the three LEPs in the WMCA geography. They are Black Country LEP, Coventry and Warwickshire LEP and GBSLEP.

Each LEP has based their Transition Plan and timeframe on specific local circumstances. For GBSLEP, it was agreed that the company will cease activities by the end of December 2023, with the aim to fully close and enter into Members Voluntary Liquidation by the end of March 2024. Specific functions will cease or transfer over the course of the transition year 2023/24.

This Delivery Plan is based on the GBSLEP transition plan and sets out the intended actions and deliverables for GBSLEP during the 2023-24 delivery year.

3. Aim and Objectives

This Delivery Plan is based – and co-dependent – on the GBSLEP Transition Plan which was submitted to Government in February 2023. The Transition Plan is a live document, which will be updated as new information arises – for example, when the outcomes of TUPE consultation and Government funding decisions are known.

This delivery year will be unlike any experienced by GBSLEP since our inception in 2011. As such, we have reviewed our aim and objectives. The below will guide us throughout this year:

Our **VISION**

To be a leading global city region and a major driver of the UK economy.

Our **MISSION**

To drive inclusive and sustainable economic growth, creating jobs, and raising the quality of life for all our residents.

Our **PURPOSE** statement

To develop and deliver focused services that generate tangible positive outputs, outcomes and impact on our local businesses and communities.



Our 2023-24 **OBJECTIVES**

- I. **Successful transfer of functions – to minimise disruption and to protect corporate memory and knowledge**
- II. **Successful completion of externally funded projects in line with signed grant agreements;**
- III. **Ongoing delivery of Growth Hub business support and advice (including access to finance, skills and employment, energy savings and innovation) until transfer to BCC in Q3**
- IV. **Employer-led interventions to help address the labour market paradox (labour market shortages existing alongside persistent levels of unemployment)**
- V. **Efficient and exemplary close down and solvent liquidation**

4. **Successful transfer of functions**

Functions mentioned in the LEP Integration guidelines

Of the many functions GBSLEP has successfully delivered over the years, several have been specifically highlighted in the Government's LEP Integration Guidelines as in need of transfer. These are the management and monitoring of Legacy Programmes including Enterprise Zone and the Growth Hub business support function. These functions have been the focus of close collaboration with the proposed receiving organisations and include the transfer of staff as well as data and potentially other assets.

I Management and monitoring of Legacy Programmes

During this delivery year, the management and monitoring of Capital Programmes including the Enterprise Zone, will transfer to Birmingham City Council. It is anticipated that this transfer will happen by the end of Q1; the end of June 2023.

Measures that will be taken before and during Q1, include:

Staff arrangements - this transfer involves a number of staff moving under TUPE from GBSLEP to BCC. Further to the confirmation of these arrangements, GBSLEP will undertake formal consultation with the affected employees. In parallel, enhanced collaboration between the GBSLEP team responsible for the function, and the team(s) in Birmingham City Council will continue to prepare for a smooth transfer.

Governance arrangements – the scrutiny and oversight function for the Enterprise Zone and legacy programmes has been overseen by the GBSLEP Programme Delivery Board (PDB). Preparations are underway for this group to be superseded by



a suitable governance board within BCC, and for existing private sector PDB members to have the opportunity to continue their involvement by transferring their membership onto the new Board. The new arrangement will be covered by a Memorandum of Understanding between Birmingham City Council and the appropriate Government Departments.

Data preparation – as the GBSLEP Accountable Body, BCC already has some of the data required regarding the financial aspects of this function. Any data that is required to transfer from GBSLEP to BCC is being prepared and reformatted if required. Work will complete in Q1 to ensure the GBSLEP Programme Management System (VERTO) can continue to be used by BCC post-transfer.

Knowledge transfer – In addition to the transfer of data, staff and assets, GBSLEP will continue to endeavour to share and transfer in-tangible assets such as knowledge and experience. It will do this through close collaboration with BCC staff, initiating and facilitating knowledge exchange meetings, and ensuring consultants working for GBSLEP on this function either capture and transfer their knowledge pre-transfer, or enter into a contract with BCC so their involvement in the work extends beyond the transfer of the function.

II Growth Hub – regional business support transfer to WMCA

During this delivery year, the coordination of the Growth Hub business support function, will transfer to WMCA. This transfer will happen at the start of Q1, early April 2023.

Measures that will be taken before and during Q1, include:

Staff arrangements - this transfer involves a number of staff moving under TUPE from GBSLEP to WMCA. Further to the confirmation of these arrangements, GBSLEP has undertaken formal consultation with the affected employees. In parallel, it is hoped that enhanced collaboration between the GBSLEP team responsible for the function, and the team(s) in WMCA, will continue, to prepare for a smooth transfer. In particular, negotiations are underway to ensure the TUPE transfer does not take away critical resource from the GBSLEP business support delivery function, which will continue to be responsible for the successful completion of the ERDF project, and subsequent delivery of the UKSPF-funded business support for businesses in Birmingham and Solihull on behalf of both local authorities. We have requested that several staff are seconded back from WMCA to GBSLEP on a part-time basis until the end of June 2023, to complete activities as part of the ERFD and ESF projects.

