
Title:	LEP Review Submission and Implementation Plan
Purpose:	To update members on the next steps required to implement the recommendations of the LEP Review and to seek members endorsement to the changes in the Assurance and Accountability Framework relating to board composition, recruitment of new board members and the implementation of new fixed terms of office for the Chair and Vice-Chair.
Recommendation:	That members note the content of the report, support the steps being taken to establish a new legal identity for BTVLEP and endorse the proposed changes to the BTVLEP Assurance and Accountability Framework.

1 Introduction

The LEP Review “Strengthened LEPs” published on 24th July requested a two stage response from LEPs to the recommendations of the Review. The first stage response, focusing on geography, was required by 28th September and BTVLEP submitted its response shortly after the September board meeting. A second stage response was required by 31st October, focusing on an implementation plan, explaining the changes and new measures that BTVLEP would enact and the timescales for implementation of these measures, a copy of this second submission is attached as **Appendix 1** to this report. In addition the second stage also included an invitation to bid for up to £200,000 of additional capacity and capability funding, to be spent by March 2019. The funding bid process came with an advisory precondition advisory that agreement on overlap and a satisfactory implementation plan for the review is submitted.

Since submission and save for confirmation of receipt there has been no response from government. Notwithstanding this point the BTVLEP Chairman met with a senior government official on 14th November and confirmed that BTVLEP will be moving forward with the implementation of the Review recommendations particularly in respect of strengthened private sector presentation and on incorporation with the creation of a new “legal personality” for BTVLEP which was noted and welcomed.

2 Overlap and Wider Geography

No decision has yet been received by government on the issue of overlap. This had been expected prior to the stage two submission date of 31st October although the staged submission dates may have been in recognition that geographical issues would take longer to agree. Government did though announce support on 1st November for a single unitary council for Buckinghamshire. Following the announcement I met with Hilary Chipping of SEMLEP on the

6th November to determine whether agreement could now be reached over the Buckinghamshire overlap issue. This was non-conclusive as Hilary had received advice from government officials indicating that MHCLG Secretary of State James Brokenshire MP will schedule a meeting between BTVLEP and SEMLEP Chairs and Executives likely to be held at the end of November to help determine the overlap issue. At the time of writing this invitation had not been received. In addition Hilary raised an issue of whether a LEP could represent a single unitary authority. As there is no formal or printed line on this matter further clarification has also been sought on this topic. Hopefully by the end of November there will be a clear position established in respect of both overlap and wider geography. Removal of overlap would have a clear and beneficial impact on the creation of the Local Industrial Strategy and delivery of existing programmes.

3 Roles and Responsibilities

We agree with the requirement for an Annual Delivery Plan and an end of year report. We have prepared an annual report each year since inception and will continue to do so. Five years into the Local Growth Fund programme we have a very mature implementation strategy and where headroom funding has become available we have issued open calls on new funding priorities that we have latterly linked to our emerging Local Industrial Strategy priorities. We have set the target date for Local Industrial Strategy approval in January 2019. It is our intention to follow this with the launch of the first Annual Delivery Plan at an Annual General Meeting proposed for February 2019.

4 Leadership and Organisational Capacity

The Review was keen to ensure that LEPs consult widely and transparently with the business community before appointing a new Chair and Vice Chair. This draft amendment has been incorporated into Version 20 of the Assurance and Accountability framework(attached as **Appendix 2** to this report) and members are asked to approve this latest version. Section 3.2.9 outlines that in future there will be consultation with government and business community over new board vacancies and that new vacancies will be openly advertised. In addition there are defined terms for all private sector board members and specific single terms for both Chair and Vice Chair of four years.

While government requires a strengthened private sector representation, which will also mean that the Vice Chair will in future be a private sector director, we have sought to maintain continuity and recommend that BTVLEP retains its five public sector members while increasing the board size to 15 with the appointment of five new private sector directors. Advertisements for new private sector directors will follow in the New Year. We will ensure that the recruitment of future private sector directors takes into account the need to maintain and improve the future gender balance and we will take active steps to encourage applications from suitably qualified and experienced candidates that maintain the diversity of our board.

To ensure an independent secretariat we will now move quickly to establish a legal personality for BTVLEP and clarify discreet contractual relationships and obligations for BTVLEP staff that will be independent of host or partner organisations. Where secondment arrangements are required these will report exclusively and directly to either the BTVLEP Chair or Chief Executive.

5 Accountability and Performance

Following BTVLEP approval to the principle of incorporation and creation of a BTVLEP “Legal Personality” the Executive commissioned Peter Latchford (Black Radley Consultants) to assist in the preparation of governance change options. This work will be presented to the LEP board in January 2019. The overriding objective is to optimise the delivery of economic development to the benefit of the Buckinghamshire economy. Guiding principles include building on the performance track record to date, maintaining a lean and agile model, maintaining a high business engagement and business voice to ensure the voice of our unique micro economy is considered in decision making, enabling expansion of business support provision, demonstrating critical mass, establishing a sustainable business model and exploiting strong proven capabilities for delivery, strategy development, data capture and finance. The work will advise on the best fit economic delivery structure for the long term. This will include a clear and transparent relationship with the Growth Hub and Delivery Vehicle both of which are already incorporated.

6 Additional Funding

Government has invited LEPs to apply for a further £200,000 capacity and capability funding to meet the requirements of LEP Review delivery linked to early development of the Local Industrial Strategy. As we are a national trailblazer area in respect of Local Industrial Strategy creation we have apportioned the priority of our bid between three principal areas. Firstly, the Local Industrial Strategy development, including data gathering, apprenticeship data analysis support and business engagement. Secondly on legal and financial support in respect of new company formation and thirdly on communication and wider corridor collaboration. Receipt of funds will bring additional capacity into the BTVLEP team to enable accelerated delivery of these prioritised work streams.

Members are asked to:

- 1. Note the content of the report and support the steps being taken to establish a new legal identity for BTVLEP and endorse the proposed changes to the BTVLEP Assurance and Accountability Framework.**