



ASTON VILLA
FOUNDATION



Draft

NORTH BIRMINGHAM ECONOMIC RECOVERY PLAN

Working Summary
Updated July 2021
(Created September 2020)

North Birmingham
Employment & Skills
Board

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Appendix – NBER Action Plan

North Birmingham Economic Recovery Plan: Executive Summary

1- Introduction

This document provides a practical framework responding to the local economic shock of the Covid19 pandemic and works in tandem with a detailed action plan. Drawing together key agencies, it focusses on collaborative action and complements the work of the North Birmingham Employment and Skills Board.

2- Mission Statement

To maximise inclusive economic activity for residents of the North Birmingham area, with particular emphasis on creating effective routes into skills training and sustainable jobs for those currently facing barriers and/or exclusion. To support Small and Medium-size Enterprise (SMEs) and Social Enterprises in accessing business opportunities available to them.

3- Agreed Workstreams and Cross Cutting Themes;

The below were agreed upon by stakeholders at the Summit meeting held on the 18th June 2020

Work Streams	Cross Cutting Themes
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Business & Employer Engagement2. Skills and Training (inc: re-skilling and upskilling)3. Jobs and Employment Support4. Commonwealth Games 20225. Peddimore Development	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Supporting priority groups including:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Young People- Black & Minority Ethnic communities- Gender equality/Women- Residents with disabilities2. Residents from priority wards/ neighbourhoods3. Environmental Sustainability4. IT – Access to equipment and digital literacy

4- Progress since March 2021

Appointment of Economic Recovery Co-ordinator – had initial introductory meetings with Single Point of Contacts (SPOCs). Continued dialogue between SPOCs and Co-ordinator in order to keep abreast of priorities and align activities.

Development of Economic Recovery Webpage – encapsulates the opportunities for jobs, training, business opportunities and support. The webpage will act as a portal to complement stakeholder websites enabling North Birmingham residents and businesses to access opportunities from a single place.

IM Properties shared positive news about two planning consultations for Peddimore; Unit A for potential manufacturing/logistical use and Unit B for a larger occupier led unit, generating opportunities for jobs for thousands of local people. Work on the ground has commenced this month (July).

Welcome Aston Villa – committed to supporting the work of the Economic Recovery Taskforce, using the brand and reach of the club to support the residents and businesses in North Birmingham.

5- Coordination and accountability will be key to success.

Cllr Ian Ward offered his full support to the action plan approach developed by the Taskforce by confirming; together we could create local jobs for the local people of North Birmingham leading to inclusive prosperity, whilst addressing the many deep-seated inequalities that have held too many people back for far too long.

Each Taskforce members' SPOC to maintain dialogue with the NBER Co-ordinator (Jobeda), providing insight and ensuring progress, collaboration and accountability.

6- Emerging Issues, Strengths, and Information/Service Gaps

Unemployment is the highest in Birmingham in comparison to other core cities in the country. According to the unemployment data for May 2021 provided by Birmingham City Council, Birmingham has the highest claimant unemployment rate (14.9%) amongst the core cities and is well above the UK average (7.4%).

Health and wellbeing support especially mental health was highlighted as an increasing need at the North Birmingham Employment Skills Board (NBESB) meeting earlier this year. According to Perry Barr Jobcentre Plus, of 5,706 unemployed claimants (who are not claiming any disability related benefits or not required to look due to childcare) approximately 40%, have declared a health condition (across Perry Barr and Erdington).

The issues highlighted here can be further understood by recent analysis of (July) statistics provided by partners of the NBESB.

- Of 7,938 engaged adults (over 19) 3,704 adults completed the training course (47%) but only 349 of those adults were supported into employment (9%).
- In respect of under 19's, partners reported 846 individuals were engaged, 142 completed the course (17%) of which only 5 were supported into employment (4%).
- The analysis illustrates very low conversion rates into employment. Especially for the under 19's being supported into employment.

Digital exclusion - partners from the NBESB also identified that there is limited access to IT equipment, connecting and training.

Local businesses support - to enable them to access procurement opportunities available through HS2, CWG 2020 and Peddimore development.

7- Alignment with Birmingham City Council Strategy

The North Birmingham Economic Recovery Plan will be aligned with Birmingham City Council Strategy – Cllr Ian Ward

Taskforce partners attended the Jobs and Skills Recovery Plan Consultation/Meeting with Birmingham City Council on the 26th of May this year.

