

Appendix 1 - GBSLEP Future Impact Fund - Application

Project Title:	Birmingham and Solihull Workforce Development Service (B&SWDS)		
Applicant Name:	Spencer Wilson		
Organisation:	Birmingham City Council		
Project Address:	Council House, Victoria Square Birmingham. B1 1BB		
Project Location:	Birmingham/Solihull	For joint projects: which is the partner LA?	Birmingham CC Solihull MBC
Project Cost:	£991,806 (BCC: £834,243 & SMBC: £157,563)		
Project Theme:	Workforce Development and Employability, particularly for young people		
Project Aim and Description: (Max 500 words)	<p><i>To deliver the LEP legacy, Birmingham City Council (BCC) and Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC) will work together to deliver a brand-new range of employment and skills services, available across the Birmingham and Solihull area to meet the strategic needs of its customers. Such services will be entirely additional and build upon existing successful provision to ensure that the GBSLEP legacy remains and is enhanced through specific, focused employment and skills activity in the form of a Birmingham and Solihull Workforce Development Service (B&SWDS).</i></p> <p><i>In line with the proposals endorsed by GBSLEP Board the B&SWDS will:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Have a clear place-based focus on provision by ensuring the successful development of the Levelling Up Zone within East Birmingham/North Solihull to deliver a myriad of LEP legacy activity (investment, business development and growth, entrepreneurship, skills provision to meet business need (especially among young people), low carbon/green energy initiatives, growth sector targeted support (creative and cultural, digital, health tech etc.)).</i> • <i>be formulated and delivered through partnership, especially with regard to the EBNS LUZ activity which is forged through a partnership between BCC and SMBC.</i> • <i>Meet the identified needs of businesses across the Birmingham/Solihull geography and complement/integrate into the business support activity of the Growth Hub (now housed within BCC) and the wider business support offer available, including half a dozen Birmingham and Solihull specific business support programmes and regionally commissioned programmes which will be available in Birmingham and Solihull</i> • <i>Complement and add value to UKSPF provision but not duplicate it.</i> • <i>Continue the 'LEP Legacy' through delivery focusing on GBSLEP employment and skills priorities such as addressing the labour market disconnect, supporting young people, apprenticeship participation/delivery, enterprise/entrepreneurship</i> • <i>Build on GBSLEP activities and interventions, learn from best practice and develop new solutions that address issues identified and improve services through experience</i> • <i>Create delivery models that are sustainable beyond the lifetime of these funds and GBSLEP.</i> <p><i>Accordingly, the GBS Workforce Development Service delivers a package of support that complements existing provision and works to deliver the GBSLEP Employment and Skills Legacy. Elements including:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GBS Workforce Development Service 		

Additional staffing will be located within the Employment Access Team (EATeam) of BCC and the Employment & Skills Team of SMBC to provide services that focus more on individual provision to help address the **labour market disconnect** by creating the employment and skills pipeline for businesses. Staff will work with employers and providers to **create work, training and apprenticeship opportunities** and ensure local people benefit from them, address recruitment, retention and progression needs within businesses, work with colleges, universities and training providers to ensure training opportunities facilitate this and work to help deliver the **social value and good employment agenda** across the Birmingham/Solihull area. There will be alignment with the Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) **Careers Hubs** in Birmingham and Solihull to enable thriving and innovative careers and skills pipelines between our schools and the local employment opportunities, especially through major investment and development. The development, implementation and enforcement of social value commitments and good employment agreements by employers will be a key part of this service to help build a sustainable workforce development model for the future, that supports equity in business growth and workforce opportunities, especially for people who experience inequity for example due to ethnicity, gender, age, or health conditions, learning difficulties or disabilities. The resources will also include a communications and marketing budget to enable the WDS/EATeam to raise the image and profile of these positive interventions with businesses, partners and local people.

