

Open

Title: Local Growth Fund Independent Assessment of New Projects

Purpose: For members to note the Hatch Regeneris Independent Assessment of the 5 Local Growth Fund projects and support the recommendation for the further development of all 5 projects.

Recommendations:

1. That members invite the 3 top ranking schemes to develop full business cases for submission to the January 2019 BTVLEP board and direct officers, with support of the programme board, to work alongside the two remaining submissions to support further development to enable future potential investment.
2. That members endorse the re-allocation of £2m LGF funding, previously earmarked for the fund of fund loan programme, to be used to support these new growth projects.

1 BTVLEP Open Call

At the July meeting of this board it was agreed that an open call inviting expressions of interest for projects to utilise up to £2 million of unallocated Local Growth Funding. The call was open for 2 months until the end of September and during this period the call was promoted via the BTVLEP website, via the local media and within the BTVLEP and BBF social media channels and e-newsletters.

5 submissions totalling £8.558m of funding requested were received. It was pleasing to see that the applications were closely aligned to the Local Industrial Strategy priority areas of creative digital and life-science providing further insight into the significant development potential within these areas. The Executive will continue to encourage new proposals in the areas of space, high performance technologies and future mobility as part of the strategic development process. A summary of the applications are listed below.

2 Summary of Project Applications

Applicant	Project Title	Funding Requested	Total Project Cost
University of Buckingham	The School of Computing and Centre for Artificial Intelligence	£2,000,000	£6,000,000

Applicant	Project Title	Funding Requested	Total Project Cost
National Film and Television Studios	The National Centre for Immersive Storytelling (Part of the StoryFutures creative cluster)	£288,073	£502,107
Bucks New University	Buckinghamshire Life Sciences Innovation Centre (Centre Floor Plan Extension - Bucks New University)	£275,000	£547,000
Bucks New University	Buckinghamshire Creates @ Pinewood: Driving productivity and growth through skills and innovation in the creative industries	£1,645,000	£3,357,000
London Medical Education Academy	Medical Education Centre for surgical skills (MECSS)	£3,950,000	£4,350,000
Totals		£8,158,073	£14,756,107

The School of Computing and Centre for Artificial Intelligence – University of Buckingham

The project has six key aims:

- To equip graduates with specialist digital skills for the Fourth Industrial Revolution by creating a new AI and Immersive Technology (mixed reality including virtual reality and augmented reality) laboratory and teaching centre at the heart of the campus of the University of Buckingham.
- To train a generation of specialists and doctoral students in artificial intelligence, augmented/virtual reality, computer vision, data science, internet of things, machine learning and mathematics; embedding cultural awareness, ethics, enterprise and leadership skills in all its graduates as core competencies necessary to work in industries of the futures.
- To nurture the next generation of spin-off companies; commercialising research and innovation and contributing to local and regional economic growth.
- To support the productivity of Buckinghamshire's priority sectors; exchanging knowledge to support the delivery of Buckinghamshire's local industrial strategy.
- To inspire the next generation, particularly women, to study computing at school and embark on a career in Tech.
- To share the benefits as widely as possible and generate lasting economic value for Buckinghamshire; helping to make sure that Buckinghamshire can contribute to, as well as benefit from the Cambridge-MK-Oxford Growth

The University has made excellent progress in the development of their current Local Growth Fund project for the Vinson Centre which will be officially opened on November 28th.

National Centre for Immersive Technologies - National Film and TV School

The National Film and Television School was recently chosen to run a new industry centre of excellence in immersive storytelling, funded in part by the Government's Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund. The NFTS is the lead partner on the project, working with Royal Holloway, University of London and a host of immersive and screen industry partners. The School is seeking match funding from the BTVLEP in order to improve the facilities and equipment at what will become Britain's first ever national hub for training, experimentation and production in immersive technologies like Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality and Mixed Reality.

The school have an excellent track record of delivery from their previous Local Growth Fund project supporting the development of their 4K Studio facilities and community and business outreach programme.

Life Science Innovation Centre - Bucks New University

This project is an extension of the approved LGF-funded Buckinghamshire Life Science Innovation Centre (BLIC) that is developed in partnership with Bucks Healthcare Trust (BHT), Bucks New University (BNU), Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC), Bucks Clinical Commissioning Group (BCCG) and the Oxford Academic Health Science Network (OAHSN). This bid is a request for additional funds to complete the entire 2nd floor of Bucks New University's South Wing (High Wycombe campus) in order to improve the hub's occupancy economies of scale, whilst also capitalising on the current building work underway.

Education Centre for Screen & Film Trades – Buckinghamshire Creates @ Pinewood - Bucks New University

A new training programme which will provide a complementary teaching and training asset and will act as a passport for both people to refine their skillset, improve their employability, gain meaningful employment and forge lasting careers in the local area.

- To work in partnership with stakeholders to identify skills gaps
- To develop relevant employers informed curriculum
- Build a leaning facility in the heart of Pinewood studios to deliver higher education opportunities
- To ensure the learners on the programme are able to use the most up to date equipment the creative industry
- To grow the numbers of educational programmes delivered at Pinewood Studios that provide quality courses with an emphasis on digital skills for a modern workforce

Medical Education Centre for Surgical Skills (MECESS)

To build UK's largest and best connected education centre for human cadaveric dissection to allow training of 10,000 surgeons annually at 600 GBP per course, to a turnover of 60million pounds, creating 60 new jobs and a future development site for testing and evaluation of medical devices.

3 Independent Appraisal

Hatch Regeneris were asked to provide an initial independent stage 1 appraisal on the 5 applications, a copy of their full assessment is attached as **Appendix 1** to this report.

The assessment was based on 3 main criteria:-

- Strategic alignment
- Evidence of need /demand
- Evidence of deliverability

As a result of the initial assessment it was identified that all 5 projects were worthy of further progression and that it is recommended that 3 projects **The University of Buckingham Centre for Artificial Intelligence, The Life Science Innovation Centre and the Medical Education Centre for Surgical Skills** should be invited to produce a full business plan for the stage 2 assessment and consideration of funding by this board.

Officers would also like to work with the other 2 projects to help develop their propositions and that the revised proposals following resubmission by Hatch Regeneris be shared with the programme board so that they too could be invited to develop full business plans.

4 Funding reallocation from Fund of Funds

Given that the total funding requested is over 4 times the initial funding allocation, the Executive would like to seek the approval of Board Members for the reallocation of £2 million LGF funding previously earmarked for the fund of funds project to provide greater flexibility in the project approval process.

As members will recall these resources were intended to be used alongside growing places funding and ERDF funds to develop an evergreen fund for small business loans. Unfortunately it has not been possible to secure the European match funding allocation that would have made this a viable proposal in the required timeframe. Officers would therefore like to reallocate this funding to support the new project proposals which can all be delivered within the current Local Growth Fund delivery window ahead of April 2021.

Even with this additional funding we would not be able to fully support all of the applications in their current format, so applicants will be advised that their further business plan development is being taken at risk but that all proposals will form an important part of the Local Industrial Strategy process and future representations to government.

Members are asked to:

- 1. Invite the 3 top ranking schemes to develop full business cases for submission to the January 2019 BTVLEP board and direct officers to work alongside the two remaining submissions to support further development to enable future potential investment.**
- 2. Endorse the re-allocation of £2m LGF funding, previously earmarked for the fund of fund loan programme, to be used to support these new growth projects.**