

**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE THAMES VALLEY  
LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP (BTVLEP) BOARD MEETING**

Held Friday 2 February 2018 from 9.30am at Arla Dairy, Samian Way, Aston Clinton, Aylesbury HP22 5WJ

- Present:** Cllr Neil Blake, Aylesbury Vale District Council (Alternate)  
Cllr Peter Martin, Chiltern District Council (Alternate)  
Cllr Nick Naylor, South Bucks District Council  
Cllr Martin Tett, Buckinghamshire County Council  
Cllr Katrina Wood, Wycombe District Council  
Philippa Batting, BBF Managing Director (Alternate)  
Michael Garvey, Buckinghamshire Business First (Chandler Garvey)  
Eman Martin-Vignerte, Buckinghamshire Business First (Bosch)  
Andrew Smith, Buckinghamshire Business First (Pinewood)  
Adam Stronach, Buckinghamshire Business First (Harwood Hutton) (Alternate)
- Apologies:** Cllr Steve Bowles, Aylesbury Vale District Council  
Cllr Isobel Darby, Chiltern District Council  
Alex Pratt, Buckinghamshire Business First (Serious Brands)  
Rebecca Bunting, Buckinghamshire Business First (Buckinghamshire New University)
- In attendance:** Dominic Williams, Hewdon Consulting (Part meeting)  
Jonathan Dixon, Blue Sky Finance (Part meeting)  
Dr Amin Ahmadnia, Department for Transport  
Richard Turl, BEIS South Central & West  
Richard Ambrose, Buckinghamshire County Council  
Richard Harrington, BTVLEP Chief Executive  
Ian Barham, BTVLEP Partnerships Manager  
Jackie Campbell, BTVLEP Skills Development Manager  
Anthony Sowden, BTVLEP, Enterprise Zone Manager  
Sarah Fraser

## **SUMMARY MINUTES**

- 1 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
  - Andrew Smith declared an interest in discussions on Creative Media Skills (a tenant of Pinewood Studios), discussions with the Film Skills Council, and in relation to the DCMS Forum for the Creative Industries.
  - Cllr Peter Martin declared an interest in the Sector Action Groups in that his son has previously worked for the Creative Media Network.
  - Cllrs Martin Tett, Peter Martin and Katrina Wood declared an interest (as County Council Councillors) in relation to discussions around the Business Loan Fund.
- 2 **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING - 17 November 2017**
  - The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as an accurate record.
- 3 **LOCAL GROWTH FUND**
  - 3.1 Silverstone Innovation Centre
    - The Board noted that taking a second charge on the building to be bought (via a long leasehold), would not be an option due to clauses in the lease being created. The standard Local Growth Fund Funding Agreement Clawback Provision will apply (extended to cover a change of control/sale of the business in the 5 year business plan period).

- The advice received regarding the risks involved in taking an equity stake in the business in order to benefit from any possible 'super profits' in the future was noted. The alternative presented of valuing the business in 5 years' time and, assuming exceeding a target value trigger level, recovering the BTVLEP investment (index linked) on value generated above this on a pro rata basis to the LGF/Private Investment in the project was considered.
- As this project falls within the Enterprise Zone, there will be benefit to be gained from business rates retention, mitigating the original investment made; and as the premises will be used as an innovation centre open to businesses other than the owners, the benefit to be gained will not be entirely around profits generated.
- Anthony Sowden to amend the proposal to include the option of a flexible trigger point to undertake a valuation of the company, and the possibility of recovering funding sooner. It was confirmed the asset will be placed in a 100% owned subsidiary to facilitate clawback, should this be necessary.
- It was noted there is still a considerable amount of work to do on this project, including the detailed financial due diligence.
- **The Board confirmed the desire to support what it considered to be a good project and approved the £2m funding, subject to compliance with the necessary due diligence.**
- **It was agreed Michael Garvey and Adam Stronach will work with the executive team to undertake additional due diligence into the company, the relevant contracts, and the mechanisms by which the BTVLEP's investment will be protected and recovered.**

#### 4 LOCAL INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY, BUCKS GROWTH STRATEGY AND OXFORD TO CAMBRIDGE CORRIDOR