- **East Birmingham/North Solihull Levelling Up Zone**

Birmingham City Council and Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council have been working in partnership with the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) to develop proposals for a Levelling Up/Investment Zones for East Birmingham and North Solihull. These proposals have been supported by Government and there is provision in the WMCA Deeper Devolution Deal for **25-year business rate retention within a proposed East Birmingham/North Solihull Levelling Up Zone**. One option being explored is an opportunity to develop a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) approach to the regeneration of East Birmingham, **paralleling the successful city centre Enterprise Zone approach**. However, these pivotal opportunities require the upfront investment to develop the business case and investment plan, and we need to prepare an Investment Plan to proceed, just as we did for the Enterprise Zone (which at the time cost around £1m). Specialist technical advice for the development of the joint LUZ proposal has been provided to date develop the proposal but now this requires further investment at this critical point in the development process to take it to the next stage.

GBSLEP residual fund support will enable **development of the new policy framework and financial model**, which is of primary importance to the region beyond Birmingham and Solihull and can support the maximum positive impact of GBSLEP funds and legacy for the citizens, voluntary and community sector and businesses of the region (a continuation of the strategic GBSLEP legacy founded with the EZIP).

EBNS coordination will be included as part of this activity to support the strategic co-ordination of delivery partners, innovation leads, investors and local anchor organisations. In this way **the multiple development and innovation investments happening in the area can be linked to the central business support mechanisms with two-way activity**, and this will support acceleration of the inclusive growth mechanisms including the business, employment and skills and place-based aspects, as part of the Levelling Up Zone development and implementation phase. **The positive impact good**

employment can have on health will also be highlighted and focused on through this activity as will the creation of bespoke careers offers that ensure the progression of young people and inactive/unemployed residents of all ages into the multiple good employment opportunities that exist in EBNS.

This is a huge opportunity and additional investment is needed in collaboration capacity to develop the policy levers for inclusive growth – so that the capital investment succeeds to benefit the residents of the EBNS area beyond reliance on ‘trickle down economics’.

- **Growth Hub and business support aligned business skills offer**

Building on the work of (and learning the lessons from) the ESF funded GBSLEP Skills Service and complemented by the B&S Workforce Development Service staff resource noted above, the B&S Business Skills Offer will continue to deliver business-led skills services through this proposal and provide the link between the various elements of the new Workforce Development Service, the business support functions of the Growth Hub as it moves into BCC as Birmingham’s part of Business Growth West Midlands, and the wider business support offer available, including half a dozen Birmingham and Solihull specific business support programmes and regionally commissioned programmes which will be available in Birmingham and Solihull. This element of the Service will see the **lessons learned from the Skills Service delivery of GBSLEP being implemented in a new model that best ensures business engagement, skills uptake and increased and improved productivity within a package of services that ensure easy and relevant access for businesses – ensuring a ‘one stop shop’ approach within the Growth Hub.** Such a model will look at new methods of engaging businesses (especially SMEs) including events and information related to specific skills priorities (apprenticeships, internships etc.), development of new methods of interaction (tech based, portals etc.), whole workforce development strategies for SMEs, business skills-related productivity improvement mapping, sector focused interventions and strategic focus etc. Learning from the lessons of the ESF phase of the Skills Service activity specific activities will be included in the offer (training sessions, interactive support sessions, workshops, mentoring etc.) and preferably the support services will primarily be delivered through the business support officers within the Growth Hub and coordinate a package of activities and initiatives to meet demand. The resources will also look to ensure capacity exists across the Growth Hub to meet the skills needs of SMEs along with their broader business demands as one integrated package. Activities that were not possible through the ESF supported model, that highlighted some of the additional skills improvement issues faced by businesses, will be provided, and there will be an **additional focus on the East Birmingham North Solihull area to align with Levelling Up Zone activity.** The first phase of this intervention will be to formulate a strategy and delivery model that both aligns/integrates with the new Growth Hub, and the wider business support offer available, and builds on/learns from the Skills Service experience, this will be produced by March 2024, followed by enhanced delivery commencing in April 2024.

