



# LOCAL GROWTH IN ACTION

Bringing the latest updates in local growth news and success stories.

Issue 2

12 February 2015

**In this issue:**

- **Welcome!**
- **Calendar**
- **Announcements**
- **Liverpool City LEP supporting business growth**
- **PROGRAMME UPDATE: Regional Growth Fund**
- **Feature: WWGLEG**
- **BIS Outreach Digital Catapult Event**
- **In the News**

**Calendar:**

- **12 Feb:** RGF Round 6 announcement
- **27 Feb:** Growing Places Fund Data Return deadline
- **30 March:** Pre-election purdah

## Welcome!

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the second issue of *Local Growth In Action*.

As the Government's Director General of Business and Local Growth, I am keen to see Government programmes and local delivery partners working seamlessly together to achieve economic growth.

A great example is the Regional Growth Fund (RGF). Today, we announced a further £297million is being invested in projects and programmes across the

country. These initiatives have significant potential to leverage private sector investment and create and safeguard jobs. Without RGF support, these opportunities may have been lost abroad and highly innovative and enterprising organisations would be unable to expand.

On behalf of *Local Growth In Action*, I encourage you to share this newsletter with others. We hope it can help to build a nationwide network of local growth stakeholders who can exchange ideas and celebrate successes.

Today's newsletter includes an update from



the RGF, as well as features on projects from the Liverpool City LEP, the What Works Centre, and BIS Outreach.

I hope you enjoy Issue Two - and good luck in all your efforts to achieving local growth.

**Bernadette Kelly,**  
*Director General of Business and Local Growth,*  
*Department for BIS*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### REMINDER: GROWING PLACES FUND DATA RETURN

The Growing Places Fund, a £730 million fund dedicated to supporting local growth through local infrastructure improvement, has released the latest GPF data return to all LEPs. LEPs are reminded to update and return the template for the final six months of 2014 by **27 February 2015**.

For information, contact [Kismet Rashid](#).



Earlier today, Greg Clark visited Romax, an automotive software company, to announce £9million RGF funding being invested in the East Midlands

## LIVERPOOL CITY REGION LEP SUPPORTING BUSINESS GROWTH

We aim to share innovative and enterprising ideas from those delivering growth at the local level.

Here, the **Liverpool City Region Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)** discuss how their AdviceFinder portal is supporting business growth in the region.

The Liverpool City Region LEP has been working with partners to try to simplify, strengthen and commercialise the business support landscape across the City Region.

When looking at the business support available it became obvious that navigating the most appropriate support can be difficult for businesses. Therefore, the LEP has developed a number of initiatives to improve the conditions for business growth in the City Region.

Central to this is the [AdviceFinder.co.uk](http://AdviceFinder.co.uk) website that provides an online matchmaking service for businesses to find commercial and other business support in the City Region based on their business needs, sector, stage of growth and location.

By making available a broad database of business specialists, the LEP aims to retain as much spending on professional services in the City Region economy as possible. The LEP estimates that every year millions of pounds are spent outside the City Region on services which could be supplied by local companies.



Access the AdviceFinder website [here](#).

The website forms part of the LEP's wider New Markets Programme (a business support initiative funded by European Regional Development funding), which can support 35% of the cost of advice for eligible SMEs to enable them to grow.

Mark Basnett, Executive Director at the LEP, explained: "SMEs are vital to the economic growth of the region but often find it difficult for busy business owners and managers to make time to find the commercial advice they need.

"We want to make it as easy as possible for businesses to access the expertise we have here in the City Region. Essentially it's about making the market work more effectively for SMEs and the professional and commercial services sector."

## PROGRAMME UPDATE: REGIONAL GROWTH FUND

Launched in 2010, the [RGF](#) stimulates enterprise by providing grants to projects and programmes with significant potential for economic growth, leveraging private sector investment and creating or safeguarding jobs.

In each issue, we provide an update from one of our flagship local growth programmes.

