

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

Held Friday 11 January 2013 from 9.30am at AVDC, The Gateway, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury, Bucks HP19 8FF

**Present:** Cllr Adrian Busby, South Bucks District Council  
Cllr John Cartwright, Aylesbury Vale District Council (alternate)  
Cllr Arif Hussain, Wycombe District Council  
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 Michael Edmonds, Aylesbury Vale District Council  
Cllr Nick Rose, Chiltern District Council

**In attendance:** Philippa Batting, Buckinghamshire Business First  
Jim Sims, Buckinghamshire Business First  
Chris Rawson, Buckinghamshire Business First  
Marcus Rogers, Buckinghamshire County Council  
Sarah Fraser, Buckinghamshire Business First

## **SUMMARY MINUTES**

### **1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following Board members declared an interest in the discussions around the Growing Places Fund 3 allocation: Michael Garvey, Ruth Farwell, Arif Hussain and Martin Tett.

### **2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING – 16 November 2012**

#### **2.1 Matters Arising**

- **Item 3 – BTVLEP Plan** – The plan will be reviewed in 6 months' time and will incorporate suggested changes made from various sources subsequent to the last meeting and clear, measurable targets and dates. Local Authority Board members reported that the Plan is being taken through Local Authority Leaders' Advisory Groups now.
- **Item 9 – Infrastructure Sub Group** – Discussion had been held at the Planning Officers Group re the adoption as policy of installing FTTP Broadband on all new build applications. More detailed technical information had been requested and it was thought that, due to a number of external limiting factors, it may be that the requirement could only be stated as desirable rather than compulsory.

### **3 GROWING PLACES FUND UPDATE**

#### **3.1 Growing Places Fund 3 – Project Recommendation**

- A call had gone out (including to those projects unsuccessful in earlier GPF rounds) for new/refreshed applications to utilise funding returned from the East West Rail project.
- Wycombe District Council had forwarded an application for an access road for the Hughenden Quarter Upper Site. The secretariat recommended support for this project based on the potential it could bring forward.

- It was noted that some of the other projects suggested by Board members at the previous meeting eg finance for SMEs, were being supported through alternative routes.
- The Board requested more detail be obtained on the number and type of jobs to be provided through the WDC scheme. It was agreed that all GPF contract documentation should encourage the creation of apprenticeships as a percentage of the overall number of jobs being created.
- Acknowledging the declarations of interest in this project made by Board members, and accepting the comments above, the Board confirmed its support for this project.

### 3.2 Growing Places Fund – Existing Projects Update

- 3.2.1 • **Handy Cross** – Draft terms had been issued to Wycombe District Council. The scheme had received planning approval from the Council on 12 December but was subsequently referred to the Secretary of State under Article 25 Directive process associated with retail floor space. The project had then been linked with an application to relocate the running track from Handy Cross to Marlow, which has also been referred. A decision is awaited.
- It was agreed that a joint letter would be sent from the BTVLEP and Buckinghamshire County Council to BIS/DCLG, copying Rt Hon Dominic Grieve MP, indicating the importance of this project to the local economy and requesting a swift decision.
- 3.2.2 • **Hughenden Quarter Spine Road** – The project had been taken to Wycombe District Council Cabinet on 3 December and approval given to acquire/dispose of properties and sites to facilitate the planned regeneration. It was hoped to finalise contracts March/April 2013.
- 3.2.3 • **Aylesbury Town Centre Regeneration** – It was hoped to get to contract by end March 2013; the contract encompassing work to both the north and the south of Exchange Street.
- 3.2.4 • **Broadband** – This project offered the potential to deliver the single biggest impact on the local economy and was vital to Bucks' competitiveness; however, it was unlikely that GPF monies would be recycled as, technically, this was very difficult to enshrine within the contract documentation being produced. The Board reiterated its desire to progress with the project and asked that the inclusion of clauses re clawback associated with take up and placing first call for GPF on any monies available for reinvestment, be progressed.
- It was agreed to seek political assistance in ensuring that the sole provider involved with this contract was offering the service at a truly competitive price.

