
Economic Development and Regeneration Service Delivery

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor K May Leader and Cabinet Member Strategic Partnerships, Economic Development and Enabling
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Assistant Director	Rachel Egan Assistant Director Regeneration and Property Services
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Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	No
Relevant Council Priority	Economic Development
Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet Committee RESOLVE that:-

- 1) Earmarked reserves be released to fund economic development and regeneration activities as follows:**
- a. Worcestershire Growth hub - £140,000**
 - b. Careers Worcestershire - £300,000**
 - c. Betaden - £70,000**

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (WLEP), now operating through Worcestershire County Council as the accountable body, provides the strategic framework for delivering business support and skills initiatives across Worcestershire. It operates through a blended funding model, combining core Government grant funding with a range of programme-specific resources, including UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), legacy Growth Deal funding and contributions from local partners. Between April 2022 and March 2026, Bromsgrove District Council, alongside the other district councils, has contributed to the delivery of these activities through its UKSPF allocation, enabling the continuation and enhancement of local

business and employability support. With UKSPF funding due to cease, there is currently no confirmed replacement funding stream, creating a significant risk to the continuity of these services.

- 2.2 The Worcestershire Growth Hub is a core component of this delivery model, providing a single access point for businesses to obtain advice, skills support and information on grant and investment opportunities. As part of a national network supported by Government, Growth Hubs are recognised as an effective mechanism for improving business productivity, resilience and growth by simplifying access to a complex support landscape. In Worcestershire, the Growth Hub has been enhanced through UKSPF investment, enabling more targeted local support. The loss of this funding would significantly reduce the level of tailored support available to Bromsgrove businesses, limiting their ability to access specialist advice, workforce development opportunities and growth funding.
- 2.3 Careers Worcestershire supports young people aged 16–24 into employment, education and training, through a partnership-based delivery model. Delivered by Worcestershire County Council in partnership with Seetec Pluss, district councils and a range of external agencies, the service brings together career’s advice, benefits guidance, wellbeing support and access to specialist services including education, SEND, housing and apprenticeships. It works closely with employers to align support with local labour market needs and create pathways into work. In Bromsgrove, this has been complemented by the development of an informal, place-based hub and outreach activity to engage young people, particularly those who are not in education, employment or training. The continuation of the Careers Worcestershire provision is reliant on sustained local investment and partnership funding to maintain and grow this coordinated, community-focused offer, without which there is a clear risk of reduced engagement and worsening levels of youth unemployment.
- 2.4 In the absence of UKSPF, the continuation of both the Growth Hub and Careers Worcestershire within Bromsgrove will require local financial support. Failure to provide this funding would result in a reduction or cessation of locally accessible business support and employability provision, with direct implications for economic growth, workforce development and inclusive opportunity within the borough.

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 3.1 Worcestershire LEP and Worcestershire County Council have developed a set of proposals to enable the continuation of key programmes previously supported through UKSPF, including the

Worcestershire Growth Hub, Careers Worcestershire and a business support programme delivered through BetaDen. These proposals set out delivery models, outputs and funding requirements for the continuation of services between April 2026 and March 2028. Bromsgrove District Council officers have engaged with both organisations to review and refine the proposals, ensuring that they are aligned with the Council's economic development and regeneration priorities and that they demonstrate appropriate value for money. This has included consideration of local delivery impacts, targeted support for Bromsgrove residents and businesses, and the extent to which the proposed programmes complement existing provision and maximise outcomes from the Council's investment.

- 3.2 The Worcestershire Growth Hub provides the principal local gateway to business support, offering coordinated access to local, regional and national advice, funding and specialist services through a single, easily accessible service. Between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2026, the Growth Hub supported 458 businesses within Bromsgrove. A proposed Council contribution of £140,000 would enable the delivery of a minimum of 170 additional business assists, ensuring the continuation of targeted support for local businesses.
- 3.3 Careers Worcestershire provides one-to-one, personalised support to help young people prepare for and access education, employment and training opportunities. Since opening in April 2024, Careers Worcestershire has supported 364 young people from Bromsgrove. The proposed Council contribution would enable the continuation of this provision which is at risk without district-level funding.
- 3.4 BetaDen provides a county-wide business innovation support programme delivered across a number of Worcestershire districts. A proposed Council contribution of £70,000 would secure access for Bromsgrove businesses to a range of targeted support, including six places on the Incubate programme supporting early-stage technology businesses, five places on the BetaDen Digital programme focused on digital adoption and artificial intelligence, and up to 65 places on a programme of workshops covering topics relevant to businesses investing in new product development and process innovation. Access to this provision is dependent on district-level financial contributions; without such funding, businesses in non-contributing areas would not be eligible to participate in the programme free of charge.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Council has an ear marked reserve for Economic Growth Development with a balance of £911,000 as of 31st March 2026.