8- Special thanks to Cliff Hall

On behalf of the Taskforce, Jack Dromey expressed thanks to Clifford Hall for his work over the years, offering opportunities to thousands of young people and wished him well in his retirement.

9- BEST Portal and Jobs Fair

The Jobs and Skill Fair took place on Thursday 17th June at 10:30am. The event was divided into two sessions. Session 1 consisted of presentations by Taskforce partners showcasing live employment/training opportunities. Specifically, IM Properties (Peddimore Estate, HS2, Commonwealth Games, South and City College and BMet College).

Session 2 was an interactive session with an expert panel, answering questions direct from the public. The panel was made up of Birmingham City Council, Department for Work and Pensions and Aston Villa Foundation. Other partners were able to contribute and answer questions put to them too. Questions ranged from generally, what advice would you give to someone looking to secure employment, to a specific question about how they can secure a role in quantity surveying/engineering – resulting in a partner forwarding the individuals CV onto the HR department.

There was a total of 96 attendees who joined the session (including presenters/stakeholders). The event was live-streamed on Facebook with 25 people logged in. This successful inaugural event provides a firm foundation for future developments.

In between the two sessions, a live demonstration of the North Birmingham Economic Recovery (BEST) Portal where the audience was shown the key features of the portal took place. Illustrating how easy, efficient and simple the portal is to use.

Feedback from partners has been very positive. The first session outlined live current opportunities, which meant the audience was engaged and interested and the second session provided a real opportunity to access information tailored to individual need.

Future events will build on the learning and experience gained from this first Jobs and Skills Fair and will focus on specific themes.

The BEST Portal was launched on the 17th of June and is now available at [Home – North Birmingham Recovery \(northbirminghameconomicrecovery.co.uk\)](http://Home – North Birmingham Recovery (northbirminghameconomicrecovery.co.uk)) or via any search engine.

10 Community-based Delivery, Reach and Access

Taskforce members have highlighted the need to enhance reach and access into neighbourhoods and communities that may not traditionally access employment, skills and employment opportunities in North Birmingham.

Witton Lodge Community Association (WLCA), in partnership with Compass and ISE, have secured ESF resources to create additional capacity and services. In total, 12 posts have been created focusing on employability, skills development and enterprise support.

Additionally, positive discussions have been held with DWP to site Youth Employment Hubs in North Birmingham. Currently there are proposals to ‘open’ three hubs in the near future.

Despite the above, the scale of the challenge requires additional capacity, capability, and resourcing. WLCA's officers initiated discussions with over a dozen community organisations across the three constituencies, where a lack of resources/funding was identified as the key barrier to participation. An application to the Community Renewal Fund (CRF) sought resources for community organisations to connect traditionally marginalised groups to opportunities in North Birmingham. Unfortunately, the bid was unsuccessful, and further consideration will need to be given to how this type of activity can be resourced, especially, in relation to imminent opportunities from the Commonwealth Games.

Partner Organisations

Organisation	Responsible Officer/ SPOC	Lead Member
Aston Villa Foundation	Pete Ezard	Guy Rippon Head of Foundation and Community
Birmingham City Council	Tara Verrell	Cllr Jayne Francis Cabinet member-Education Skills & Culture
BMET College	Suzie Branch	Pat Carvalho Principal and Chief Executive
Chambers of Commerce- Birmingham	Emily Stubbs	Henrietta Brealey CEO
Commonwealth Games Birmingham 2022	James Walsh	Ian Reid Chief Executive Officer
Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)	Kristina Cassidy	Dez Grant Service Leader
Greater Birmingham Solihull LEP	Spencer Wilson	Ed Watson Interim Chief Executive
High Speed Rail Ltd	Matt Hadlington	To be confirmed
IM Properties (Peddimore)	Steve Farr	David Smith Planning Director
South & City College	Jacqui Maher	Mike Hopkins Principal
West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA)	Keiran Casey	Julie Nugent Director of Productivity and Skills
Witton Lodge Community Association (WLCA)	Iram Fardus	Afzal Hussain Chief Officer
North Birmingham Economic Recovery Coordinator		Jobeda Shahed

Sponsors

Jack Dromey MP

Member of Parliament: Erdington

Cllr Robert Alden

Birmingham City Council: Erdington Ward

Linda Hines MBE

Witton Lodge Community Association: Chair

Document compiled by Witton Lodge Community Association in collaboration with Partners listed above, Erdington Covid19 Taskforce and the North Birmingham Employment and Skills Board