The £134,000 of GBSLEP residual funds assigned to Birmingham and Solihull Business Skills Offer is calculated from the cost of two Grade 4 officers to deliver business skills support and initiatives to SMEs across the Birmingham and Solihull geography. This is based on the potential to evolve the current model of skills support to SMEs, learning from the experiences of the current GBSLEP Skills Service offer and:

- **Looking to integrate the skills offer into the broader business support offer of Business Advisers, in which case this funding can also be used to deliver complete integrated business support offers across the Growth Hub (including SME skills support);**
- **Delivering specific support, skills related marketing/communications and training sessions to SMEs specifically linked to skills activities and the benefits these can bring. This can be training sessions, workshops, seminars etc. around apprenticeships, recruitment, opportunities, skills mapping etc. (again, building upon the most recent delivery experiences of the Skills Service);**
- **Providing an apprenticeship levy transfer service to work closely with BCC and WMCA, to ensure that this provision is maximised to ensure as much apprenticeship resource is retained within the Birmingham and Solihull area for the benefit of local SMEs through the recruitment and progression of apprentices.**

The resource, however, will also retain enough flexibility to be used in specific ways to deliver non-staff related activities based on the lessons learned through the GBSLEP Skills Service, if this is what is required based on this experience. This can be through commissioning of specific skills related activity (this is also picked up in the following Bespoke Initiatives text), training, mentoring, marketing etc.

- **Bespoke Legacy Initiatives**

*It is proposed to commission and deliver complementary and innovative initiatives that were key to the GBSLEP skills portfolio and would form a vital part of any GBSLEP legacy aligned to the activity of the Workforce Development Service. Such activity is best delivered by **expert partners in the GBS area** that achieve significant impact for relatively small investment. Examples of such initiatives include the Ladder for Greater Birmingham, the NHS 'I Can project' and the GBS Ideator. The GBSLEP residual funds will be essential here, not just to deliver important, innovative interventions (and to continue provision where it is currently ongoing and vital to continued improvement) but also to help lever in other contributions to maximise potential investment into such impactful projects and interventions.*

The reduction in the GBSLEP Bespoke Initiatives budget from £150,000 (in a previous submission) to £80,000 reflects the need to move additional resources into the specific EBNS LUZ expenditure which will also explore and, where appropriate, fund specific initiatives in the EBNS geography. This will also leverage employment and skills activity developed through EZIP activity, delivering focused, investor-led initiatives across the EBNS area to maximise the employment impact and potential of local strategic investment.

Regardless of this, it is planned that the new budget will directly fund at least two initiatives through the proposal, while flexibility between the GBSLEP resources, and other funding streams (such as those identified above), will ensure that at least as much activity as previously identified in earlier submissions will be commissioned, including training in areas such as enterprise and entrepreneurship such as that funded previously by GBSLEP through Enterprise Made Simple, and sector focused innovative careers initiatives such as those delivered by Ahead Partnership.

Additional funding has also been identified to complement and add value to the GBSLEP funds to deliver such activities alongside and integrated

into this intervention. This includes funding from other public and private sector sources to deliver initiatives such as those identified and ensure not just the maximum impact of the GBSLEP funds but also longevity and sustainability beyond the lifetime of the GBSLEP residual funds. GBSLEP residual funds will act as a catalyst for other funding and investment into this activity, especially in East Birmingham and North Solihull, to ensure long-term success and maximum impact.

All activity across the Workforce Development Service will have a strong East Birmingham/North Solihull focus to ensure maximum collaboration, best value and impact across this key Levelling Up Zone in our region and the consequent positive impact on the wider Birmingham/Solihull area.

Partnership (max 100 words)

*Partnership is at the very core of this proposal, in essence a partnership between **SMBC and BCC** to deliver the best service, including:*