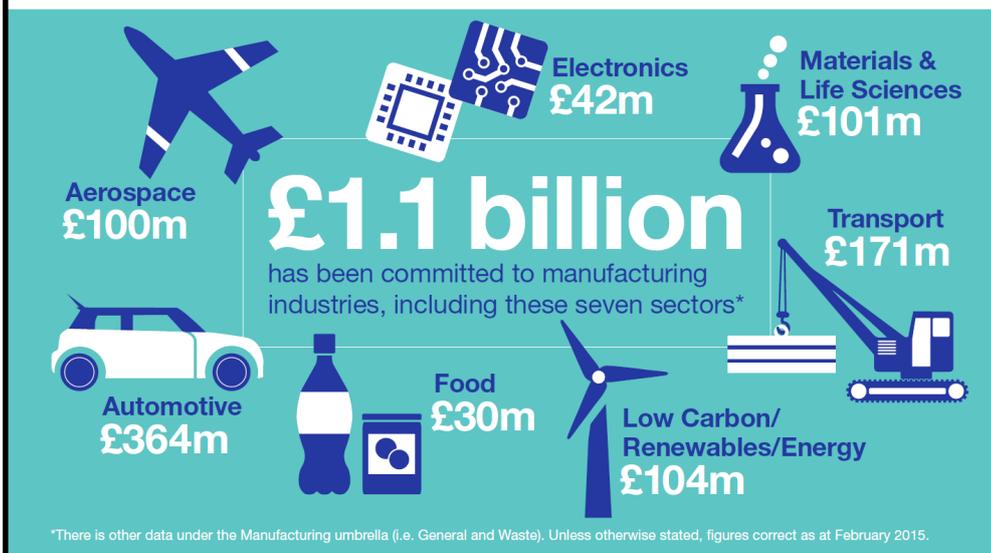
With the landmark announcement today, today we look at the **Regional Growth Fund.**

Nick Clegg,  
Deputy Prime  
Minister:

*"The success of the RGF is proof that putting money in the hands of local businesses helps them flourish, and creates opportunities for more people to work locally."*



How the **Regional Growth Fund** is benefiting manufacturing



- In line with the Government's strategic priorities RGF has supported manufacturing (see above) and the [Industrial Strategy](#).
- For every £1 the Government has invested, the private sector has put in £5.50.
- By 2017, £2.85 billion will have supported 470 projects and programmes
- In today's Round 6 announcement, RGF is backing 63 projects and programmes across England with a further £297 million.
- 100,000 jobs have been created or safeguarded to date - with a further 480,000 expected by the mid-2020s.
- Mini Cooper to Haribo - ['Ten cool products that show British business is GREAT'](#)
- Follow [@RGFGrowthFund](#)



Today, Vince Cable met apprentices at Brose, a manufacturer of automotive components, to announce the £55m RGF investment into the West Midlands.

Lord Newby visited Beatson Clark, a glass manufacturer, whose Round 4 RGF-funded project has already created or safeguarded 322 jobs.



## FEATURE: WHAT WORKS CENTRE FOR LOCAL ECONOMIC GROWTH (WWCLEG)

Each edition will focus on a particular area of local growth at the national level.

This issue looks at the valuable work of the **What Works Centre for Local Economic Growth (WWCLEG)**.

### What do they do?

The [What Works Centre for Local Economic Growth](#), launched in 2013, is intended to improve the use of evidence in policy making for local economic growth by:

- ⇒ **Showcasing the policies that work** by reviewing impact assessments of local economic growth policies;
- ⇒ **Engaging an extensive network of practitioners across the UK** to develop best practice and guidance to improve policies and policy evaluation;
- ⇒ **Developing toolkits to show ‘what works’**, through a website featuring an online toolkit;
- ⇒ **Ensuring that two way exchange is at the heart of how the Centre operates**, working closely with Local Enterprise Partnerships and local authorities to develop and disseminate best practice;
- ⇒ **Improving the evidence-base in the long-term** –ensuring that robust evidence is embedded in the development of policy.

### What have they been up to recently?

The Centre has published [systematic evidence reviews](#) in several areas of policy - Employment Training, Business Advice, Culture & Sport, Access to Finance, Estate Renewal and the forthcoming Broadband and Transport reviews. These have highlighted important findings about what works from a comprehensive survey of existing literature.

