

**Meeting date:** 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023

**Report to:** Managed Growth Scrutiny Board

**Report title:** Delivering Inclusive Growth in Solihull

**Report from:** Director of Public Health

**Report author/lead contact officer:** Rachel Egan, Head of Inclusive Growth

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**Wards affected:**

- All Wards |  Bickenhill |  Blythe |  Castle Bromwich |  Chelmsley Wood |  Dorridge/Hockley Heath |  Elmdon |  Kingshurst/Fordbridge |  Knowle |  Lyndon |  Meriden |  Olton |  Shirley East |  Shirley South |  Shirley West |  Silhill |  Smith's Wood |  St Alphege
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**Public/private report:** Public

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**1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 The report outlines progress on the delivery of the inclusive growth programme and wider activity to deliver inclusive growth.
- 1.2 The Council is making good progress in terms of using its role as an employer and procurer to drive inclusive growth and to working with Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care System (BSol ICS) and other employers to support their work in this area. Additional activity to drive inclusive growth has been progressed through the development of a plan to deploy Solihull's allocation of UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), joint work with Birmingham City Council on the East Birmingham North Solihull Corridor and the publication of the draft Economic Strategy. Potential future areas of activity include developing our approach to working with local businesses to support inclusive growth through their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities and further supporting the development of social enterprises.

**2. Decision(s) Recommended**

- 2.1 To consider progress to date and recommend areas for additional activity.

## Report Title: Delivering Inclusive Growth in Solihull

### 3. Matters for Consideration

#### Inclusive Growth Programme

- 3.1 Solihull has one of the strongest economies in the UK with unprecedented prospects for accelerated economic growth, new employment opportunities and further inward investment through the delivery of High Speed 2 and UK Central (UKC). The challenge is to ensure that this growth provides opportunities across the whole Borough and that all can contribute to and benefit from this growth. Inclusive Growth has now been fully embedded into the Council Plan and is becoming part of how the Council does business. As such there are many projects and programmes that contribute to the Council's inclusive growth ambitions that are delivered and governed through existing structures such as the Sustainability Board, UKC Board, Thriving Communities and Health & Wellbeing Board. To complement this activity, an Inclusive Growth Programme was established in 2021 to focus on areas of work that are not part of established programmes, add value to existing activities and have an impact on taking forward the inclusive growth agenda. It is designed to address identified gaps in activity where the Council is best placed to lead and is jointly led by the Director of Public Health and the Director of Economy and Infrastructure.
- 3.2 The programme originally included the development of an inclusive growth outcomes framework aligned to the Council Plan, specifying, and capturing the contribution of social value to delivering inclusive growth and using our role as an employer to provide opportunities for targeted groups with an initial focus on young unemployed people and those with Learning Disabilities. We have started to develop our approach to using the economic power of anchor institutions to drive inclusive growth through our own experience as an employer and procurer and also the work that the Council is leading on behalf of the Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care System (BSol ICS) to build entry level pathways from deprived communities into NHS jobs.
- 3.3 In addition, the principles of inclusive growth have been embedded into the Economic Strategy refresh and the delivery of the UKC programme, particularly the Kingshurst Village Centre and Chelmsley Wood Town Centre redevelopments, through which we will drive the delivery of inclusive growth outcomes. The development of the Community, Health and Wellness Hub in Kingshurst Village Centre is a key part of this work and will integrate a range of services to tackle health inequalities in the area.
- 3.4 Key achievements in relation to the programme over the last year include:
- a) In our role as an employer we have employed an additional six people with a Learning Disability through the creation of a dedicated fund to develop employment opportunities within the Council. There are a range of roles in facilities, administration and catering. We are exploring additional opportunities in administration and catering as well as in library services and are in discussion with Solihull Community Housing to explore the addition of some environmental roles so that we have a broader range of posts to offer. We are also developing 5 opportunities for supported internships for people with learning disabilities that will commence in September 2023. We employed 18 young unemployed people

under the Kickstart programme in partnership with Solihull Community Housing. 14 of those young people moved into employment or training following the completion of their six month placement and the other four individuals are being supported by the employment and skills team to secure employment or further training.