- *The **East Birmingham and North Solihull Levelling Up Zone**, and the Birmingham based Investment Zone activity could potentially unlock funding in the order of **£100s of millions (as a minimum) over 25 years**. The WMCA is working towards a Government approval of the Trailblazer Devolution Deal with the possibility of an announcement in November, and to go-live in 2024/2025.*
- *The EBNS LUZ is a model with its very foundations in partnership, between **BCC, SMBC and WMCA** (along with DLUHC) and with the additional **partnership support of GBSLEP**, a legacy will be secured of massive regional importance that delivers benefits to businesses and citizens in line with the LEP's core principles and objectives.*
- *Alignment with the **Growth Hub/Business Growth West Midlands** ensures business integration/support and Business Skills Offer as well as the regional leadership of **WMCA**. Building on the partnership work of the GBSLEP Skills Service and working through the BCC EATeam and SMBC Employment and Skills Team draws in **FE, HE and ITP** partnerships. This will also bring partnership with the **Chamber of Commerce** and essential alignment with the region's LSIP.*
- ***EBNS** geography aligns existing partnership activity including with **Partnership for People and Place schools, anchor network employers and various community interest groups** engaged.*
- *Employment Access Team integration within BCC ensures **employer engagement** to create good employment opportunities for young local people, delivery of social value targets and activities (this includes extensive **developer and investor** engagement related to major investments across the Birmingham and Solihull area). Aligned to this is the coordination with the **EZIP** which also brings additional investor and developer partnerships.*
- *The close linkages with the Careers Hubs in Birmingham and Solihull through the employer-led offer the B&SWDS will also build on those partnerships with **CEC** and **WMCA** already in place and develop more employer involvement and business-led careers offers.*
- *Project specific activity with **community enterprises (Apprenticeship Ladder and GBS Ideator)**.*

Alignment

This project is strongly aligned with policy and other (mainly publicly) funded initiatives including:

Levelling Up – as previously highlighted, Birmingham City Council and Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council have been working in partnership with the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) to develop proposals for a Levelling Up Investment Zone (LUIZ) for East Birmingham and North Solihull. There is provision in the WMCA Deeper Devolution Deal for 25-year business rate retention within a proposed East Birmingham/North Solihull Levelling Up Zone. The EBNS LUZ activity is perfectly aligned with policy at the national and regional level and requires initial GBSLEP legacy support to realise this unique policy alignment opportunity.

UKSPF – through the Business Support/Growth Hub/Business Skills Offer alignment that brings LEP resources alongside those of SPF to have the maximum positive impact on small business across the Birmingham/Solihull geography. The GBSLEP legacy support will cover the exclusivity gap that currently exists within the SPF programme between the Business Support and People and Skills pillars to complement both and maximise collective impact. The SPF funds targeting East Birmingham will also complement this activity as will the **Levelling Up Zone** funds in this geography and smaller initiatives such as the DLUHC funded **Partnerships for People and Place**. The project is designed to align with the UKSPF timeframe to ensure complementary delivery and create a business case for business-led skills provision for the programme that follows in April 2025 (possibly a devolved Single Settlement).

Commonwealth Games Legacy Enhancement Fund – complementing both LEP residual funds and UKSPF, the Commonwealth Games Enhancement Fund delivers support that will be brought together into a package of support for young people to deliver collective employment outcomes.

Social Value - Through the activity of the officers funded through this programme, there will be a focus on securing **employer contributions for social value** related activity such as creating apprenticeships and work experience opportunities in new business and investments through the creation of social value action plans and the adherence to the conditions of **Section 106** agreements. This will also help ensure continuity and sustainability of these interventions beyond the lifetime of this GBSLEP intervention.

Careers and Enterprise Company – the CEC Careers Hubs in Birmingham and Solihull will align with the activity of the Workforce Development Service by ensuring that schools are fully engaged in the work of the WDS and the learning and employment opportunities that are being identified through it and create a pipeline of career/opportunities within key businesses and sectors that meet the needs of the Solihull/Birmingham economy.

Enterprise Zone Investment Plan – working with employers on the 38 sites of the EZ and coordinating with the employment and skills aspects of the **EZIP**, the WDS will ensure developer and investor social value action plans are implemented and key investors receive a package of support necessary to maximise employment and skills opportunities, retaining investment in the local area. Similar approaches will be taken in Solihull at major developments like **Blythe Valley and Arden Cross**. As highlighted, the EZIP and associated LEP leadership and investment also provides a blueprint for potential LUZ activity in EBNS.