Over the last year, the Centre has engaged with a network of practitioners, including LEPs, Local Authorities, private companies, and Chambers of Commerce. They have established a User Panel to help make the work of the Centre as useful as possible to policy-makers and practitioners.

In recent months the Centre has hosted a series of capacity-building workshops around the country, teaching practitioners how to use evidence to inform policy design.

### What’s next?

Planned activities over the next 12 months include:

- Running [workshops](#) with New Economy Manchester for local authorities, LEPs, government departments and their delivery partners on how to integrate evaluation into their programmes.
- Launching a new website which will make the evidence about what does work easier to access.
- Developing a toolkit to help policymakers assess the relative cost-effectiveness of different approaches.
- Supporting as many demonstration projects as possible.

### Want to learn more?

Browse the Group’s website and sign up for updates at [whatworksgrowth.org](http://whatworksgrowth.org).

## BIS OUTREACH RECOMMEND DIGITAL CATAPULT

BIS Outreach organised a visit to the [Digital Catapult Centre](#) on 11th February which was well-attended by Government officials working in local growth. The visit proved to be extremely popular and revealed some interesting ideas about how the Digital Economy can support local growth. Some attendees shared some learnings on local growth below.

Anyone can visit the Digital Catapult independently. [Visit their events page](#) for details about upcoming activity - you may find something particularly pertinent to your work. If you have any ideas or observations about outreach, please email [BIS Outreach](#).

*“The Digital Catapult visit was excellent, it was nice to hear they are opening centres in Sunderland, Bradford and Brighton.*

*“Toothpick, a website which listed available dentist appointments in your area was one of many excellent businesses that the Digital Catapult had helped develop”.*

**Joe Staniforth, Growth Team**

*“Digital Catapult is a creative, light and buzzing space where businesses, universities and not-for-profit organisations collaborate to unlock proprietary data in faster, better and more trusted ways.*

*Jenni Young, Centre Manager, gave an excellent overview and responded to our questions. Over her shoulder we saw some of the IT experts letting off some creative energy playing a game of darts in the open plan office!”*

**Jane Lovel, Enterprise & Skills Group**

*“[Digital Catapult] provide a great, technologically advanced workspace for SME start-ups at various stages of development, to iron out any technical issues and help them get to market.”*

**Eve Tilly, Head of Sectors Briefing Hub**

## IN THE NEWS

### BLACK COUNTRY LEP GROWTH DEAL SIGNING CEREMONY

[Express & Star](#): Greg Clark visited Wolverhampton on 5 February to sign the Growth Deal agreement with the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership. This follows the announcement on 29 January that the LEP agreed an expansion to its Growth Deal with the Government which will see an extra £24m invested in the Black Country between 2016 and 2021. This is in addition to the £138m of funding committed by the Government on 7 July 2014. Over the lifetime of its Deal (2015-2021) the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership estimates that up to 5000 new jobs could be created, 1400 new homes built and that it has the potential to generate up to £310m public and private investment.

### WORCESTERSHIRE LEP CELEBRATES SUCCESSES

The Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (WLEP) announced that it is on track or exceeding current long-term goals for the County's economy. From June 2011 to September 2014, Worcestershire has seen an increase of over 8% in employment levels which compares favourably with a 4.7% increase in the West Midlands generally and 4.8% across England. £600m of private sector investment has been leveraged through schemes including the new UK distribution centre for Vax at Droitwich, and the Premier Inn's new development adjacent to Worcestershire County Cricket Club. Find out more about WLEP's fantastic achievements [here](#).

The LEP also reached its 10,000 apprenticeships milestone several months early—an achievement that was commended by Business secretary Vince Cable (read the [Worcester News report](#)).

Subscribers to this newsletter will receive the latest local growth news and details of upcoming deadlines and events.

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(@Communities)

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Business, Innovation  
and Skills (@bisgovuk)

Cabinet Office  
(@CabinetOffice)

## We need your help!

If you want to publicise upcoming events or feel you can share lessons from recent activities, please send us information and we may cover it in future editions.

We would welcome your feedback - please contact us to tell us what else you would like the newsletter to feature and how it may be improved.

Contact us for feedback and information: [localgrowthcomms@bis.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:localgrowthcomms@bis.gsi.gov.uk)

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