- b) Building on this experience we recently secured £300,000 from the Department for Work & Pensions to deliver a Local Supported Employment Pilot to help 60 local residents with a learning disability or autism to move into work and be supported throughout the duration of the pilot with both pre and post-employment support. The Council has partnered with local providers, Experts by Experience, Ideal for All and Colebridge Trust to deliver the programme which started in February 2023. The pilot draws on the experience of these providers alongside Council Services (Employment and Skills Team, All Age Disability Team and Education Health and Care Plan Team) to work in partnership to offer a wraparound service, helping individuals to secure work and support employers to develop a working environment that meets both their needs and the needs of the individual employed.
- c) Birmingham and Solihull NHS Trusts have committed to working together to open up access to NHS jobs, particularly for the unemployed and those from deprived communities. The Council has led a piece of work, on behalf of the ICS, to review how jobs are recruited to, where they are advertised, minimum requirements and job descriptions and have simplified the recruitment process so that the opportunities are better understood and more accessible. The pathway into these jobs was launched in November 2021 under the 'I Can' campaign. This involves a multi-agency approach to engagement, pre-employment training and a simplified recruitment process to support those who may not be able to secure employment through normal open recruitment channels. To date, 254 offers of employment have been made through this process with a further 182 people currently being supported through the programme. We are exploring the expansion of the programme into Primary Care roles and will be piloting the approach for social care in April 2023.
- d) Our approach to social value has been further reviewed to examine the process and tools that we use to support the delivery of social value and the costs and benefits of the approach in relation to the social value return on this investment. As a result of this review, proposals are under development to further reduce and focus the Themes, Outcomes and Measures that contractors can select from and to focus resources on larger contracts where the most social value can be obtained. Recommendations to amend the current approach will be put forward following the publication of the new Council plan to ensure alignment with Council Plan priorities.
- e) In relation to Kingshurst Village Centre, we have agreed an approach to social value with Willmott Dixon, our preferred contractor, that will include the delivery of an on-site training hub that will train local people in construction skills to then work either on site in Kingshurst or to work on other sites in the region including HS2. We are facilitating a partnership between Willmott Dixon and Solihull College to deliver a mix of on and off-site training with industry input and

engagement in the programme. There is also a commitment to employ local people on site including the long term unemployed and those with disabilities.

- f) Recognising that there was overlapping work happening in relation to the development of a place based outcomes framework through Place Committee and the Health and Wellbeing Board, a dashboard to monitor delivery of the Economic Strategy and an inclusive growth outcomes framework, these pieces of work will be brought together to develop single suite of outcomes for Solihull following the close of consultation on the Economic Strategy.

### UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)

3.5 UKSPF is a central pillar of the UK Government's Levelling Up agenda and a key tool in supporting inclusive growth. Its primary goal is to build pride in place and increase life chances across the UK, with 3 key investment priorities:

- a) Community and Place
- b) Supporting Local Business
- c) People and Skills (including adult numeracy programme, Multiply)

3.6 WMCA has been allocated £88.4m to be spent between April 2022 and March 2025 of which £5.3m has been allocated to Solihull. WMCA as the lead accountable body for UKSPF submitted a high-level investment plan to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) which was approved in December 2022. For Solihull, this provides:

- a) A total of £5.3 million over three years
- b) 50% of this to be ringfenced to Business Support activity, delivered over year 2 and year 3
- c) 50% to be determined locally, spent on Community and Place activity (years 1, 2 and 3) and People and Skills activity (year 3), with increasing allocations year on year

3.7 The grant agreement for funding was received by the Council in January 2023 and the local plan to utilise this funding will be considered by Full Cabinet on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2023. The draft plan has been based upon Council Plan priorities and includes actions relating to family hubs, community capacity building, development of community assets, arts and culture, wildlife ways and employment support for the economically inactive.