Data preparation – The Growth Hub manages a large amount of – partly sensitive – data. Where legally transferable, any data that is transferred from GBSLEP to WMCA to allow it to perform its co-ordination role will be prepared and reformatted as required. It is anticipated that this work may continue into Q2 and Q3 of the 2023-24 delivery year, subject to the development of a CRM solution at WMCA.



Knowledge transfer – In addition to the transfer of data, staff and assets, GBSLEP will continue to endeavour to share and transfer less or intangible assets such as knowledge and experience. To that end, the Growth Hub Director has been funded by GBSLEP to work 40% of his time with WMCA during much of 2022/23.

Knowledge from staff who are not expected to transfer to WMCA will also be made available to WMCA where it is appropriate to do so. GBSLEP sees this as an essential part of the smooth transfer of the function.

III Growth Hub – business support delivery transfer to BCC

During this delivery year, the frontline Growth Hub business support delivery function, will transfer to BCC. It is anticipated that the GBSLEP Growth Hub team will deliver UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) outputs on behalf of BCC and SMBC from April 2023, and that the transfer will happen during Q3, in or around November 2023. Post-transfer, the service is expected to be funded by BCC and SMBC with UKSPF funding.

Measures that will be taken to make this transfer happen include:

Staff arrangements - this transfer involves a number of staff moving under TUPE from GBSLEP to BCC. Further to the confirmation of these arrangements, GBSLEP will undertake formal consultation with the affected employees during Q3. Ahead of that time, we will work very closely with colleagues in BCC to ensure that the GBSLEP team responsible for the function, and the team(s) in BCC, will jointly prepare for a smooth transfer. In particular, the team will concentrate on the successful completion of the ERDF project and the successful start of delivery of UK Shared Prosperity Fund outputs in Birmingham and Solihull. Our objective throughout this transfer process will be to minimise disruption to the businesses we serve and the staff we transfer.

Data transfer – The Growth Hub manages a large amount of – partly sensitive – data. Where legally transferable, any data that is required to transfer from GBSLEP to BCC is being prepared and reformatted, with consent sought as required. It is anticipated that this work may continue into the 2023-24 delivery year, subject to the development of a CRM solution at WMCA, for use by all the UKSPF delivery partners in the West Midlands and requirements relating to UKSPF outputs.

Knowledge transfer – In addition to the transfer of data, staff and assets, GBSLEP will continue to endeavour to share and transfer intangible assets such as knowledge and experience. To that end, the GBSLEP team will work very closely with BCC colleagues and make staff available prior to the formal transfer if deemed necessary. Knowledge from staff who are not expected to transfer to BCC will also be made available to BCC where it is appropriate to do so. We see this as an essential part of the smooth transfer of the function.

IV Other functions – Policy and Strategy



Other functions that have no formal basis for transfer, are therefore expected to finish in 2023. This includes the LEP policy and strategy function. Although this function will end in March 2023, every effort is still being made to ensure the value and impact generated by this function is transferred for the benefit of the region. As such, we consider:

Staff – whilst no TUPE of staff is agreed, GBSLEP colleagues continue to be encouraged to share their knowledge and expertise where they can. As such, we anticipate at least one short-term secondment into WMCA in 2023-24 to facilitate the transfer of knowledge and expertise in the field of culture and creative industries. Beyond such short-term secondments paid by GBSLEP, no longer-term employment opportunities for strategy and policy work are expected. As such, all strategy and policy roles in the GBSLEP structure will be made redundant from the start of 2023-24.

Data – The policy and strategy function has generated a range of policy, strategy and research data over the decade of GBSLEP’s existence. GBSLEP will explore its capacity to review such data and prepare it for transfer to partner organisations such as WMCA or LAs in the interest of future strategic inclusive and sustainable economic development in the region.

Knowledge transfer – Most knowledge transfer in the field of policy and strategy has taken place in 2022/23. Limited further work is planned in 2023/24 taking account of depleted GBSLEP team resources.

5. Successful completion of funded projects in line with grant agreements

GBSLEP starts 2023/24 with three live, externally funded projects:

1. The Growth Hub Project – ERDF funded and due for completion by end of June 2023;
2. The Skills Hub Project – ESF funded and due for completion by end of December 2023; and
3. The SuperTech project – Partially Enterprise Zone funded and due for completion by end June 2025.

