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20 March 2024

Dear Joanna

Enterprise Zone Project Delivery Funding – Higher Level Skills Match Plus Pilot Project

Following the findings of the independent technical evaluation (ITE) and approval by the EZ Partnership Board on 20 March 2024, this letter confirms that your request for EZ revenue grant has received approval. This approval is based on the evidence provided in the Full Business Case submitted on 21 December 2023 and further clarifications provided as part of the ITE process.

As part of the approval, the Enterprise Zone (EZ) will provide a maximum capped funding contribution of up to £949,615 (nine hundred forty nine thousand six hundred and fifteen pounds) paid as a revenue grant towards the delivery of Higher Level Skills Match Plus Pilot project costs of £1,368,000. Birmingham City University (BCU), as the lead grant recipient, is responsible for meeting any expenditure over this maximum amount.

This approval by EZ Partnership Board will require Cabinet approval on 23 April 2024. Once BCC Cabinet approval has been given and cleared, details of this scheme will be entered on to the Subsidy Transparency Database.

As part of the approval by EZ Partnership Board, they want absolute clarity and transparency on what the match is designed to achieve and detailed monitoring of that activity as well as time spent on these activities. They also require a formal mid-term review and report on progress to the Partnership Board.

The award of £949,615 will be provided under the terms and conditions detailed in the Agreement for Grant, by separate cover. Acceptance by BCU of the award is acceptance of those terms and conditions.

Outputs and Outcomes

The Agreement for Grant will also highlight the outputs proposed in your approved Full Business Case and the monitoring and evaluation period proposed, which will be tied to the availability and approval of EZ funding. The funding agreement will make it clear that grant can be required to be repaid if evidenced outputs are not achieved and it could be terminated if inputs and outputs are not as

expected. The EZ Partnership Board felt that any shortfall should result in repayment of grant, rather than a revision to the timescales or quantity of outputs and short-term outcomes to be achieved.

The outputs and outcome are summarised below:

Output Description	Quantity	By When
EZ Companies engaged by the Plus programme	250	31 March 2026
EZ Companies completing a Business Skills Needs Assessment (BSNA)	188	31 March 2026
EZ Companies completing a BSNA that sign up to the Plus Graduate Talent Charter	179	31 March 2026
EZ Companies signing the Plus Graduate Talent Charter and recruiting at least 1 graduate over the 2 years	170	31 March 2026
Minimum number of local Graduates (including Unemployed Graduates, those with a First, Masters or Postgraduate Degree) securing graduate level jobs	170	31 March 2026
Minimum number of local Graduates recruited via Plus to be retained following a formal probationary period, or after 6 months, where a probationary period does not apply	128	31 March 2026
Minimum number of local graduates securing graduate level jobs who are from disadvantaged backgrounds (BME, Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), Single Waged Household etc.)	119	31 March 2026
Minimum number of local graduates securing jobs who were previously unemployed or underemployed	111	31 March 2026
Minimum number of local graduates recruited via Plus progressing in work within 12 months	60	31 March 2026

Table 1: Higher Level Skills Match Plus Pilot Project Outputs

The following key outcomes reflect the contribution the Higher Level Skills Match Plus Pilot project will make towards graduate recruitment and employment.

Output Description	Quantity	By When
EZ companies, (including new inward investors) co-designing Plus skills and job preparation provision with the HEI Consortium, to supports local economic growth. Plus recognised as a key component of a wider package of support for EZ businesses and new investors.	Minimum of 85 (50% of Charter Signatories) engaged in the co-design of Plus skills and job preparation workshops	(Short Term) 31 March 2026
Removing a serious barrier to labour market participation, by offering skills and job preparation support to unemployed and underemployed graduates, including those who have attended universities outside of Birmingham, and thereby ensuring all local graduates have an opportunity to secure graduate level employment with a business in the EZ, and to progress in work.	Minimum of 170 local graduates secure graduate level jobs	(Short Term) 31 March 2026
Ongoing development and presentation of the Plus Account Management service delivery model to all businesses operating within the EZ and, potentially, the proposed Birmingham City Centre Digital Innovation Zone. Plus delivering effectively not only to existing businesses, new investors, and their supply chains within the EZ, but also attracting new investment (over other potential locations) to the City Centre.	To be agreed with BCC's EZ Team by 31/12/2025	(Medium Term) 2026 to 2028

<p>Plus embedded as a core HE / FE delivery mechanism, offered to companies in all priority sectors of the Birmingham and Solihull and WMCA areas, and contributing to the retention of City Centre investment in local communities and the broader Birmingham and West Midlands economy.</p>	<p>All 11 Birmingham-based HEIs and FECs deploying Plus as a core higher level skills business and graduate support service</p>	<p>(Longer Term) From 1 April 2029</p>
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Table 2: Higher Level Skills Match Plus Pilot Project Outcomes

Key Milestones

Key milestones from within the Full Business Case and updated following clarification questions are shown below and will be agreed within the grant agreement. Once agreed any variance from these key milestones should be discussed with the EZ Programme Team and will be subject to a change control process.

Milestones	Completion Date
Engage key stakeholders	31 March 2024
Establish Plus PIP Group, PIP Task and Finish Groups	31 March 2024
Develop Key Project Documentation	31 March 2024
Develop and submit the Plus FBC	18 December 2023
EZ Partnership Board approval sought	20 March 2024
EZ Plus Funding Agreement developed	February/March 2024
BCC Cabinet approval sought	23 April 2024
EZ Funding Agreement signed	30 April 2024
The Financial, Operational and Performance Management Framework (FOMPF) and SLAs, containing a GDPR-compliant Data Sharing Agreement, signed by all Delivery Partners	1 May 2024
Formal launch events, and main delivery phase commences	30 May 2024
Interim Project Evaluation undertaken, and recommendations submitted to the PB for approval and implementation.	31 March 2025
Project operational end date	31 March 2026
Project closure activities completed	30 May 2026
End of Project Evaluation completed and shared with BCC and the WMCA	30 June 2026

Table 3: Higher Level Skills Match Plus Pilot Project Milestones

Funding profile

The final claims delivery profile for the £949,615 will be agreed as part of the grant agreement, and once agreed will be considered fixed, and variances from that profile should be discussed with the EZ programme Team and will be subject to a change control process.

Publicity requirements

As part of the funding conditions, you will be required to acknowledge Birmingham City Council as the Funder and Enterprise Zone funding within all publicity materials. Please can you confirm your

communications lead by 5 April 2024, so that we can provide a full briefing on these marketing and publicity requirements.

Monitoring and reporting

From acceptance of this offer, you will be required to continue to report on progress through regular Project Management Reports. Kerry Billington, EZ and Legacy Consultant Programme Manager, will act as the principal point of contact for the project.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Betjemann', with a stylized flourish at the end.

James Betjemann
Head of Curzon and Enterprise Zone Development

cc. Kerry Billington, Birmingham City Council
cc. Lucia Puricelli, BCU
cc. John Lee, BCU