### East Birmingham North Solihull Corridor

3.8 We have been working closely with Birmingham City Council to develop proposals for an East Birmingham North Solihull Levelling Up Zone to deliver increased investment, growth and employment at a scale that will transform the West Midlands region and make a major contribution to national economic growth. A Levelling Up Zone across this area would address a unique combination of opportunity, scale and need. It would build on and accelerate existing major projects and initiatives including HS2 and

Birmingham City Centre; Tyseley Environmental Energy District; and the planned development of UK Central at Arden Cross. The dynamic economic areas which bookend East Birmingham and North Solihull sit either side of the largest concentration of deprivation in the UK outside London with 72% of the wards in the proposed zone in the most deprived 10% nationally. This proposal would unlock and accelerate growth and job opportunities in an area that contains some of the country's highest unemployment levels and is being developed as part of discussions for the West Midlands Trailblazer Devolution Deal, central to which are:

- a) Infrastructure funded through new approaches to infrastructure funding, flexibilities and local tax retention,
- b) Integrated public services that allow local businesses to access skilled labour, and
- c) Freedoms and flexibilities that further support growth and development.

3.9 The current timetable for the Trailblazer Devolution Deal is working towards an announcement in the Spring Budget on 15<sup>th</sup> March.

### Economic Strategy

3.10 The draft Economic Strategy is currently out to public consultation which closes on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2023. The principles of inclusive growth are embedded within the strategy and associated delivery plan, recognising the differences in life chances across Solihull and taking steps to tackle inequalities so that everyone can progress and enjoy a good quality of life.

### Employment and Skills

3.11 The team has delivered a wide range of events, activity and customer support throughout the year including:

- a) Two Apprenticeship Shows, in the north and south of the Borough receiving over 3,000 visitors
- b) Engagement with 535 new jobseekers and helping 226 residents to find employment, education or training (between April 22 and Dec 22)
- c) Full deployment of the Skills for Success programme in schools and colleges, providing preventative support to stop young people becoming NEET (not in employment, education or training).
- d) The launch of a Digital Hub providing a brand-new ICT offer to jobseekers
- e) A range of jobs fairs, recruitment events and employer engagement to support businesses to recruit to vacancies

## Social Enterprise

- 3.12 In October 2019 the Council entered into a 3-year agreement with the Greater Birmingham & Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBS LEP) Growth Hub for the provision of a full time experienced Third Sector/Social Enterprise (SE) Business Navigator at a cost of £20k pa for 3 years, this agreement was extended (at no cost to the Council) until June 2023 although we have just been informed that it will now only run until the end of March 2023. The Solihull SE Business Navigator employed by iSE (Initiative for Social Entrepreneurs) provides focussed support and delivery within Solihull specifically; Pre – start advice and guidance and onward referral to the mainstream Employed for Success start up provision and post – start support: Advice and guidance in Management and Governance including trustee appointment; market making; access to appropriate VSCE funding opportunities; volunteer attraction. Since October 2019, 22 unique social enterprises have been supported through this agreement equating to a total of 191 hours of direct support.
- 3.13 The Navigator role has been closely aligned to the Enterprise 4 Success (Blue Orchid) and VCSE Infrastructure Support (CAVA) providers to provide a comprehensive service of third sector business development support within the Borough and giving greater access to mainstream support programmes via the wider Growth Hub network.