- BTVLEP, OXLEP, SEMLEP and GCGP LEP are to prepare the Local Industrial Strategy within their own areas, aggregating these up to create a strategy along the Oxford to Cambridge corridor area. Government has been clear on its aim of enhancing productivity and earning potential in this area.
- A combined vision for the 4 LEP area will be produced by April 2018, with a full proposal to put out to consultation ready by summer 2018, to complete by December 2018. This will leave 3 months to refine the strategy to submit in Government's timeframe of March 2019. A consultant will be appointed, via Oxfordshire County Council, to assist with this.
- The Board previously agreed to use existing mechanisms (Bucks Advantage etc) to create an Industrial Strategy for Buckinghamshire.
- The Board commented:
  - More focus needs to be made on North/South connectivity to maximise the benefit to be gained from East/West development. Access to Heathrow is fundamental to the success of the whole corridor.
  - The route of the proposed cross corridor Expressway will have implications on the strategies to be created and it was noted Central Government are working to ensure alignment of announcements and budgets. The preferred corridor is to be announced by Highways England in summer 2018. England's Economic Heartland has been asked by Government to look at access to and from the Expressway and how other communities might benefit from these egresses.
  - The Industrial Strategy should include housing growth as this will be one route to providing economic growth. The BTVLEP are the only LEP to have secured planning permission for 1,100 homes.
  - It would be useful to look at how to capture the uplift in land values as a result of development and plough these back to the benefit of Bucks.
- LEPs are to use an evolutionary process in developing Local Industrial Strategies (LIS). Bucks will use the Bucks Growth Strategy evidence base (recognising the strategy as a whole has not been formally endorsed by all areas in the county) as one element informing the LIS.
- Board members were asked to brief Bucks Advantage (BA) directors on the need to work together to create a Local Industrial Strategy, based on existing research. Terms of Reference will be shared with BA directors and engagement with the county's universities will play a key part in development.
- Bucks is 1 of 3 pilot areas and further information on support available is anticipated from Government.
- The Board asked RH to circulate a timetable for the production of the Local Industrial Strategy to ensure approval processes can be appropriately managed by Board members.

- **The Board noted the report, supported the use of existing mechanisms to deliver the Local Industrial Strategy based on existing evidence bases, including but not limited to the Bucks Growth Strategy, and requested a timetable for the creation process.**

## 5 **ASSURANCE AND GOVERNANCE UPDATE**

- BTVLEP received excellent feedback following discussions at the Annual Conversation, including around assurance and governance. Private sector Board members and the Section 151 Officer had attended the Annual Conversation discussions on this occasion to demonstrate the breadth of business engagement in the BTVLEP. Local Authority Board members will be invited to attend future meetings.
- Government has accepted the recommendations of the Ney Review into Governance and Transparency, and LEPs are required to comply with these recommendations by 28 February; the issuing of revised Declarations of Interest Forms to Board members being the first step in this process.
- Government had commended the process and transparency by which Buckinghamshire Business First (BBF) appoints directors to its Board, the BTVLEP business representation being drawn from the BBF Board. Membership of BBF is free to any business based, or trading within, Buckinghamshire and anyone interested in BTVLEP Board membership is free to approach BBF to discuss this. Local Authority Board members commented the level of business engagement with the BTVLEP was exemplary, noting that many other LEPs struggle to get true engagement with their business community.
- The Board agreed the following nominations to BTVLEP sub committees:
  - ESIF Committee Chairman - Klaus Allion
  - Enterprise Zone Management Board Chairman - Alex Pratt
  - Bucks Business Group Chairman - Adam Stronach
- **The Board:**
  - **Noted the positive feedback from the Annual Conversation with Government.**
  - **Undertook to meet the requirements of the LEP national Assurance Review best practice guidelines, with particular reference to making Board papers publicly available prior to meetings, and ensuring full declaration of any interest.**
  - **Endorsed the sub group nominations and agreed to allow flexibility on appointing people as workloads dictated.**

## 6 **CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT**

### 6.1 Local Growth Fund Programme

- Further to additional information/clarification on the outline business case, Andrew Smith and Nick Naylor were mandated to sign the offer letter on the Eastern Link Road South project prior to the next full Board meeting allowing the promoter to make the necessary land deals. A full business case and a recommendation on this £10m investment will be brought to the March Board meeting.
- The Board noted the slow progress on the Marlow to Maidenhead Rail upgrade. If the project cannot be delivered to the planned timeframe funding will be reallocated.
- Work to fit out incubation space at UCAV in Aylesbury will commence in summer 2018.