The successful completion of the two EU funded projects is essential. Firstly, GBSLEP needs to ensure the anticipated benefits and impact of the projects are achieved for the businesses and individuals targeted by the projects. Secondly, GBSLEP needs to mitigate any risk of financial penalties for underperformance. In the case of SuperTech, the project extends beyond the lifetime of GBSLEP. As such, a recipient organisation will be identified to novate the Enterprise Zone contract in order for it to continue to be delivered.



Growth Hub ERDF

The Growth Hub ERDF project (October 2019-June 2023) will have:

- Received £2,407k support from the European Regional Development Fund
- Helped to create 169 new jobs (130% of the target of 130)
- Supported over 3,500 local companies
- Delivered 1302 medium intensity 3-hour business assist outputs (100% of the target)
- Delivered 686 high intensity 12-hour business assist outputs (100% of the target)
- Delivered Access to Finance support to over 350 local business and secured over £8M.

In order to successfully complete the project, GBSLEP will work with WMCA and BCC to ensure the right balance is struck between transferring Growth Hub staff as part of the Growth Hub transfer, and retaining staff in the short-term to ensure we maintain sufficient delivery capacity. We seek to use our ERDF delivery experience to help ensure the UKSPF-funded business support delivery in Birmingham and Solihull starts efficiently and seamlessly in Q1.

Skills Hub ESF

By the time GBSLEP completes the Skills Hub project in December 2023, the project will have:

- Received £800k towards this £1.6m project for local businesses
- Completed 174 Training Needs Analysis for local SMEs
- Undertaken 88 employer follow-ups, guiding local businesses towards training and development solutions for the workforce
- Undertaken 100 employee reviews with company employees who have or will benefit from enhanced training and employment opportunities
- Production of a project toolkit for internal and external use, to include information on the ESF project, role of advisers, and the resources available that can support businesses.
- Project evaluation document outlining the impact of the project.

Staff on the Skills Hub project work closely with the Growth Hub team Advisors. As such, the delivery of the Skills and Growth Hub are interdependent and successful delivery requires stability on both teams. Whilst no formal transfer of this function has been agreed to date, transfer options will be explored to ensure the skills and expertise in the team are retained for the benefit of the city-region.



SuperTech EZ

SuperTech is the market-facing, industry-led cluster organisation for West Midlands ProfTech (see www.supertechwm.com). ProfTech is an umbrella term and includes fintech, insurtech, lawtech, proptech and other sub-sectors of the professional services sector undergoing technology led disruption. GBSLEP has enabled the creation of SuperTech and is the accountable body for cluster organisation.

SuperTech was formally launched in February 2021 and was part of the region's economic plan to support the growth of the Business, Professional and Financial Services sector. Since its launch SuperTech created a place proposition for next generation services such as fintech. It is part of the inward investment narrative for the region and a recognised body on the National FinTech Network. SuperTech has also increased innovation capacity in the region by increasing participation in tech innovation through public-private funded programmes such as the Connector Series, the Serendip Incubator with BNP Paribas Personal Finance and Bruntwood SciTech, and revenue funded programmes such as the SuperTech seeds which has supported 30 founder businesses over three cohorts. SuperTech has also been successful in applying to the Birmingham Enterprise Zone (EZ) and this contract provides resourcing until July 2025.

GBSLEP will not be able to complete the SuperTech EZ project, as it extends beyond March 2024 when the company will close. We therefore aim to novate the EZ contract to a suitable delivery organisation that is not only able to successfully complete the project, but also to provide the environment in which the SuperTech cluster can continue to grow and thrive.

The GBSLEP Board have identified a preferred host organisation, which will be formally confirmed in Q1. The subsequent novation of the contract and associated transfer of staff, data and budget is planned to take place by the end of June 2023.

This transfer will enable the project to :

Leverage £1m additional funding for the region,

Create one new role and safeguard two existing roles/jobs,

Continue to represent Birmingham/SuperTech cluster on the FinTech National Network,

Engage with the BPFs sector through community building events,

Co-deliver trade delegations,

Enhance the reputation of the BPFs sector in the region, and

Enable 150 organisations to participate in the SuperTech cluster.



6. Ongoing delivery of Growth Hub business support and advice

The seamless continuation of support and advice to local businesses is critically important, particularly at a time when many business owners face major challenges due to inflation, energy price hikes and labour market shortages. The GBSLEP Growth Hub has, over its lifetime, supported over 3,500 businesses and provides a highly regarded and trusted service to local businesses of all sizes and backgrounds.

The responsibility for the Growth Hub function transfers to the WMCA. In consultation with Local Authorities, the WMCA have designed a new 'hub and spoke' model for business support in the region. The hub in the WMCA will take on central coordination function, including a new regional CRM. The GBSLEP Growth Hub will act as the 'spoke' and will continue to deliver frontline business support throughout most of the 2023 calendar year, leading up to the expected transfer to Birmingham City Council during Q3.