## Areas for Development

- 3.14 We are currently revisiting our approach to supporting Corporate Social Responsibility amongst local businesses to create a stronger link between local businesses and the community and voluntary sector and to bring together different ways that the Council can support this activity. This links to our work on social value and these two areas are likely to have shared priorities delivered through different relationships with businesses.
- 3.15 The current social enterprise offer was due to cease in June 2023 but we have just been informed that this has been brought forward to the end of March 2023. Officers are currently exploring what can be delivered in the future through UKSPF and these discussions are ongoing with Birmingham City Council who will host the Growth Hub following the closure of GBS LEP. Officers are also in discussion with the Strategic Lead for Social Economy at West Midlands Combined Authority to explore the support and expertise available through them. We are particularly looking at opportunities relating to Kingshurst Village Centre, building on our current engagement with the voluntary and community sector and the potential for social enterprises to be involved in the new Community, Health and Wellness Hub to be delivered as part of the redevelopment.
- 4. What options have been considered and what is the evidence telling us about them?**
- 4.1 The actions outlined in the report are designed to support the delivery of the Council Plan and wider plans, adding value rather than duplicating activity. It is anticipated that the scope and nature of the Council's work on inclusive growth will continue to evolve over time as new challenges and opportunities arise.

**5. Reasons for recommending preferred option**

5.1 The inclusive growth programme provides the Council with a clear set of actions to pursue in addition to the wider activities of the Council that contribute to this agenda.

**6. Implications and Considerations**

6.1 State how the proposals in this report contribute to the priorities in the [Council Plan](#):

Priority:	Contribution:
<p>People and Communities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improving outcomes for children and young people in Solihull.</li> <li>2. Good quality, responsive, and dignified care and support for Adults in Solihull when they need it.</li> <li>3. Take action to improve life chances and health outcomes in our most disadvantaged communities.</li> <li>4. Enable communities to thrive.</li> </ol>	<p>The Council’s approach to inclusive growth supports the delivery of all elements of the Council Plan and directly influences the development of the approach to delivering outcomes for the economy, environment and people and communities of Solihull.</p> <p>Enter text.</p> <p>Enter text.</p> <p>Through its role as a major local employer, the Council is ideally placed to implement inclusive growth by embracing, and securing value from, supported employment programmes, apprenticeships, traineeships and work experience.</p>
<p>Economy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Develop and promote the borough’s economy, with a focus on revitalising our town and local centres.</li> <li>6. Maximising the opportunities of UK Central and HS2.</li> <li>7. Increase the supply of affordable and social housing that is environmentally sustainable.</li> </ol>	
<p>Environment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Enhance our natural environment, improve air quality and reduce net carbon emissions.</li> </ol>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Promote employee wellbeing</li> </ol>	

6.2 Consultation and Scrutiny:

6.2.1. The inclusive growth programme is reported to the Economic Development and Managed Growth Scrutiny Board on an annual basis.

### 6.3 Financial implications:

6.3.1. The Inclusive Growth Programme and Council actions it identifies have been developed with regards to the Council's available resources and funding. There are no additional direct financial implications as a result of this report.

### 6.4 Legal implications:

6.4.1. There are no direct legal implications as a result of this report.

### 6.5 Risk implications, including Risk Appetite:

6.5.1. No new risks have been identified as a result of this report.

### 6.6 Equality implications:

6.6.1. Reducing both poverty and inequality is at the heart of the meaning of inclusive growth. It is measured not only by how much growth is generated but also by how well it is shared across the whole population and place making sure that everyone can contribute to and benefit from economic growth, delivering greater prosperity and equity across the borough

### 6.7 Linkages to our work with the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), Local Enterprise Partnership or the Birmingham & Solihull Integrated Care System (ICS):

6.7.1. The Council's work on inclusive growth is developed through regular consultation with WMCA to share best practise, identify shared priorities and shape the approach at both regional and local level.

6.7.2. GBS LEP has been a key partner in the delivery of our economic growth and employment and skills activity.

6.7.3. The Council leads the BSol ICS work on the employment and skills agenda and is supporting the development of the ICS approach to using their economic power as anchor organisations to support inclusive growth priorities.

## 7. List of appendices referred to

7.1 N/A

## 8. Background papers used to compile this report

8.1 N/A

## 9. List of Other Relevant Documents

9.1 N/A