### 6.2 Local Transport Board Funding

- Katrina Wood registered Wycombe District Council's disappointment at the reallocation of LTB funding away from High Wycombe Reserve sites as a result of delayed planning application submission due to a number of outstanding highways questions. It was agreed:
  - To investigate where BCC has failed to respond on questions.
  - To review the situation in light of the Housing Infrastructure Funding announced for Bucks.

### 6.3 Budget

- The Board approved the budget and requested a further breakdown of staffing costs.

#### 6.4 Broadband

- The Board noted the information provided on the Broadband programme and the continued delays in sourcing appropriate match funding to support the programme which, despite being run on a “shoestring”, has been the most successful in the country.
- The Board agreed to provide total funding of £113,235 towards the cost of programme management resource, to be recouped from gain-share income expected at the end of contract 2. The BTVLEP will be unable to provide further match funding, and it was suggested District Councils consider how to support the programme in future.
- It was noted AVDC had now sold the company it established to deliver broadband to hard to reach areas, on the understanding that the new company will roll out broadband to 2,000 new homes fairly quickly.
- A number of questions were raised re the contract and alternative options available.

#### 6.5 Business Loan Fund

- Jonathan Dixon provided information on supporting SME access to finance through the Business Loan Fund (to be in place by early 2019). The fund will be used particularly to help support younger entrepreneurs finding it difficult to access backing.
- The intention is to utilise the services of an experienced Fund Manager, contracting with them for an 8 year period based on BTVLEP’s investment strategy and investment guidelines. DCLG will act as Managing Authority and will require the appointment of an Entrusted Entity, through which funding will flow and where responsibility for the grants paid down will rest.
- RH to speak to Berkshire Thames Valley LEP who have been running a very successful escalator fund for some time and are looking to be self-sustaining on this by 2023.
- The Board confirmed it was comfortable with the direction of travel on this fund and asked that it be a main agenda item at a future meeting.

#### 6.6 Growth Hub Update

- The Board congratulated BBF on being recognised as one of the top 5 Growth Hubs in the country and the only non-city Growth Hub in the top 5.
- The Growth Hub leverages in £4 for every £1 invested in the Growth Hub by the BTVLEP. Approximately £4m of support has been delivered to businesses in Bucks.
- Growth Hub funding has been confirmed for the next 2 years.

#### 6.7 Skills Update

- Jackie Campbell updated on the work of the Skills team, including the establishment of Sector Action Groups to address skills issues in the 6 key sectors identified in the Buckinghamshire Skills Strategy. The Creative Industries Sector Action Group is the furthest developed and will meet for the first time on 8 February. Each of the Sector Action Groups will, in time, feed in to the Skills Board.
- JC was asked to ensure that having Creative Skills Set on the Board of this Action Group will not disadvantage BTVLEP in future funding bids.
- More needs to be done to encourage young people into Apprenticeships in Bucks. This will be helped with the introduction of Degree Level apprenticeships.
- More education is needed for employers on how to make best use of the Apprenticeship Levy. News is awaited from Government on the ability of large employers to gift 10% of their unspent levy.
- Richard Turl agreed to investigate the possibility of BTVLEP/Bucks running a pilot on pooling the levy around the LEP to direct funds to best advantage for the county.
- The BTVLEP bid for an Institute of Technology, based at UCAV, with a specialism in assisted technology for health and social care, embracing new technologies and linking with satellite technology at Westcott is progressing. The bid deadline is 1 March 2018, with the Institute to be open by 2019.

#### 6.8 Aylesbury Garden Town

- Tracey Aldworth to be invited to give a presentation to the Board on progress with the Garden Town.

7 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- Discussion on a Central Growth Board to be a major agenda item at a future meeting.

8 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

- Friday 23 March 2018, 9.30am, Stoke Mandeville Hospital.