In addition to the core business support service, providing diagnostics, advice and referrals, the Growth Hub will continue to provide services including Access to Finance. From the start of this reporting year, the GBSLEP Growth Hub expects to deliver business support services on behalf of BCC and Solihull MBC. This will help deliver UKSPF commitments for both Local Authorities and is expected to engage in excess of 300 businesses over the period between April and November.

7. Employer led interventions to address the labour market paradox

The current labour market paradox: where high numbers of unfilled vacancies co-exist with stubbornly high levels of unemployment and economic inactivity, is a significant barrier to the growth of the local economy which affects businesses and employers as well as individuals and communities. The GBSLEP Board has agreed that interventions to help address this issue continue to be a priority to deliver with the reduced resources retained in GBSLEP during this final year.

Specific interventions that GBSLEP will undertake to address this issue are:

Apprenticeship support with the Ladder for Greater Birmingham. GBSLEP has worked with Ladder for Greater Birmingham (Ladder) since 2018, when the Ladder first came to the GBS area. Since then, over 3,000 apprenticeships have been started through the Ladder, with support from GBSLEP. In 2023, the Ladder Skills Academy opened with GBSLEP Growing Places Fund investment. The Academy features a 'have a go' facility to enable people of all ages and young people in particular, to gain practical experience to help them determine the career path best suited to them. Collaborating with employers from all sectors including hospitality, construction, retail and health and social care, Ladder facilitates and promotes apprenticeships as a key route for employers to recruit and retain talented and



skilled staff. For individuals, the Ladder offers the opportunity to gain the skills they require and the work experience that has been lacking since Covid.

During this delivery year, with GBSLEP support, Ladder will work with another @@ employers, generating a further 1,000+ apprenticeships, creating local jobs for local people.

Digital Innovators – In 22/23 GBSLEP funded the Serendip Ideator Pilot which saw 350 young learners meet future skills and employment opportunities. This was delivered across five education providers and 10 employers. Several high-profile local employers took part; These included Universities Hospitals Birmingham in partnership with West Midlands Academic Health Science Network (WMAHSN), and HS2 in association with the West Midlands Digital Catapult.

The next stage following the pilot is the development of a financially sustainable business model for Digital Innovators to create an employer-led Skills Academy. This will enable young people to gain experience working in an authentic business environment by collaborating with industry experts, university researchers, and government agencies focusing on the latest in-demand business and technology skills. GBSLEP will fund a bridging grant to support the transition to the new model of delivery with the aim to engaging 60 learners, 90 16–19-year-olds with careers advice and guidance, engagement with 3 employers and the design of a future offering model by summer 2023.

Birmingham Education Partnership (BEP) - GBSLEP has worked with BEP to promote skills opportunities to its network of schools. GBSLEP will fund BEP to continue its consultancy and marketing service to improve access for young people into the workplace. This focuses on supporting schools to deliver the Gatsby Benchmarks in careers education and enabling students to receive real world career's education and experience to help them make positive choices about post school pathways.

8. Efficient and exemplary close down and solvent liquidation

In addition to the outputs and impact delivered through the services we continue to provide during 2023/24, much focus this year will be on winding down activity towards a solvent Members Voluntary Liquidation by March 2024.

GBSLEP will seek to continue to comply with the National Assurance Framework. As such, we will produce and publish our annual accounts and summary annual review, which will be presented at our Annual General Meeting in Q3 of this year. We will also ensure appropriate and proportionate governance arrangements remain in place throughout this period.



GBSLEP will also seek to capture the legacy of the 12 years of GBSLEP in a suitable way for the benefit of those who continue to delivery and promote sustainable and inclusive economic growth in the GBSLEP 9-local authority area.

GBSLEP will engage professional and legal support to ensure the process of wind-down and Members Voluntary Liquidation is undertaken and completed in compliance with relevant regulations and legislation. In addition, we will continue to work closely with our section 151 officer at Birmingham City Council, our accountable body, to satisfy that appropriate arrangements are in place for the GBSLEP's financial affairs, including its residual funds.

GBSLEP will manage its workforce to deliver its delivery plan, whilst ensuring that 90%+ of its staff will have exited the company by the end of Q3 through TUPE transfer, resignation or redundancy. The remaining closure team of up to four staff will work with the Directors and the liquidators to fulfil outstanding closure obligations in areas such as finance and governance and will exit the company by the end of Q4.

GBSLEP will aim to carefully and prudently manage its finances during 2023/24, towards a solvent liquidation with more than sufficient residual surplus to cover any potential post-closure cost or liability.