£200,000 has already been allocated in the budget to continue the delivery of the Innovation Lighthouse business support programme delivered by Warwick Manufacturing Group. This leaves a balance of £711,000 that could be used to support the continuation of business support and youth employability activity in Bromsgrove.

- 4.2 It is proposed that three projects are funded, for the period from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2028, to a value of £510,000 from the remaining £711,000 as shown in the table below.

Project	Budget	Commitments	Further details
Economic Growth Development Reserve as at 01.04.2026	£911,000		
Existing Projects:			
Innovation Lighthouse business support programme		£200,000	Delivered by Warwick Manufacturing Group. Delivery to 31 March 2028
Proposed Projects:			
Betaden		£70,000	Proposed in this report. Delivery to 31 March 2028
Worcestershire Growth Hub		£140,000	Proposed in this report. Delivery to 31 March 2028
Careers Worcestershire		£300,000	Proposed in this report. Delivery to 31 March 2028
Unallocated:			
Remaining Balance		£201,000	Plans to be confirmed
Total	£911,000	£911,000	

- 4.3 Subject to approval of the recommendations in this report, budget will be vired to the projects identified above, leaving a balance of £201,000 yet to be allocated in the Economic Growth Development Reserve.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 In order to deliver the proposed activities it will be necessary to enter into contracts with Worcestershire County Council.

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Reorganisation

- 6.1 All activities proposed in this report will be completed prior to local government reorganisation.
- 6.2 Funding for economic development activity post March 2028 is not yet confirmed. It is expected that responsibility for delivery of economic development and the funding that supports this activity will fall within the remit of a new Strategic Authority.

Relevant Council Priority

- 6.3 The proposed use of the earmarked reserves will contribute to delivering the Council's priority of Economic Development.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.4 There are no climate change implications directly relating to this report.

Community Impact

- 6.5 The proposed activities will support both new and established businesses, helping them to grow, create jobs and drive economic growth. Funding for Careers Worcestershire will provide targeted support to help young people progress into education, employment or training enabling them to benefit from future job creation and economic opportunities.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.6 There are some clear positives in the proposals, particularly around the continued investment in Careers Worcestershire and its focus on supporting young people including those not in education, employment or training. This will support more inclusive access to economic opportunities locally.
- 6.7 It is important to ensure that equality considerations are built into delivery of the funded services with a focus on ensuring services are accessible, inclusive and responsive to the needs of all communities

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 Failure to secure funding for business support activities will lead to a reduction in services available to businesses across the borough. Without additional investment, the Growth Hub will be limited to delivering a core, reactive service focused solely on responding to

enquiries. The proposed funding contribution would enable the Growth Hub to provide a higher level of business support and take a more proactive approach in targeting and supporting priority sectors.

- 7.2 The Betaden programme delivers innovation support to both new and established businesses, helping them explore how innovation can drive improvements in productivity and sustainability. It plays a key role within the local innovation ecosystem. Without district-level financial contributions local businesses will not be able to access the broad range of expertise provided by the programme in the development of new products and processes, including digital adoption and the use of Artificial Intelligence.
- 7.3 Careers Worcestershire has been in operation for two years and has supported a substantial number of young people during this time. However, youth unemployment remains a significant challenge. Without district-level financial support, the service will cease, risking a rise in youth unemployment.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet
2026

17 June

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Cllr K May Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Partnerships, Economic Development and Enabling	26/5/26
Lead Director	Guy Revans Executive Director Environment and Communities	22/5/26
Financial Services	Debra Goodall Assistant Director Finance and Customer Service	22/5/26
Legal Services	Claire Felton Assistant Director Legal, Democratic and Procurement Services	
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	Helen Mole Business Improvement Manager	26/5/26