	<p>Cost of Living/Public Health Interventions – In Birmingham, as part of the second phase of Cost of Living interventions the importance of good employment related to improved health and obvious improvements in the cost of living balance will be targeted and this will provide a key alignment to the business focused skills and employment interventions of this activity – especially in EBNS.</p> <p>Although in its initial phases, and linked to the above, plans are afoot led by the ICB and Local Authorities to develop a strategy and intervention in EBNS through the Government’s proposed Work Well Partnerships initiatives (DfH&SC and DWP led) to align good employment with improved health of local residents; again, complementing the EBNS employment and skills activity within this proposal.</p>		
Project Start:	01 January 2024	Completion Date:	31 March 2025
Project Aim and Description: (Max 500 words)	<p>Specific Birmingham and Solihull Workforce Development Service activity will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of a new business focused skills offer that builds upon the work of the GBSLEP skills service, learns lessons, and takes a more dynamic approach to business engagement and support. Aligned with the Growth Hub offer within BCC, and broader business support offer, such a service will look to new engagement and support practices (events, comms, IT, media etc.) to engage and support businesses in ways that align with modern business practices and provide improved Value for Money and sustainability of service through enhanced integration. • Through the above, focus on the promotion and take up of specific skills priorities such as apprenticeships and supported internships and ensure alignment with existing opportunities and initiatives that maximise value and impact (Levy Transfer etc.). • Creation of a one stop shop business support service, with the Growth Hub/Business Growth West Midlands that supports the entire HR journey through recruitment, retention, upskilling and workplace progression, ensuring measurable business improvements • Social value support and provision for employers including large investors, especially across the EZ and EBNS Levelling Up Zone, highlighting and working with employers to ensure social value commitments (around employment and skills) are identified and worked towards to both create good jobs that benefit both local people (especially young people) and improve business productivity. • Implement strategically agreed employer engagement activity especially in key investment areas such as EBNS, the multiple investment sites of the Birmingham City Centre Enterprise Zone and areas of investment in or around Solihull such as Blythe Valley and Arden Cross. • Undertake access support such as developing partnership-based recruitment pathways, jobs fairs etc. and increasing access to the opportunities created by the above for local people; especially young people. • Implement careers and schools support linked to growth opportunities including the targeting of specific communities and geographies, in partnership with the Careers and Enterprise Company. • Complementing the work of the Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) especially around the engagement of (cornerstone) employers and their integration into the offer • Matching programmes (including those led by FE/HE) and funding (AEB, UKSPF, CWG legacy etc.) to create a package of place-based support that addresses skills gaps identified by employers and investors and is integrated with other place-based services. • Understanding and impacting on the linkage between good employment and health and wellbeing of the citizens of Birmingham and Solihull. 		

- *Complementing the activity of the LSIP by addressing skills needs that are place-based, growth sector focused, business-led and individually bespoke.*

This will include the uptake of apprenticeship focused provision and the development of T-level related activity; the potential increase in scope of the apprenticeship levy transfer scheme (alongside that of WMCA) will be a key part of this.

More of a focus will be placed on the impact of these interventions and measuring it through productivity improvements, staff recruitment, upskilling and retention etc. It will form a key part of the Business Growth West Midlands offer and be designed in such a way to integrate with this product in a way that seamlessly supports businesses engaged. The additional support of the Workforce Development Service will also provide a broader workforce development function to enable employers to receive recruitment and retention support that includes a pipeline of appropriately skilled local residents. It will also afford the Skills offer the opportunity to complement investment and support investors across the GBS geography including within the EBNS Levelling Up Zone where a bespoke package of support can be developed.

In addition, innovative LEP legacy services such as the Apprenticeship Ladder, I Can and Ideator projects will be supported to maximum effect, both directly and through leveraging in additional resources (where available) to maximise the impact of these key projects. We will look to support two or three of these innovative projects that have proved so successful through LEP interventions and also utilise additional 'match' funding where appropriate to maximise the impact of the activities and of the GBSLEP funding. There will be a strong East Birmingham and North Solihull flavour to all interventions to maximise impact and joined up benefit in this key Levelling Up Zone. Detail of projects to be built upon include:

Examples of such initiatives include:

- **The Ladder for Greater Birmingham**

The Ladder is ideally suited to complement the Workforce Development Service model to increase the uptake of apprenticeships by businesses of all sizes and young people across the GBS geography. A focus of Ladder activity could also be in the EBNS area and build upon the activity already underway there, through the Partnerships for People and Place (PfPP) project with 6 schools, in supporting local careers pathways for young people especially via less known vocational routes. The PfPP project draft evaluation recommends this, and increased working with school leads on understanding apprenticeships, an activity that the Ladder undertakes alongside its other promotion, advice, and support activities.

