
Title:	Chief Executive's Report
Purpose:	To update board members on the main operational updates following the July Board Meeting.
Recommendation(s):	That members note the content of this report and comment on any items of particular interest and concern and approve the LEP Risk Register.
Impact on Risk Register:	The Risk Register for BLEP was reviewed by the Audit & Finance Sub Group at its meeting on September 29th and is attached as Appendix 2 to this report.

1 LEP Review Update

As reported at the September board meeting, the LEP Review had been delayed coinciding with the Levelling Up White Paper and the Spending Review. As part of the Government reshuffle which saw Robert Jenrick replaced by Michael Gove as the Secretary of State for the, now renamed, Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, the responsibility for the LEP Review also switched from Paul Scully to Lee Rowley, the Parliamentary Secretary of State for Business and Industry. Prior to undertaking his parliamentary career Minister Rowley was closely linked to the Institute of Economic Affairs who this LEP worked alongside to fund and develop the Vinson Centre at the University of Buckingham. Officials expect the LEP Review to conclude at the Spending Review 2021 announcement.

Advice from officials on LEP Review is to carrying on delivering, be clear on the implications of reduced funding through the LEP channels, for members to use their networks with government ministers to inform the debate and to encourage our wider stakeholder partners to make representation on behalf of the LEPs.

We have supported a social media campaign of PR activity over the past month from the LEP Network to highlight the impact of LEPs in the fields of Net Zero, Skills, Business Support and innovation working under the **#LEPfuturevalue** banner. The LEP Network will also be making a submission to the Spending Review outlining how England's Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) stand ready to deliver on the Government's Levelling Up ambitions and to implement the Plan for Growth at a local level. This means an evolution of the role and responsibilities of LEPs – taking the best of the past and making it fit for the future. A summary of this submission is attached as **Appendix 1: LEP Future Value – A New Deal**. A copy of a letter sent by the LEP Chair, Mark Bretton, to the Cabinet Office following the reshuffle is attached as **Appendix 2** to this report.

2 Finance & Audit Update

At its meeting on September 29th the Finance & Audit Sub Group considered the LEP Risk Register and asked for a specific risk to be included relating to the financial implications of the LEP Review and how these are to be managed and mitigated by the LEP. A copy of this updated risk register is attached as

Appendix 3: Risk Register and will be considered as part of the Mid Year conversation which is scheduled for October 11th.

Ahead of the Mid Year conversation an external compliance check has been undertaken of the LEP website. I am pleased to say that this compliance check was passed, we have also now taken the opportunity to update our Assurance Framework to incorporate our revised Sub Group membership and to include the Scheme of Delegation recommended by the Finance & Audit Sub Group.

3 Capital Programme Sub Group - GBF Progress

Good progress has been made in developing the Getting Building Fund programme; contractual arrangements are in place for all except one of the approved projects and funding claims for circa £2.4m are expected to be received against project delivery in the next quarter.

The one project that is yet to be contracted relates to the Advanced Braking System being proposed by Advanced Engineering Firm D2H. The company have revised their original proposals and have now submitted a new business case outlining a slightly smaller project based on the original proposals. This revised business case will be shared with the Capital Programme Sub Group for consideration prior to entering into contractual arrangements.

A summary of the Getting Building Fund claims is shown below: -

Project Name	Applicant	Approved GBF Allocation	Claimed Q4 2020/21	Claimed Q1 2021/22	Forecast Q2 2021/22
Bucks Rural Broadband Voucher Top Up	Buckinghamshire Council	1,010,000	£0	£0	869,190
Innovation Ecosystem at Westcott	Satellite Applications Catapult	2,609,530	£0	£0	10,000
DISC Phase 1	Satellite Applications Catapult	1,200,000	£113,745	£0	tbc
TESTA - Novel Test Facility at Westcott	URA Thrusters Limited	250,000	£0	£0	250,000
Bucks Operator Skills Hub	Flannery Plant Hire Ltd	750,000	£0	£0	500,000
Centre of Excellence for Rocket Engine and Flow Tests Facility (CEREFT)	European Astrotech Limited	740,000	£0	£0	350,000
East West Rail-Fibre Provision Upgrade	England's Economic Heartland	643,000	£0	£0	0
LUNAZ Applied Technologies - Silverstone	LUNAZ Group	250,000	£0	£0	250,000
Advanced Braking Facility	D2H Technologies	247,470	£0	£0	0
		7,700,000	£0	£0	2,342,935

Board members should note that excellent progress is being made in the construction of the new facilities being promoted by the Satellite Applications Catapult at Westcott (as you will see as part of the Board meeting) and that major claims for those two significant projects are expected in Q3 of this year.

As we near the end of the Local Growth Fund programme, final funding claims have been received from Total Sim for their globally unique robotic pedalling rig, that simulates the movement of a cyclist as part of their testing regime at the Silverstone Sports Hub and opening events have been hosted at the University of Buckingham for their Centre for Artificial Intelligence and Computing and at Stoke Mandeville Hospital for the new Centre for Innovation.

4 Growth & Skills Hub Updates

I will be participating in the mid-year review of the Growth Hub programme, scheduled for October 12th. Given the current LEP Review, it is particularly important this year to highlight the exceptional and aligned work of Bucks Business First as our Growth Hub which I believe is unique in the country in co-locating Growth Hub, Skills Hub and Destination Management Organisation within the same structure.

