

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

Held Friday 14 June 2013 from 9.30am at
The Clare Charity Centre, Wycombe Road, Saunderton, Bucks HP14 4BF

Present: Cllr Michael Appleyard, Buckinghamshire County Council (Alternate)
Cllr Michael Edmonds, Aylesbury Vale District Council
Cllr Roger Reed, South Bucks District Council (Alternate)
Cllr Nick Rose, Chiltern District Council
Cllr Richard Scott, Wycombe District Council
Ruth Farwell, Buckinghamshire Business First (Bucks New University)
Michael Garvey, Buckinghamshire Business First (Stupples Chandler Garvey)
Alex Pratt, Buckinghamshire Business First (Serious Brands)
David Pritchard, Buckinghamshire Business First (Manches) (Alternate)
Rob Spurrett, Buckinghamshire Business First (ComDev)

Apologies: Cllr Adrian Busby, South Bucks District Council
Cllr Martin Tett, Buckinghamshire County Council
Andrew Smith, Buckinghamshire Business First (Pinewood)

In attendance: Karen Satterford, Wycombe District Council
Chris Schmidt-Reid, Wycombe District Council (part meeting)
Richard Harrington, BTVLEP Chief Executive
Warren Ralls, BTVLEP Partnerships Manager
Sarah Fraser, Buckinghamshire Business First

SUMMARY MINUTES

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no new declarations of interest at this meeting.

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING – 22 March 2013

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as an accurate record and were signed accordingly.

2.1 Matters Arising

- 2.1.1 • **Item 2.1.1 – Broadband** – The meeting being arranged with DCLG regarding Planning policy and barriers to growth will include discussion around including FTTP as a prerequisite on all new build applications.
- 2.1.2 • **Item 2.1.2 - Planning Officers Group** – The Planning Officers will be asked if it is possible to request information on the number of jobs being created through new applications.
- 2.1.3 • **Permitted Development Rights** - Applications forwarded by Bucks Authorities for exemption under the permitted change of B1 offices to residential use had largely been refused. BTVLEP officers are researching the impact of this on economic regeneration and will write to the Planning Minister expressing the LEP's disappointment and requesting detail re how the decisions had been arrived at.
- 2.1.4 • **Item 4 - Consultation Response Process** - The revised process will be taken to the Bucks Planning Officers Group; and brought back to the July BTVLEP Board meeting for approval.

All other outstanding actions had been undertaken or were covered on the agenda.

3 WYCOMBE TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN PRESENTATION

- A presentation was given looking at challenges (including availability of start up premises and room to expand/land constraints), opportunities, and current and planned development in and around Wycombe. The overall target is to provide 2,000 new jobs by 2016.
- Challenges/themes from this type of document will be fed into the BTVLEP bid document.

4 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

4.1 Whitehall

- A Local Growth Committee, chaired by the Rt Hon Nick Clegg, has been announced bringing together the ministerial groups previously chaired by Mr Clegg on the Regional Growth Fund and City Deals to provide oversight across the local growth agenda.
- 26 June will see Spending Round announcements; the Government seem determined to push through the Single Local Growth Fund (Single Pot), but only as a 1 year settlement. Clarity is expected on the quantum of the Single Pot with the focus of funds to be made available to LEPs being around skills, transport and housing, although it is unclear which parts of these budgets will be allocated.
- The most important facet of the LEP bids will be how well the individual LEP community is working together, business and Local Authorities must be as one.

4.2 Team and Roles

- Thanks were offered to the Appointments Committee for their rapid and strong help to get the BTVLEP to the point where a full team is now in place, providing capacity and ability.