- **GBS Ideator**

*Working with key partners (Digital Innovators etc.) the Ideator created a **unique collaborative environment** to facilitate a **"learning by doing"** approach to skills development and training. It created a place where young people developed **skills in a practical way by working on projects and ideas** provided by **large corporate and government organisations, SMEs, and start-ups**. The Ideator creates opportunities for young people, including those with Special Educational Needs, to access opportunities traditionally out of reach but where employers identify and encourage their potential. A continuation/expansion of the Ideator could build upon the PfPP work to create EBNS opportunities for young people to fulfil their latent potential, following*

the successful 'Reverse Mentoring' conducted by that project which supported 2-way familiarisation between young people and SMEs as well as major employers in the locality.

The reduction in the GBSLEP Bespoke Initiatives budget from £150,000 (in a previous submission) to £80,000 reflects the need to move additional resources into the specific EBNS LUZ expenditure which will also explore and, where appropriate, fund specific initiatives in the EBNS geography. This will also leverage employment and skills activity developed through EZIP activity, delivering focused, investor-led initiatives across the EBNS area to maximise the employment impact and potential of local strategic investment.

Regardless of this, it is planned that the new budget will directly fund at least two initiatives through the proposal, while flexibility between the GBSLEP resources, and other funding streams (such as those identified above), will ensure that at least as much activity as previously identified in earlier submissions will be commissioned, including training in areas such as enterprise and entrepreneurship such as that funded previously by GBSLEP through Enterprise Made Simple, and sector focused innovative careers initiatives such as those delivered by Ahead Partnership.

A Communications and Marketing resource will be located within the BCC EA Team but will cover the whole GBS geography (providing support to the WDS offers within BCC and SMBC, producing joint marketing materials etc.) and focus on the areas noted above and the positive economic and social impact of 'good employment'.

Specifically, in relation to the support of the development phase of the EBNS Levelling Up Zone, GBSLEP support is key to provide the upfront investment to develop the business case and investment plan, and we need to prepare an Investment Plan to proceed, just as we did for the Enterprise Zone. Specialist technical advice for the development of the joint LUZ proposal has been provided to develop the proposal but requires further investment to take it to the next stage.

A core advisory function is required and will include:

- Lead development of the Levelling Up Zone proposition and investment plan*
- Engagement with internal stakeholders, including senior officers and politicians, and with partners including WMCA*
- Data gathering and analysis*
- Preparation of proposals for submission into the TDD process*

The consultancy support will deliver the following outputs:

- An initial Levelling Up Zone mobilisation report which will set out a recommended approach to the development of the Levelling Up Zone, including the project management and governance arrangements for the tripartite working with Solihull Council, Birmingham City Council and the West Midlands Combined Authority, a stakeholder engagement workstream, and an indication of the overall scope of the work needed to deliver the Levelling Up Zone over a 12 month period.*
- Provision of supporting evidence setting out a proposal for the Levelling Up Zone TIF arrangements, if this option is supported by SMBC, BCC and the WMCA. It could be based upon the contributions of the partners and other consultants, and configured in a manner which meets the requirements of the WMCA and supports the production of related documents (Cabinet Reports, materials for public engagement etc.)*

