

£54.2 million cash boost for Greater Birmingham and Solihull to help create local jobs and growth

Communities Secretary Sajid Javid today announced a government cash boost of £54.2 million for Greater Birmingham and Solihull to help create jobs, support businesses and encourage growth.

Some of the locally-chosen projects likely to benefit over the next few years include:

- The Precision Technologies Accelerator, which will provide space for laboratories to transform the way that we treat illness and disease;
- The Future Skills Fund will support the development of world class facilities and equipment for local colleges and universities across Greater Birmingham and Solihull; and
- The Thermal Energy Demonstrator and Research and Development Centre will be part of Energy Capital and will establish a testbed capability to support the development and deployment of new thermal technologies.

These, alongside other projects, will improve skills, create jobs, build homes and improve infrastructure.

This latest award of Local Growth funding is on top of £378.8 million of Growth Deal funding already awarded to Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership. This will see jobs created, homes built and extra investment.

Communities Secretary Sajid Javid said:

“This Government is backing Greater Birmingham and Solihull with this new £54.2 million funding pot. Exciting projects to benefit include new medical research laboratories and a new centre to develop clean energy.

“This new funding will help create jobs, boost skills and give businesses support.

“Local people will also have the chance to have their say and vote on 4 May for their new mayor.”

Steve Hollis, Chair of the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership, said:

“We welcome the news that the Government has committed this funding to the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership. In total, the Government’s investment now stands at £433 million – a real statement of confidence in our track record of delivery and ambition. When combined with the £1 billion of funding we are unlocking through our Enterprise Zone and the billions of pounds of investment in HS2, we have significant resources to deliver projects that will help support the realisation of our vision to be a global city region by 2030.

“Through this Growth Deal we will look to work with partners to support projects, such as the Precision Technologies Accelerator Life Sciences project and the Future Skills Fund that will help us to reach our ambition to grow the regional economy by £29 billion, benefitting both local residents and businesses.

“We expect this additional investment to unlock the development of 1,000 new homes, create and safeguard 2,900 jobs and assist many more learners to take advantage of the economic opportunities on offer across Greater Birmingham. In doing so, we will leverage £163 million from public and private sector partners to boost economic growth across the region.”

The Leader of Birmingham City Council, Cllr John Clancy, said:

“The announcement that the Greater Birmingham area has been awarded £54.2 million from the Growth Deal 3 bid will help to boost an already ambitious agenda to deliver new housing, jobs and skills based on an overriding principle of inclusive economic growth – making sure new investment reaches and benefits all communities.

“Local Growth funding is already contributing to the construction of the National College for High Speed Rail in Birmingham, a facility which will exploit our world class academic excellence to accelerate the development of new technology and its integration into the rail supply chain. This will attract significant international investment, placing Greater Birmingham at the heart of global rail transport innovation.”

Creating an economy that works for everyone

An ambitious strategy to help the Midlands reach its full economic potential has been published today as the Chancellor Philip Hammond visited the region the day after delivering his first Budget.

The Midlands Engine Strategy includes significant investment in skills, connectivity and local growth, while it sets out how the government plans to drive the region’s huge potential and promote it to the world.

Alongside our historic devolution deals – one of which will mean West Midlands Combined Authority benefits from an extra £1 billion investment over 30 years, a new mayor and a range of new powers - the £12 billion Local Growth Fund equips local leaders with the cash they need to invest in and support locally determined projects.

Under the fund, England’s 38 Local Enterprise Partnerships – made up of council leaders and business representatives – bid for investments based on local priorities.

Bids are highly competitive and to be successful, Local Enterprise Partnerships need to work with partners to agree strong and accountable governance and put forward proposals that boost growth and bring in private sector funding.

Over £9 billion of the Local Growth Fund has now been awarded to Local Enterprise Partnerships through three rounds of Growth Deals, helping more than 1,000 projects get started across England already – this is supporting vital infrastructure, improving skills and creating thousands of jobs. Together with money for unlocking housing sites to support home building and investment in very large transport schemes – both announced in 2016 – we have fulfilled our commitment to a £12 billion Local Growth Fund.

In Greater Birmingham and Solihull this has already:

- Provided £2.4 million for the Friarsgate Development in Lichfield city centre, estimated by the Local Enterprise Partnership to create 900 jobs and grow the economy by £283 million;
- Contributed with other partners to the recently opened £16 million Hoobrook Link Road, which has improved connectivity within the South Kidderminster Enterprise Park – a key employment site in the area; and
- Supported the development of the University Centre at Innovation Birmingham Campus through a £2.5 million investment. The purpose-designed centre will facilitate effective collaboration between small businesses and universities.

The Midlands Engine is the ambitious long-term economic plan to achieve greater economic growth and productivity across the whole Midlands. Our plans for the Midlands Engine demonstrate that when we say we'll build an economy that works for everyone, we mean it.

The Government is supporting improvements in infrastructure, skills, business, environment and innovation in the Midlands. The Government is also increasing trade and investment by promoting the Midlands nationally and internationally.

Across the Midlands local people are set to benefit from £392 million investment with the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership receiving £54.2 million to spend on its programme. Projects that may be supported through this programme include:

- The Precision Technologies Accelerator which will drive innovation across the life sciences sector by providing commercial incubator space, skills development and laboratories. This £36 million project is estimated by the LEP to create 250 jobs, leverage £100 million of private sector investment and unlock significant commercial potential by generating deeper insights into diseases and their treatment. Ultimately, the proposals will transform the way that we treat illness and disease and will lead to significantly better outcomes for patients;
- The Future Skills Fund will support the development of world class facilities and equipment for colleges and universities across the Greater Birmingham and Solihull area driving innovation and growth; and

The Thermal Energy Demonstrator and Research and Development Centre will be one pillar in the vision to establish Energy Capital and the associated Energy Innovation Zones in the West Midlands. Building on the Thermal Energy Research Accelerator, this investment will establish a test bed capability to support the development and deployment of new thermal technologies - both hot and cold. This will make the West Midlands one of the most attractive locations in the world to develop clean energy technology companies. With an initial focus on the Tyseley Environment Enterprise District, the Energy Demonstrator will contribute towards the delivery of regeneration of Tyseley, creating new jobs and growth.