

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE THAMES VALLEY LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP (BTVLEP) BOARD MEETING

Held Friday 11 May 2012 from 9.30am at BP Collins, 32-38 Station Road, Gerrards Cross SL9 8EL

Present: Cllr Adrian Busby, South Buckinghamshire District Council
Cllr Michael Edmonds, Aylesbury Vale District Council
Cllr John Richards, Wycombe District Council (Alternate)
Cllr Martin Tett, Buckinghamshire County Council
Cllr Fred Wilson, Chiltern District Council (Alternate)
Ruth Farwell, Buckinghamshire Business First (Bucks New University)
Michael Garvey, Buckinghamshire Business First (Stupples Chandler Garvey)
Alex Pratt, Buckinghamshire Business First (Serious Brands)
Andrew Smith, Buckinghamshire Business First (Pinewood)
Rob Spurrett, Buckinghamshire Business First (ComDev)

Apologies: Cllr Arif Hussain, Wycombe District Council
Cllr Nick Rose, Chiltern District Council

In attendance: Karl Wingfield, BP Collins (Part meeting)
Mark Wathen, Aylesbury Vale District Council
Marcus Rogers, Buckinghamshire County Council
Heather Dean, Ngage Solutions Limited
Jim Sims, Ngage Solutions Limited
Sarah Fraser, Buckinghamshire Business First

SUMMARY MINUTES

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

AB declared an interest in BP Collins.

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING – 30 March 2012

2.1 Matters Arising

Item 6 – Bucks Planning System

- There are different planning systems in each of the 5 Local Authorities, in part driven by the differing conditions in each (eg Green Belt restrictions in SBDC); but there was a clear message given that all the Local Authorities are open for business.
- As policies are refreshed the Local Authorities all stated that early involvement from Business would be welcomed.
- The Board recognised that there is good practise already being exemplified but that there was always room for improvement. It was acknowledged that the situation had been complicated by the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Outstanding actions from previous minutes – HS2

- Work continues to try and ensure local businesses benefit from construction work opportunities relating to HS2, and if and when these arise they will be promoted through the BBF website.

3 BTVLEP SUB GROUP FORMATION

- The Board agreed the establishment of a Skills & Employability sub group and an Infrastructure sub group, each being led by a private sector Chairman, whose role would be aligning partners and providing advice to the BTVLEP Board.

4 STRATEGIC TRANSPORT PRIORITIES

- The presentation given highlighted the dramatic improvement in connectivity that East/West Rail will bring to the county as a whole; but also highlighted the lack of adequate major road provision in the North of the County, where the majority of housing growth is due to be taken.
- It was agreed that it would be useful for the Infrastructure sub group to consider what might constitute the Bucks devolved majors programme.
- The BTVLEP to provide real vision in its Economic Development Strategy for the development of improved transport links and clarity on how these will unlock growth.

5 AVDC ECONOMIC PICTURE/PRIORITIES

- The work already undertaken by AVDC to regenerate the area was highlighted, including: Aquavale; the Waterside Theatre; the new Waitrose; the new office and conference centre; the town centre/high street redevelopment; the redevelopment of the Sainsbury's site.
- AVDC do not have the Green Belt restrictions imposed on some of the other District Councils in Buckinghamshire. There are areas of AONB within Aylesbury Vale but these are not extensive, and have resulted in the district taking the bulk of the housing growth targets within the county.
- The lack of appropriate infrastructure networks will limit the ability to create jobs to match housing targets.
- There are opportunities opening up for Aylesbury, particularly around the UTC, telehealth and technologies enabled by improved Broadband provision but to take full advantage of these and to be able to attract inward investment, a young well-educated cohort is needed.
- A recent survey of householders showed that 92% of residents are happy living in the Vale.

6 FUNDING UPDATES/CONSULTATION RESPONSES

- The BTVLEP continued to strive to be strategy led in bidding for available sources of funding.
- The support of MPs into Whitehall is seen as invaluable in terms of lobbying and influence but closer links into Local Authorities will also assist.

6.1 Regional Growth Fund

- The BTVLEP are unlikely to have a suitable project, far enough advanced to bid into RGF3.
- Discussions are underway to support a bid to future rounds of the RGF if these are confirmed.

6.2 Growth and Innovation Fund (GIF)

- A decision as to whether to bid to the GIF would be made following discussion of the initial results from the Warwick Skills Study.

6.3 Growing Places Fund (GPF)

- Appropriate governance procedures/monitoring regimes are being implemented to ensure that the BTVLEP are kept fully informed of progress on the projects to be funded through the GPF.
- Discussions continue around the possibility of leveraging match funding on projects to be supported through the GPF2 allocation.

7 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

7.1 Website

- It was confirmed that the first iteration of the BTVLEP website was now live and work continued in the background to finalise content before the full site would be up and running.

7.2 Board Composition

- The BTVLEP Board recognised the value of drawing its Business members from Buckinghamshire Business First, including:-
 - Current business membership approaching 600; aiming to be over 2000 by year end.
 - Close connections and relationships with all the Business Representative Organisations (FSB, IoD, Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce etc).
 - Local Business groups being established including Aylesbury Business First (as requested by David Lidington MP).
 - Board members drawn from across the full geography of Bucks; with varying sector experience; from organisations of differing sizes ranging from micro business to large corporate organisations.
- The advantages of the BTVLEP Board remaining small were seen as the ability to have full and frank discussions and to make decisions quickly, efficiently and appropriately.
- It was acknowledged that the BTVLEP were particularly fortunate that the Local Authority Members on the Board all had significant private sector experience in addition to their public sector expertise. The mix of skills and experience, and the size of the Board were all felt to be completely appropriate.
- The Board were clear that delivery of economic development involved a number of partners across the County, including BBF and the Economic Development Officers/Departments within the Local Authorities.

8 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Nothing of note.

9 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- Friday 15 June 2012, 9.30am, Pinewood Studios, Pinewood Road, Iver Heath, Bucks SL0 0NH