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for the preparation of an initial Levelling Up Zone Delivery Plan and its fit within the larger Place Plans designed to unlock further funding , utilising financial and economic modelling jointly developed with WMCA, and setting out the programme of infrastructural investments needed to deliver the Spatial Vision. • Project management and organisational support to facilitate the tripartite working for the duration of the commission, including arranging meetings, tracking actions, and producing supporting collateral as required to facilitate decision making.
<p>Outputs. Outcomes and Impact (max 100 words)</p>	<p>Outputs (B&SWDS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 New Local Employer Engagement strategy considering sectors, geography, recruitment cycles for best alignment of local support services (Solihull) - 1 New ‘one offer’ business focused employment and skills offer to promote a broader service to employers including recruitment support, Careers Hub employer activity, training and workforce development opportunities, Supported Employment (LA provisions aligned EBNS-wide) - 600 Number employers engaged and accessing our support (50 in SMBC) - 15 new training opportunities (e.g.SWAPS) developed (8 in SMBC) - 400 vacancies filled at Good Employment standard (e.g. Real Living Wage and employee status) (Bham only) - 500 new apprenticeship opportunities created (Bham/External e.g. Ladder only) - 50 new internships (incl supported) created (10 in SMBC) <p>Outcomes / Impact (B&SWDS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 70% Businesses responding reporting positive results / experience <p>Outcomes / Impact (Levelling Up)</p> <p>The opportunity of retaining business rates for 25 years frees the EBNS from short term operational concerns that time limited funding offers. It is vitally important to get this right and using consultants means that an independent expert body can take a holistic view of EBNS objectives & the external pressures affecting it, ensuring the chosen solution achieves the desired objectives, allowing the LUZ to have a significant role in creating a future society that is prosperous, equitable and sustainable.</p> <p>Within the above specific data will be recorded as per responsible practices where appropriate, such as young people receiving and benefitting from specific types of support, number of businesses supported that are SMEs and specific place-based outputs and outcomes (e.g. EBNS), this will contribute to the qualitative impact report on an annual basis.</p>
<p>Why is GBSLEP Funding Needed?</p>	<p>GBSLEP funding is key to the roll out of this service as we currently operate in an environment of significantly reduced public funding to tackle employment and skills activities such as those outlined in this proposal.</p> <p>Local government budgets are diminished and there is a funding gap between EU Structural Funds and UKSPF People and Skills provision that will be partially addressed, in suitable areas, by this key support. This will enable essential continuity of provision through this critical period.</p> <p>To maximise outcomes, there is a need to develop a VCS framework particularly in the EBNS LUZ where new collaborative ways of working will be developed with the VCS sector who will play an integral role in maximising the impact of the LUZ on local people.</p>

This is also especially true in the case of the EBNS Levelling Up Zone development phase, where a relatively moderate intervention at this early stage has the likely potential to deliver an enormous impact in terms of investment and the consequent impact this has on the local economy, businesses the community and voluntary sector and people. As we know from the EZ model, this initial investment can deliver an enormous level of investment and impact and, in this case, the GBSLEP resources can enable this, without which the progression to a position of readiness to gain Zone approval is at risk.

Likewise, but on a much smaller scale, in the current environment additional resources have been identified to part fund some of the activity that is highlighted as being an opportunity to commission (Ladder, Ideator etc.) but the initial GBSLEP investment can act as a catalyst to lever in these additional resources and enable such vital interventions to maximise impact.

The GBSLEP residual funds, and the flexibility afforded through them, will fill gaps in the funding landscape while also ensuring other specific funding opportunities are brought together to maximise impact and added value. The GBSLEP funds become the glue between people-based skills and employment funding and economic development, the community and voluntary sector business support funding that the current funding landscape sees operate in silos. The LEP funding will enable a joined-up employment and skills offer, directly linked to business support, development and investment across Birmingham and Solihull.

Aligning with what is currently the only known instance of both business support and people and skills UKSPF support being deployed together, and understanding that there is currently no integration between these two funding pillars, the GBSLEP funds will enable the essential crossover between the two themes to address the most obvious of needs; business demand-led skills provision. This will also then support a case for such provision continuing post March 2025 through a new funding programme – possibly a regional devolved Single Settlement which could be identified through the Place Plan

What will the GBSLEP Funding be spent On?

GBSLEP Residual Funding will be spent on:

- *Additional staffing brought in to deliver the Workforce Development Service Offer

 - *4 WDS officers (2 in SMBC, 2 in BCC)**
- *Bespoke business-led skills offer (sufficient additional resource within/aligned with the Growth Hub/broader business support offer to provide a complete business support solution, including skills)*
- *2/3 commissioned innovative employment and skills local expert offers to meet specific needs (if three this will likely include additional funding identified as positionally available to match)*
- *EBNS Levelling Up Zone development – core advice and technical support to be commissioned*
- *EATeam/WDS marketing & comms budget.*

A breakdown of the funds by activity is as follows:

