

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

Held Friday 12 October from 9.30am at The Clare Foundation, Wycombe Road, Saunderton, Bucks HP14 4BF

<b>Present:</b>	Cllr Adrian Busby, South Bucks District Council	(AB)
	Cllr Michael Edmonds, Aylesbury Vale District Council	(ME)
	Cllr Arif Hussain, Wycombe District Council	(AH)
	Cllr Nick Rose, Chiltern District Council	(NR)
	Cllr Martin Tett, Buckinghamshire County Council	(MT)
	Cllr Fred Wilson, Chiltern District Council (Alternate)	(FW)
	Ruth Farwell, Buckinghamshire Business First (Bucks New University)	(RF)
	Michael Garvey, Buckinghamshire Business First (Stupples Chandler Garvey)	(MG)
	Alex Pratt, Buckinghamshire Business First (Serious Brands)	(AP)
	Andrew Smith, Buckinghamshire Business First (Pinewood) (Part meeting)	(AS)
	Rob Spurrett, Buckinghamshire Business First (ComDev)	(RS)
<b>In attendance:</b>	Philippa Batting, Buckinghamshire Business First	(PB)
	Jim Sims, Buckinghamshire Business First	(JS)
	Marcus Rogers, Buckinghamshire County Council	(MR)
	Bob Smith, Chiltern and South Bucks District Councils	(BS)
	Sarah Fraser, Buckinghamshire Business First	(SF)

## SUMMARY MINUTES

### 1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- Andrew Smith reiterated his declaration re an interest in discussions concerning Pinewood Studios.

### 2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING – 20 July 2012

#### 2.1 Matters Arising

- **Item 6.2 - Coordination of Business Visits in relation to Skills** – The Skills Sub Group are investigating how best to manage this to achieve best effect for all concerned.
- **Item 11 – BTVLEP Conference** – The BTVLEP Conference would be held in February 2013.

### 3 BUCKS COUNTY COUNCIL – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AIMS/CHALLENGES

- The Board received an update on the challenges faced by Buckinghamshire County Council and the county itself; not least being quashing the perception held by those outside the county that Bucks is an affluent county with little requirement for assistance from central government.
- Key challenges for BCC were identified as:-
  - Freeing up capacity on the M40 'growth' corridor and development of Junction 3A.
  - Providing improved connectivity north-south through the county and across its borders.
  - Improving educational/skills attainment against a backdrop of reduced BCC influence.
  - An increasing ageing population and the associated care provisions needed.
  - Addressing the shortage of appropriate utility supplies.
  - Maintaining and enhancing Bucks' natural environment.

- The County Council would continue to:-
  - Work with Academies and schools with a view to raising academic achievement in all and providing skills and experience for students not wishing to move on to University.
  - Lobby Whitehall re policy and provision of equitable funding streams to all geographies.
  - Work with neighbouring areas on strategically important infrastructure projects.
  - Work innovatively within straitened budgets to provide the best outcome possible in Bucks.
- It was noted that officers are looking at designing a wider infrastructure scheme with a 'big vision' for transport and would be pulling together the associated costs to bring this to fruition.

#### 4 **BTVLEP PLAN FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH**

- It was anticipated that the Heseltine Review, due to report on 31 October, would suggest significant additional responsibilities for LEPs and, therefore, the BTVLEP Plan would be a starting point only as roles and priorities would no doubt change over time.
- The Board were keen to maintain the ability to act quickly and nimbly even in the face of increased responsibilities and bureaucracy.
- It was agreed that one of the key roles for the LEP should be maintaining a two-way dialogue with central government; sharing whether things perceived as barriers to growth in central government are also perceived as issues on the ground locally.
- It was confirmed that the draft BTVLEP Plan would be put out to consultation before being brought back to the Board for approval at its next meeting.
- The Board agreed that the LEP has a valuable role to play in the strategic development of Local Plans/core strategies and that the LEP should be commenting on specific planning applications where these are of major strategic import to the entirety of Bucks (with due regard for Local Plans).

#### 5 **COUNTY/LEP DEALS**

- It was agreed the BTVLEP should maintain a watching brief on progress with County Deals, whilst looking at the potential opportunities for Bucks and considering an appropriate bid.
- Consideration would be given to what is happening in Milton Keynes as this may impact on the north of the county and potentially the county as a whole.

#### 6 **NATIONAL STRATEGIC PLANNING MATTERS**

- The Board reiterated its belief that, notwithstanding the difficulties attached to entering the 'planning arena' and recognising the fact that LEPs are not a statutory consultee on planning matters, one of the key added values of the LEP is the ability to take a position on strategic issues.

(Andrew Smith left the meeting)

##### 6.1 Pinewood

- The Board considered that the potential development at Pinewood appeared, in principle, to have significant economic merits, always provided that the case could be clearly made for special circumstances re building on green belt land.
- The Board agreed to defer taking any decision re this development until Pinewood has submitted an application, but any view taken would be based on the economic merits of the case made.
- The BTVLEP would continue to help bring together Business and Planning through engagement with the Bucks Planning Officers.

(Andrew Smith rejoined the meeting)

## 6.2 Air Capacity

- The Board agreed that airport capacity is very important to the country's economic future and it was hoped that government would take a decision in short order considering the country's long term needs rather than simply addressing the immediate problem.
- It was agreed to respond to the government's draft Aviation Policy to this effect and to maintain a watching brief on developments thereafter.

## 7 **FUNDING UPDATES**

- It was reported that meetings had taken place with all project sponsors for both GPF1 and GPF2 projects; cashflow projections had been provided for all projects; and it appeared that the BTVLEP would be able to support all projects to the levels requested. Creditworthiness checks had been completed on all applicants and all appeared to have an excellent risk rating.
- Contracts etc had been developed for all projects and were being reviewed prior to signature.
- Ground would be broken first on the Hughenden Spine Road/ Aylesbury Town Centre projects. These, in addition to housing growth taking place at Berryfields, will provide a positive story into central government and the secretariat were asked to provide a short ministerial briefing on this subject.

## 8 **BTVLEP SUB GROUPS - UPDATE**

### 8.1 Skills Sub Group

- The broad thrust of the work the Skills Sub Group is pursuing had been outlined at the last meeting; the key now would be establishing a level of granularity as to particular skills/employment.
- The apprenticeship '100 in 100' initiative had provided 223 placements in the 100 days.
- The work being completed by the Skills Sub Group will provide the map for the skills gaps to be addressed in Bucks, specificity around the skills needed in particular industries and by particular employers, and what could be achieved at what cost.

### 8.2 Infrastructure Sub Group

- The Infrastructure Sub Group is working on pulling together information about the county and using a GSI tool to overlay this to provide a complete picture of the opportunities and challenges/constraints.
- It was thought that there may be work for the Infrastructure Sub Group to complete looking at the infrastructure necessary to support the creative industries in Bucks prior to responding to the inquiry launched by the Culture, Media and Sport Committee into support for the creative economy.

## 9 **GOVERNANCE AND MONITORING**

- Details on core funding recently announced to support the work of the LEP secretariats and also a breakdown of expenditure to date by the BTVLEP secretariat had been provided.
- Submissions were required in December for 2013/14 funding.

## 10 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

10.1 **Wilton Park** - The MoD had confirmed recently that the Defence School of Languages would not be based at Wilton Park in Beaconsfield in the future but with no confirmed new location as yet.

10.2 **Space Technology** - It was reported that world leading Bucks technology used in the latest Galileo satellites would be launched later that evening.

## 11 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Friday 16 November 2012, 9.30am, venue tbc.