
Title: Cambridge, Milton Keynes, Oxford Growth Corridor

Purpose: To update board members on the latest programme of activity in relation to the Oxford to Cambridge Growth Corridor including the development of Local Industrial Strategy and Cross Corridor economic alignment, BTVLEP support for Sector Deals and Science and Innovation Audits and for Members to consider the position of BTVLEP in relation to the membership and involvement with the Central Area Growth Board.

Recommendation:

- **That members note the progress that is being made in developing the Buckinghamshire Local Industrial Strategy (BLIS) and joint LEP work across the wider corridor area.**
- **That members consider whether they would like to receive direct presentations and update reports from the science and innovation activity and sector deal reports that BTVLEP are involved in.**
- **That members advise on how BTVLEP should position in respect of Oxford to Cambridge Corridor Growth Board governance arrangements.**

1 Local Industrial Strategy and Joint LEP work Progress

At the last meeting of this board it was agreed that a steering group be established to oversee the development of the Local Industrial Strategy for Buckinghamshire (BLIS) and the integration of this strategy across the wider Cambridge, Milton Keynes, Oxford Corridor.

On February 5th the BA Directors met to consider this proposal and it was agreed that the representatives of all local authorities would support this process as a task and finish group, providing both strategic guidance and operational support to develop and deliver the strategy.

The group were keen that the Industrial Strategy should use the adopted Strategic Economic Plan as the foundation for this activity and that within the programme timetable there should be the opportunity for both local authority and private sector members to consider the draft strategy ahead of final adoption by the BTVLEP board.

The next meeting of this task and finish group is scheduled for March 27th where an updated development timetable will be assessed along with an assessment of the initial evidence base and identified gaps and the timetable for proposed consultation and engagement. A process for the engagement of specialist support including economic data analysis and lead consultants will also be considered.

A conference call was held with Joe Manning from the Cities and Local Growth Unit on March 15th to consider the alignment of the BLIS with the wider corridor programme of work and to identify the level of support that is available given that we are one of three trailblazer areas together with Greater Manchester and the West Midlands Combined Authorities that will be required to produce a LIS by March 2019. The call was very helpful in clarifying the government's vision for the development of industrial strategies. The Corridor was selected as one of the trailblazers as it offered significant economic potential beyond the city regions and government were keen to see the strategies being a significant advance from SEPs. Government is looking for a strong and robust evidence base and strong partnership arrangements.

On the subject of government resources to support the trailblazer areas, an initial offer of access to government analysts and data sources was offered as an interim arrangement and further resources may be available at the conclusion of the LEP review. Joe and his team also offered to support engagement events across the Corridor and will be meeting with representatives from our task and finish group after Easter.

Across the Corridor an initial vision piece has been co-ordinated by Central Bedfordshire Council with the support of the four LEPs, although this has fallen short of initial aspirations the document serves as a useful demonstration of high level collaboration and acts as a starting point for identifying cross corridor growth sectors and economic challenges. A copy of this document is attached as **Appendix 1** to this report, this document will be used as part of the evidence base for a four LEP led joint vision which is currently being commissioned, a brief for which is attached as **Appendix 2**.

2 Consultation and Engagement Events

On June 21st a major conference has been organised to explore the economic opportunities and potential of the Cambridge: Milton Keynes: Oxford Growth Corridor. We have both BTVLEP members and executive invited to present as part of this event covering specific topic areas including transport, skills, delivery and the use and development of technology. A series of localised consultation events will also be organised in the coming months on sector opportunities across Buckinghamshire.

As many of you will know Iain Stewart MP has been appointed as the Government's Champion for the Growth Corridor, a number of board members attended a launch event for this appointment at the House of Commons. In addition, Richard Harrington will be representing BTVLEP at a meeting with Iain and a number of the Universities from across the Corridor at a dinner at Cranfield University next week.

3 Science & Innovation Audits

BTVLEP are currently supporting a number of Science and Innovation Audits and sector deal programmes relevant to the growth corridor opportunity and delivery of the Industrial Strategy. Later in this agenda we will be receiving an update on the Creative Digital proposal "Story Futures" and board members may wish to receive updates on two further proposals in due course.

Brunel University led Sustainable Airports SIA – With the growth of Heathrow Airport, Brunel University have been leading a Science and Innovation Audit looking at the opportunities for developing a modern sustainable airport ecosystem. The audit is looking to focus on three themes: Sustainable Construction, Operational Excellence and Big Data & Cyber Security all of which are highly relevant for our Industrial Strategy work. This audit is being jointly supported by BTVLEP and TVBLEP.

National Space Sector Proposition. Together with colleagues in Oxfordshire, Hertfordshire, Leicestershire and Cornwall, BTVLEP have been supporting the LEP Network and the UK Space Agency in developing a place focussed national upstream space proposition. This programme is looking

to identify the complementary elements of the national space offer which can be developed alongside the devolved authorities in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. From a Corridor perspective the vast potential of the satellite belt, drawing in the expertise at Harwell, Westcott and Stevenage, may be further developed as an international asset, particularly given the limited international capacity within this area.

4 BTVLEP Growth Board Representation

At the last meeting of this group members asked that BTVLEP consider its position in relation to the Central Area Growth Board. A shadow growth board has now been established covering the Buckinghamshire and SEMLEP areas and currently has a membership of all the local authorities within the areas with the exception of Buckinghamshire County Council. The two LEPs have been offered an associate membership of one representative each. BCC maintain that two separate boards based on the existing LEP Geographies would provide a more sensible and deliverable approach based on functional economic areas and building on existing planning partnership arrangements. I have asked and am awaiting clarity on the functional relationship between local authorities and LEPs within the growth board.

At the outset it was intended that any growth board (or boards) covering these areas would be based on the Oxfordshire Growth Board model which provides proportionate representation for local authorities and other key stakeholders including LEPs and Universities. Presently the proposals for the Central Growth Area Board would give full membership to the 17 local authorities and provide associate membership to the two LEPs (BTVLEP and SEMLEP).

SEMLEP representation on Central Area Growth Board was considered at their Board meeting in February and a number of divergent views were given as to how the shadow board should be developed. There was however a strong feeling that the private sector voice was disproportionately small and that an approach consistent with the Oxfordshire model would be preferred. The Oxfordshire Growth Board has six local authorities and six business representatives. I have spoken with Nigel Tipple CEO at OXLEP who has kindly offered to explain arrangements including structure, roles and responsibilities further if Board members would find that of assistance in reaching a view on optimal arrangements for Buckinghamshire.

Given the recent progress in the Modernising Local Government Review and the suggested timetable for the LEP Review we would welcome members' views on BTVLEP positioning in respect of Growth Boards.

Members are asked to:-

- 1 Note the progress that is being made in developing the Buckinghamshire Local Industrial Strategy and joint LEP work across the wider corridor area.**
- 2 Consider whether they would like to receive direct presentations and update reports from the science and innovation activity and sector deal reports that BTVLEP are involved in.**
- 3 Advise on how BTVLEP should position in respect of Oxford to Cambridge Corridor Growth Board governance arrangements.**