

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE THAMES VALLEY LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP (BTVLEP) BOARD MEETING

Held Friday 30 March 2012 from 9.30am at BT Office, 81 Newgate Street, London EC1A 7AJ

Present: Cllr Adrian Busby, South Buckinghamshire District Council
Cllr Arif Hussain, Wycombe District Council
Cllr Martin Tett, Buckinghamshire County Council
Cllr Fred Wilson, Chiltern District Council (Alternate)
Ruth Farwell, Buckinghamshire Business First (Buckinghamshire New University)
Gavin Oldham, Buckinghamshire Business First (Share PLC) (Alternate)
Alex Pratt, Buckinghamshire Business First (Serious Brands)
Andrew Smith, Buckinghamshire Business First (Pinewood)

Apologies: Cllr Michael Edmonds, Aylesbury Vale District Council
Cllr Nick Rose, Chiltern District Council
Michael Garvey, Buckinghamshire Business First (Stupples Chandler Garvey)
Rob Spurrett, Buckinghamshire Business First (ComDev)

In attendance: Peter Cowen, BT (Part meeting)
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

- Fred Wilson declared an interest in BT.
- Martin Tett declared an interest in BT.
- Ruth Farwell declared an interest in the Telehealth item on the agenda.

2 BTVLEP BOARD MEMBERSHIP

- The BTVLEP Board recognised the ability to be 'fleet of foot' and flexible in considering the vast agenda opening up to LEPs as a key advantage and remaining a small, focussed board assisted in this.
- It was agreed that business representatives on the BTVLEP would continue to be drawn from membership of the Buckinghamshire Business First (BBF) board.

3 BTVLEP BOARD MINUTES

- The Board confirmed its wish for transparency and openness and agreed that summary minutes should be available through the BTVLEP website.

4 FUNDING UPDATES

4.1 Local Transport Bodies

- The Board supported the principle of the LTB funding remaining within the control of the discrete geography of the Transport Authority.
- It was agreed that Buckinghamshire County Council, as Transport Authority, should take on the role of the Local Transport Body (LTB).

- The BTVLEP would offer advice to the LTB as to where it believed the strategic priorities lay for this funding stream.
- The BTVLEP supported the draft consultation response prepared for submission to DfT on Monday 2 April.

4.2 **Highways Agency – Pinch Point Funding**

- Clarification was to be sought from the Highways Agency regarding the decision to ‘de-trunk’ the A41 etc as it was considered that Aylesbury in itself was a pinch point where significant improvements needed to be made.
- Currently, none of the road links around Aylesbury would qualify for support under the Pinch Point funding as these roads were not the responsibility of the Highways Agency, but were rather under Local Authority control.
- It was agreed to add Transport issues to the agenda for the next BTVLEP Board meeting, prior to which research would be undertaken/provided to establish areas of most concern.

4.3 **Funding Opportunities Update**

- The establishment of a BTVLEP Funding sub group was agreed to include representation from both the public and private sectors working on how to leverage resources into Bucks.

4.4 **Regional Growth Fund**

- Advice was requested from colleagues at BIS around the type of bids that might be successful to the RGF; it was thought that these would need to be projects of national importance.

4.5 **Growth and Innovation Fund**

- It was thought that there might be opportunities to bid for GIF funding in either the May or September rounds and these would be progressed.

4.6 **Growing Places Fund**

- The Government had announced a subsequent GPF allocation for Bucks of £2m - information was awaited from CLG around the Terms & Conditions of the funding.
- The Board requested that the executive provide regular progress reports for the projects already being supported through the GPF (to include GPF2 in the future and other funding streams); and a list of possible projects to benefit from the GPF2 funding.

4.7 **Bucks Infrastructure Fund**

- The Board agreed to investigate the possibility of using a proportion of the £2m GPF allocation to establish a shared Bucks Infrastructure Fund with a view to leveraging in additional funding from a variety of sources, recognising the investment already being made by District Councils in their local area as part of their day to day business.

5 **BTVLEP ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

- It was agreed to discuss transport priorities for inclusion in the BTVLEP ED Strategy at the next Board meeting.
- The Board highlighted the issue of NEETS as being a key issue for inclusion in the Strategy.
- There were a number of areas competing for attention/support from the BTVLEP and as these intersected with the Board’s stated desire to focus on job creation/retention and economic prosperity they would be brought to the BTVLEP Board table for consideration.

6 BUCKS PLANNING SYSTEM

- It was suggested that it would be useful to establish a clear dialogue between the public and private sectors around planning issues and discussing how these might be overcome, particularly with regard to achieving strategic objectives for the county. It was thought that this was around ensuring a shared vocabulary and demonstrating that Bucks is open for business.
- It was agreed that it was the BTVLEP's role to be looking at where policy may be adjusted to assist businesses through the planning process. To begin this process the Board requested that an audit of the current planning policies in place across Bucks be undertaken, looking at areas of commonality and where there was potential for improvement.

7 THE BUCKS PICTURE

- It was agreed that it would be useful for each of the District Councils to give a brief 'warts and all' presentation of the key developments taking place within their area in order to provide the Board with a clear countywide picture of the challenges being faced. AVDC to be asked to give the presentation at the next meeting.

8 SKILLS STRATEGY

- The Bucks Skills Study being undertaken by Warwick University was agreed as key to informing the Skills Strategy. The preliminary results from the Skills Study had now been presented but the final results were still awaited. In the interim the focus had been on trying to get young people into employment and providing meaningful work experience placements and apprenticeships.
- The "100 in a 100" initiative, getting 100 young people into apprenticeships in 100 days, would start on Monday 2 April and the Board were asked to champion this programme.
- The Board considered that a programme of internships for University students at the end of their 2nd year, prior to commencing their 3rd year, may be useful in retaining talent within Bucks once students had graduated.
- The establishment of a Skills Board advising the BTVLEP was agreed, to include representatives from key providers.

9 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

- Executive capacity necessary in supporting the BTVLEP would be raised as an item for discussion at a future Board meeting.
- It was confirmed that Mark Prisk/Greg Clark had indicated they would be prepared to attend a future BTVLEP Board meeting and meet Bucks businesses and this visit would be progressed.

10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Nothing of note.

11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- Friday 11 May 2012, 9.30am, BP Collins, 32-38 Station Road, Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire SL9 8EL.