Activity	Cost/Funding Request
<i>B&SWDS staff resource</i>	<i>£315,805</i>
<i>EBNS Levelling Up Zone</i>	<i>£450,009</i>
<i>B&S business skills offer</i>	<i>£134,992</i>
<i>GBSLEP Legacy Bespoke Initiatives</i>	<i>£80,000</i>
<i>EAT/WDS marketing/comms</i>	<i>£11,000</i>
Total	£991,806

<p>What are the key risks / issues? (Three Only)</p>	<p>BCC Section 114: <i>The issuing of a Section 114 notice to Birmingham City Council creates an environment of financial uncertainty attached to any initiative associated with the Council and attracting funding. However, this proposal has already received endorsement from the Children’s Services Leadership Team and been to Cabinet Member Briefing. It has also received approval from the Council’s Section 151 officer as part of the ‘bulk approval process’ aligning the level of funding against this activity within the Council and approving required spend against it at the levels specified.</i></p> <p>Lack of business uptake/demand: <i>the demand for the skills support service is known through the experiences of the GBSLEP Skills Service (the need for a more activity led and holistic HR focused offer) and the activity of the EATeam, which works with partners to address employment and skills demands with developers and investors every day. Business engagement will be facilitated through the business support offers of the Growth Hub (and broader business support offer) and EATeam and an appropriate delivery model will be designed and implemented in the first three months of delivery based on such data.</i></p> <p>Lack of continuation/additional complementary funding: <i>with this funding aligning with the end of UKSPF support there is a concern that there’ll be nothing to follow financially. As previously noted, this intervention will enable the creation of a business case for business-led skills provision in the area for whatever follows UKSPF (including a devolved Single Settlement). However, in bringing together other funds and developing new business focused partnerships and arrangements, the WDS will enable place-based funds such as EZIP and LUZ funds to continue post GBSLEP support, while new private sector investment through social value agreements will be targeted through this intervention to support such provision if appropriate public sector supports fails to materialise. As highlighted, the GBSLEP initial investment can ensure continuation funding in EBNS of a level rarely seen through the development phase of the LUZ, which is currently understood to be progressing well through the DLUHC application/approval process, with key announcements expected immanently.</i></p>
<p>How will the project be delivered? Max 50 Words</p>	<p><i>The overall project will be managed by Birmingham City Council through the Employment and Skills Team of the Children and Families Directorate. This service already successfully manages large externally funded projects such as the ESF/YEI funded Youth Promise Plus project.</i></p> <p><i>However, it is very much a partnership venture with the joint activity for EBNS LUZ development phase, being managed and contracted by SMBC.</i></p> <p><i>Delivery staff will be split between BCC and SMBC, sitting in the Employment Access Team and the East Birmingham Programme Team in BCC and the Employment and Skills Team of SMBC.</i></p> <p><i>Additional services and contracting will be procured and contracted by BCC on behalf of the partnership, in line with appropriate procurement rules, and managed accordingly.</i></p> <p><i>Business-led skills offer services will be designed by the project team, in consultation with partners (including through the findings of the evaluation of the ESF funded GBSLEP Skills Service project), in the first quarter of the project lifetime and delivered subsequently through a variety of activities that align with the model above, delivered through existing or new staff and services or appropriately procured. This will be coordinated through the Growth Hub located in BCC.</i></p>

	<p><i>Where funds have to be passed between BCC and SMBC this will be done through a long-established practice of back-to-back agreements between the two local authorities.</i></p> <p><i>As noted, Section 151 officer approval has already been obtained within BCC for this activity and associated spend (including any that will need to be passed to SMBC).</i></p> <p><i>All programme activity will be monitored throughout the project lifetime by the Enterprise Zone and Legacy Board according to the terms of the MOU, to ensure targets are attained and reported back through the appropriate funding governance mechanism.</i></p>
<p>Key Milestones: (Four Only)</p>	<p><i>Design and contracting of EBNS LUZ development activity: at risk in November / December 2023, to be able to start delivery in Jan 2024</i></p> <p><i>Design and start of new business skills offer (SMBC): Mar 2024</i></p> <p><i>Appointment/start of all associated staff (SMBC Jan 2024, EA Team June 2024).</i></p> <p><i>Procurement of all innovative skills initiatives complete: Sep 2024</i></p>