

Appendix 1

Project A – Greening the Grey (Wildlife Ways)

Wildlife Ways has, since April 2018, been delivering a wide range of habitat improvements across the urbanised area of Solihull. The success of the project has, in part, been due to the initial Solihull Habitats and Nature Improvements project which has been in delivery from 2017. These programmes have delivered a significant improvement to habitat spaces both for people and wildlife across Solihull with 13.4Ha achieved by Wildlife Ways and 91.92Ha achieved by Solihull Habitats and Nature Improvements project.

The Wildlife Ways programme has also enabled the delivery of a Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership wide habitats grants programme. It was envisaged that this grants programme would have the majority of applicants based in the Birmingham and Solihull area but pleasingly, more funding is needed to meet the projected demand for the habitats grants programme in the District Council areas of: Tamworth, Cannock Chase, East Staffordshire and Lichfield.

The application for more funding was submitted to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) on the 30 September 2019. The application proposes an extension of time to 2023 allow the maximum number of applicants to apply for funding.

To date, it is estimated that the programme will improve the ecology of 171 Ha of land across the GBSLEP area.

Project B: Enterprise and Development programme (Solihull for Success)

The extension to the Enterprise for Success project (March 2022 – June 2023) will continue and build upon the successful delivery to date of the programme, responding to the greater focus on and opportunities for scale-up in Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP) area.

The project extension will continue to provide a package of start-up and new business growth support coordinated through GBSLEP's Growth Hub giving entrepreneurs access to advice, support and networking, with specialist expertise, including young enterprise and business growth from March 2022 to June 2023.

Working with delivery partners focussing on key areas / communities with relatively low levels of enterprise /innovation activity and under-represented groups, it will achieve increases in entrepreneurship, business creation, job creation and growth. It will also link these growing businesses into the full range of support in their next phases of growth through a range of start up and post start support delivered across the GBSLEP.

A consultant provider, commissioned via OJEU compliant procurement, will cover services in Cannock, Tamworth, East Staffs, Lichfield and North Worcester. Funded partly through contributions from each of these authorities, it will enable these areas to signpost to one point of contact for a relatively small number of people who are located over a wide geographic area.

Up until March 2022 business support in Solihull will be delivered through our procured consultants. ERDF will continue until June 2023 but, as there is uncertainty as to what happens after this point, and no clear option in terms of alternative funding for this programme, it seems prudent to trial an alternative approach to delivering Business Support in Solihull.

In Solihull, from March 2022, the programme will focus on a commission with the Prince's Trust to deliver business support to 18-30 year olds, a charitable organisation, with a long track record in delivering support to young people. This target group has traditionally taken longer to transition from pre-start to a trading position. This support is well aligned to the Council's Inclusive Growth agenda.

Further support for all age ranges will come from Birmingham City University (BCU), the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Growth Hub (GBS GH) and the Library of Birmingham.

This trial will be monitored and evaluated before the end of the current programme (March 2022) to ensure there is a smooth transition of business support activity for all Solihull enterprises, but also to compare the outcomes achieved of the two alternative approaches.

Project C: Local Strategic Network Resilience, Connectivity Enhancements Programme.

The strategic outline case to the West Midlands Combined Authority application is to undertake the development of an outline business case including associated evidence required for three areas of work which are:

1. Smart Resilience Assets (SRA) designed to help future proof areas of work such as: digital asset data capture, artificial intelligence condition analytics and project planning tools to better manage highways network information through traffic management systems.
2. Significant Network Connections (SNC) designed to better manage important strategic highways structures and congestion 'hot spots' around the Borough such as A45N, near Birmingham Airport.
3. Sustainable Mobility Management (SMM) examining the potential of reducing the number of single occupancy and short journeys on the local highway network. This work includes using behavioural insights specialists to drill down into the detail to identify what 'nudges' could influence change in Solihull and to develop appropriate activities, including campaigns.

Benefits and lessons learned from the above activities will be shared across the Council and also with West Midlands' local highway authorities and Transport for West Midlands.

Project D - Promoting local businesses during HS2 construction – ‘Open for business’

Solihull has a strong tourism sector, supporting a large number of jobs. An application to the HS2 Business & Local Economy Fund, supported by the Solihull Tourism Forum, will be used to mitigate any impacts from HS2 works on these businesses and on their workforce, over the key delivery phase of the infrastructure works. This funding will be used to promote that, despite the extensive road works, Solihull businesses are ‘open as usual’ from both a business and visitor perspective. The work will include marketing and business support.

The Solihull ‘Open for Business’ programme will, through a series of targeted interventions, help keep key tourist attractions and businesses open, help their employees get to those businesses and help the public access them.

In line with the funder’s requirement, priority focus will be given to the centres that lie the closest to the HS2 route – namely Chelmsley Wood, Bickenhill (Birmingham Airport/Birmingham NEC), Hampton in Arden and Balsall Common.

These aims will be achieved by:

- Supporting the marketing of Solihull’s visitor attractions and key tourism offer and highlighting key walking and cycling routes that circumvent the affected road network;
- Business support to help promote local businesses through one to one support as well as supporting the delivery of a number of events promoting the local centres;
- The creation of walking and cycling maps and increasing way marking of key routes;
- Promotion of alternative forms of transport - for businesses and individuals.

Project E: Fillongley Road Bridge

The bridge, built in 1958, is connected to Fillongley Road and spans the A45 which is a busy commuter route and plays an important part in the local economy, linking many pockets of high employment as well as Birmingham International, Birmingham Airport, the NEC and Hampton in Arden. In addition the bridge needs to be able to cope with increased traffic and no weight restrictions when the UK Central and the HS2 station near Birmingham Airport are developed.

The bridge has had more than 50 years of constant, heavy use and it now needs extensive maintenance. Following a series of inspections of this bridge it has been determined that either extensive maintenance or replacement of the bridge is required. As the bridge is a key employment link, it is important that it is maintained for current use but also for the expected developments which will create new employment opportunities in and around the HS2 station. With this in mind, it is vital the bridge is suitable for all road vehicles without weight limitation.