I had the pleasure of meeting many new members of the BBF Team for the first time at a joint awayday at the Vinson Centre in Buckingham recently and was very proud to hear about the great work they continue to do in supporting business growth and partnerships and in fostering innovation, low carbon policies, start up and peer network support and training programmes to their 14,000 members and other businesses in Buckinghamshire.

Much of this work will be showcased at the Digital Summit and Buckinghamshire Business First AGM which is being held at the Silverstone Experience on the afternoon and evening of November 23rd to which all LEP Board Members will be invited.

Feedback has been received from the Department of Education about the process for updating the Local Skills Reports for this year. Given the work undertaken over the past two years, full reviews are not needed but LEPs have been asked to undertake deeper dive research into particular topics of interest and relevance for their areas. At the SAP group meeting on September 17th, it was agreed that our focus should be on green jobs, engineering skills needs, digital skills needs, and the impact of Covid. This year's report will need to be submitted by the end of January.

4 EZ Board Update

At the recent meeting of the Enterprise Zone Board, it was agreed that the terms of reference (TOR) for the Board would need updating to clarify the links between the EZ board and the main BLEP Board. These terms of reference should be more consistent with our other Sub Groups and would allow for operational decisions within the framework of the agreed implementation plan to proceed smoothly.

The TOR will emphasise that the Enterprise Zone Strategic Board (the EZ Board) is a Sub Group of the BLEP Board. It is accountable to the BLEP Board for its operation and delivery. The EZ Board operates within the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding established at the beginning of the Enterprise Zone's activity and updated in 2021.

The membership of the Enterprise Zone Board will follow the guidelines of the LEP Assurance Framework with a minimum of 2/3 private sector members, it is therefore recommended that the revised board membership will feature 2 Buckinghamshire Council members and 4 LEP Private Sector Board Members

(including the LEP CEO). We will, therefore, be seeking one additional private sector member to join the Enterprise Zone board.

A copy of the draft Terms of Reference will be presented to the next meeting of the EZ Board for consideration.

Elsewhere there have been a number of notable recent announcements linked to our Enterprise Zone programme. The recent publication of the UK Space Strategy has confirmed Westcott's position as one of the most significant hubs in the country. We responded to the strategy launch with a statement from our Chair highlighting how we could help to promote national growth and support levelling up across the space economy and to reaffirm how we will contribute to the whole of government approach to the sector growth as spending programmes are announced in the Spending Review.

We are delighted to report that one of the fastest growing businesses on our Silverstone Enterprise Zone, Lunaz, have been chosen to host "Green Wheels in Motion", a satellite event linked to the COP 26 summit. The event highlighting innovation in net zero transport initiatives will be broadcast directly to the main conference in Glasgow and is being co-ordinated by a partnership that includes ourselves, BBF, Bosch and Buckinghamshire Council.

5 Digital Programme Status

DCMS and BDUK 'Project Gigabit' National Programme - The government led 'Project Gigabit' national programme is being extended into Buckinghamshire, with plans to deliver Gigabit capable services to areas not covered by commercial service providers. DCMS and Building Digital UK (BDUK) has just completed an Open Market Review in five areas including Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Hertfordshire and East of Berkshire to help identify premises that may be suitable for future public funding for gigabit-capable broadband. This is the first stage assessment for the delivery of the new national £5bn programme, both Buckinghamshire Council and the LEP have promoted this opportunity to independent suppliers looking to operate in the Buckinghamshire area.

The new programme will differ from previous schemes in that it will be nationally managed by BDUK, and the role of local partners will largely be confined to enabling the national delivery through local intelligence, wayleave arrangements and the promotion of available offers. One area where Buckinghamshire Council are currently supporting the national programme is through an audit of its public buildings and health infrastructure to provide the information for the Public Sector Hub programme that will support rural programme delivery.

Our new Digital Programme Lead, Rachel Daley, will be joining the team in November from Brunel University and will work alongside Buckinghamshire Council colleagues in supporting the new project Gigabit programme in Buckinghamshire.

6 OX Cam Arc Regional Spatial Plan

At Budget 2020, the government committed to developing, with local partners, a Spatial Framework for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, which government currently defines as the area that spans the five ceremonial counties of Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire, Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire. The plan aims to establish a sustainable strategic framework for economic growth, place, movement and environment. Government aims to achieve beneficial outcomes by focusing on the strategic opportunities for growth and environmental improvement that cross local administrative boundaries and require more joined-up thinking across the area. A response to the consultation is due by the 12th October. The consultation document link for reference is attached [Consultation Link](#)

The Buckinghamshire Growth Board will prepare a consultation response and there is an opportunity to comment and contribute. Broadly, a subregional spatial framework that prioritises productivity growth while enhancing the natural environment, recognising that this will require sensitive management and review and adjustment over the plan period would be a constructive outcome. Government aim to publish a draft Spatial Strategy in the autumn 2022.

7 Communications Update

Our AGM for 2021 is now confirmed for the morning November 10th, we will be hosting this year's event at Buckinghamshire New University's main High Wycombe Campus providing the opportunity for guests to see the health innovation space that has been supported through our Local Growth Programme. Our data observatory and annual report will also be launched as part of the AGM programme.

As part of the continuing Team Bucks approach to Economic Development, on October 19th both ourselves and Bucks Business First will be presenting to the new Buckinghamshire Council Cabinet and Deputy Cabinet members, highlighting the strong partnership arrangements and benefits of close collaboration between the 3 organisations.

Board members are asked to:

- **Note the content of this report and comment on any items of particular interest and concern.**
- **Approve the LEP Risk register.**