4.3 Wider Geography

- The BTVLEP has been working with the Greater Thames Valley LEPs (GTV6) looking at sharing resources on things such as EU funding, lobbying and broadband/5G.
- The 39 LEP Chairs, as a group, have provided input into Spending Round discussions in advance of the announcements on 26 June, particularly around the need for the pot to be of a sufficient size (and unencumbered by over-complicated departmental strings) to enable growth to be delivered. A document has been produced by the 39 LEP Chairs to be sent to Treasury outlining the LEP Chairs' concerns and what they believe is required. A copy of the final document sent will be forwarded to the BTVLEP Board for information.
- Discussions are underway to look at what a reconstituted LEP Network, designed to support the 39 LEPs and to be a conduit into/out of Whitehall might look like.
- The 39 LEP Chairs are also in negotiation with Whitehall re the rules to be attached to the Single Pot, and how the bidding process will work to ensure that this is equitable for all.
- The 39 LEPs have been grouped under 5 Typology headings one representative from each group providing a link to others within the group to assist communication flow.

4.4 Pinewood

- The Board were aware that the Pinewood planning application had been refused by South Bucks District Council recently. The application would now proceed through the appeals process, the appeal focussing on making the case for very special circumstances.
- The BTVLEP's position remained unchanged and it was agreed to submit a letter to the Secretary of State supporting the economic benefits that would accrue as a result of a positive decision. It was noted that the other Greater Thames Valley LEPs (Oxfordshire, Thames Valley Berkshire, Enterprise M3, Hertfordshire, and Coast to Capital) have indicated that they would wish to co-sign this letter.
- It was agreed that the BTVLEP Chairman would speak at the inquiry to be held.

4.5 Vice Chairman Appointment Process

- The Board signalled its agreement to the Chairman progressing discussions with Local Authority members re the appointment of a Vice Chairman.

5 CHIEF EXECUTIVE UPDATE

- The BTVLEP Financial Summary had been included in the Chief Executive's report. The LEP is obligated under central government funding conditions to match fund officer time to funding received. A significant amount of officer time has already been committed but more is needed.

5.1 Growing Place Fund - Projects Update

- **Handy Cross Hub** - Funds are due to be drawn down within the next two weeks.
- **Aylesbury Town Centre** - A request has been made to draw down funds.
- **Broadband** - Heads of Terms have been agreed. A partnership agreement with Hertfordshire would be signed imminently, following which Bucks County Council would be approached re drawing down funds. BT have been approached re their roll out programme in an attempt to ensure business areas are connected in the earliest waves; balanced against BT's need to manage the project cost effectively.

5.2 EU Strategic Plan

- Final government guidance is still awaited; but information on key themes had been included within the Chief Executive's report. EU funding is one area where the Greater Thames Valley LEPs are collaborating and further information will be brought back to the July Board meeting.

6 CASE CONFERENCE PITCH

- The pitch to government is about demonstrating what Bucks partners are already achieving and what more can be achieved with assistance from the centre on a zero net cost basis.
- The advice received from colleagues in Whitehall previously had been that the pitch must make a clear ask; give clarity on what local partners will do; and provide a clear rationale for why investment should be made in Bucks rather than any other area in the country.
- The Case Conference offers a number of opportunities: to give an indication of the direction of travel of the Bid document to the Single Pot from 2015 onwards; to demonstrate early Bucks' growth plans, sharing where barriers lie; and to demonstrate that there are projects ready to be progressed quickly should there be funding available.
- The Board asked that the pitch demonstrate: a clear track record; strong business involvement; the ability and ambition to get things done; and the clear Bucks USPs.

7 SUB GROUPS UPDATES

7.1 Infrastructure Sub Group

- The BTVLEP Board endorsed the initial priority list of projects to be forwarded to DfT as part of the programme of devolution of funding for Majors programmes (recognising this list could be changed freely in the future) and recommended the projects for consideration by the Local Transport Body.

7.2 Skills Sub Group

- The Skills Sub Group has been considering the issue of retention of graduates in Buckinghamshire and has reviewed a model for engagement between employers and skills providers, particularly schools and colleges, which has been developed. The model has arisen from graduate retention and focusses on advanced manufacturing, but is transferable.
- The Group has also been looking at sector specialisms and how Bucks plays into these.
- The next meeting of the Skills Sub Group will take place on 12 July and will involve local employers.

8 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Friday 26 July 2013, from 9.30am, venue tbc.