## 4 **BROADBAND PROJECT UPDATE**

- The Board received a full update on the status of the Broadband project. Contracts were due to be awarded in early May with ground being broken in August 2013. The projected end date currently being within the 2014/15 financial year.
- The Board asked that the key priority areas for improved connectivity in Bucks were clearly identified and this information forwarded to the provider.
- The Board also asked for information to be provided on the balance of take up between residential and commercial use (including where sole traders operate from their home).

## 5 **HESELTINE REVIEW – Autumn Statement Implications**

- A presentation was given of the summary implications relating to the LEP of the Autumn Statement and the Heseltine Review.
- In the event that the Heseltine view is followed that there was potential for a big shift in the economic development landscape, with the creation of a new regional office structure, in part so that we are able to negotiate effectively with Europe.

- Consideration was still being given as to how to maximise the national allocation from European funding streams, whilst taking account of local growth ambitions based on the creation of a number of new local strategic plans.
- It was thought that LEPs will need to act in partnership to maximise the chances of success through these funding routes.
- The Board expressed its concern at the seeming level of bureaucracy being advocated and the number of differing Strategic, SMART Specialisation, Operational and Skills plans being requested. There was a strong call not to let this distract attention from the real work needed on the ground.

## 6 CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE

- Work continues with neighbouring LEPs on cross border/shared priorities.
- Work with James Elles MEP and Digital Business First on the call for a well thought through national digital policy has continued and a recent meeting with Maria Miller MP went well.
- Europe offers significant opportunities to bid into large funding pots and to bring investment into the UK. A sponsored familiarisation visit to Brussels is planned on 17/18 June to assist in this process.
- The BTVLEP Board had previously agreed to focus very clearly on jobs growth and growing the local economy in Bucks. In this regard, the BTVLEP will give consideration as to how the social, rural, voluntary etc sectors/priorities might feed into future thinking.
- It was agreed the secretariat would deploy additional funding being made available from central government in order to provide appropriate resource to produce the Strategic Plans etc required in order to devolve funding. The secretariat will provide regular updates to the Board in this regard.
- The Board asked that projects being delivered via BTVLEP support are clearly advertised as being so.

## 7 SUB GROUPS UPDATE

### 7.1 Infrastructure Sub Group

- The infrastructure appraisal tool is now complete and will be used to prioritise projects. Around 75 different target schemes have been identified for appraisal, from which 5-10 will be selected for submission to DfT for consideration.
- The digital infrastructure map of Bucks will shortly be available on the BTVLEP website.
- Details of the assurance framework for Local Transport Bodies are to be forwarded to DfT by the end of February and a list of projects is to be forwarded by July.

### 7.2 Skills Sub Group

- The Skills Sub Group has been making progress in line with discussions at the last meeting.
- The group has been extended to include, for example, Economic Development Officers from the District Councils, representation from Aylesbury Training Group, and the secondary schools lead.
- The immediate priority has been to focus on graduate retention.
- Work continues on gaining a better understanding of the manufacturing and engineering sectors.
- Work Wise Week will be held 4-8 February and will bring students, employers, parents etc together.
- An IAG (Information, Advice and Guidance) pilot is planned in Chesham with Thomas International and Bucks County Council, to help NEETS in the town.
- The skills and recruitment portal is underway through BBF, with support from Thomas International.
- Dialogue with employers is seen as key and the planned virtual network has now been reconsidered, work being underway to increase the level of face to face engagement.
- A bid is being prepared to the ESF for skills enhancement; the notional allocation for Bucks being £420k for workforce development and £75k for research.
- The sub group is working to align providers to deliver a pipeline of suitably qualified people for the future jobs that might be available. Mapping these future jobs will be a difficult task and a number of sources are being used to try and pull this information together.

8 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

8.1 LEP Network Meeting

- At a meeting held recently with David Frost, Chairman of the LEP Network it had been indicated that the Business Representative Organisations, as a group, would become even more important going forward as the recommendations in the Heseltine Review are accepted.

9 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

- Friday 15 February 2013, at Martin-Baker Aircraft, Lower Road, Higher Denham, Near Uxbridge UB9 5AJ.