

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

Held Friday 15 February 2013 from 10.30am at Martin-Baker Aircraft Ltd,
Lower Road, Higher Denham, Near Uxbridge UB9 5AJ

Present: Cllr Michael Edmonds, Aylesbury Vale District Council
Cllr Arif Hussain, Wycombe District Council
Cllr Roger Reed, South Bucks District Council (Alternate)
Cllr Nick Rose, Chiltern District Council
Cllr Martin Tett, Buckinghamshire County 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)
Andrew Smith, Buckinghamshire Business First (Pinewood)

Apologies: Cllr Adrian Busby, South Bucks District Council
Rob Spurrett, Buckinghamshire Business First (ComDev)

In attendance: Philippa Batting, Buckinghamshire Business First
Jim Sims, 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 discussions around the Growing Places Fund project to develop Aylesbury's Town Centre: Ruth Farwell, Martin Tett and Michael Edmonds.
- The following Board members declared an interest in discussions around Permitted Development Rights: Michael Garvey, Andrew Smith, and Roger Reed.

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING – 11 January 2013

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

2.1 Matters Arising

- **Item 2.1 Matters Arising – Bucks Planning Officers Group** – Confirmation is to be sought from the BPOG re what is needed from government to ensure FTTP connectivity for all new builds as this requirement is not currently legislated, so that the BTVLEP can pursue this. BPOG would also be asked what information is available around the number of new jobs being created through planning applications.
- **Item 3.2.1 – Growing Places Fund – Handy Cross** – The Secretary of State had decided not to call in the Handy Cross project. A decision was still awaited re the running track to be re-sited in Marlow from Handy Cross, the removal of which was necessary to allow work to start on the Hub.
- **Item 3.2.4 – Broadband** – Letters had been written to Maria Miller re Broadband provision in Bucks; a response was awaited. The Digital Business First (DBF) national launch would be taking place in London on Wednesday 13 March 2013 highlighting that business is being badly impacted by the government's lack of investment in digital infrastructure. The South East England Council (SEEC) would be writing to DCMS re Broadband provision in the South East. Negotiations continue with BT re priority sites within the county for connection.

- **Item 6 – Chairman’s Update – Brussels 17/18 June** – Work continues to ensure Bucks is well placed to bid to whatever EU funding becomes available; building networks/allies in Europe is part of this work.

3 **INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS – PROJECT UPDATE**

3.1 Infrastructure Appraisal Framework

- This project involves development of a “tool” for use by the BTVLEP and the Local Transport Body (once established) in assessing and prioritising infrastructure schemes going forward. A demonstration at the next Board meeting was requested.

3.2 LTB Transport Scheme List

- Schemes are being identified to put forward to DfT by the end of July 2013, following assessment through the IAF tool, cross referenced against BTVLEP and central government priorities.

3.3 Buckinghamshire Digital Map

- The map will give a clear picture of current Broadband provision overlaid with a number of things, such as where future growth is due to take place. It will assist in infrastructure decision making in the future and will provide the narrative for what the BTVLEP are trying to accomplish and why investment is being made in particular projects.
- A presentation on the capabilities of the Digital Map would be brought to a future meeting.

4 **LOCAL TRANSPORT BODIES (LTBs)**

- Further to DfT’s decision to devolve funding for major transport schemes, an assurance framework by which the LTBs would operate was required by DfT by the end of February 2013.
- The proposed assurance framework for Bucks had been circulated to the Board. The key points identified from the proposal were:-
 - Bucks LTB geography will be in line with Bucks County Council’s administrative boundary, which reflects the BTVLEP geography.
 - Voting membership of the Bucks LTB will be the BCC Cabinet Member for Planning and Transport (LTB Chairman); the BCC BTVLEP Board Member; a private sector BTVLEP Board member (preferably the Chairman of the Infrastructure Sub Group). A further non-voting BCC member to offer advice and guidance in line with overview and scrutiny recommendations.
 - An open sharing of information was proposed with neighbouring LTBs.
 - BCC will be the accountable body and support/secretariat will be provided by BCC/BBF.
 - The indicative funding allocation for Buckinghamshire is £12.4m (a relatively small sum in terms of what this can actually achieve with regards to highways projects).
- Projects to be taken to the LTB would have first been agreed by both BTVLEP and Local Authorities through a variety of forums.
- A one-off £133k had been received from DfT to ensure support development of the LTB. The proposed Assurance Framework met the minimum requirements identified by DfT.
- The BTVLEP Board offered its support for the proposed Buckinghamshire LTB’s Assurance Framework and formally nominated Michael Garvey as the BTVLEP representative on the LTB.

5 **PINCH POINT FUNDING BID**

- Information was tabled regarding a bid to the Pinch Point fund in respect of improvements to Chapel Lane in High Wycombe. This met the requirement that projects submitted would assist local economic growth and unlock new business development/expansion and address congestion issues.
- The BTVLEP to provide a letter of support for this bid to BCC by 19 February in order to meet the deadline for submission to DfT of 21 February.

6 GROWING PLACES FUND UPDATE

- An update on the Growing Places Fund projects had been provided.
- The Board asked that pressure be maintained to bring these projects to fruition quickly, whilst recognising that negotiations were extremely complex and unforeseen delays, such as the Secretary of State reviewing the Handy Cross Hub development project, had impacted upon initial progress.
- Confirmation was to be requested of dates when work on the ground will commence for each project.

7 SUB GROUPS UPDATE

7.1 Skills Sub Group

- The work of the Skills Sub Group is progressing as discussed at the last Board meeting.
- Work Wise Week had taken place and was deemed to have been successful; thanks were offered to all the employers that had taken part.
- The next Sub Group meeting will look at the issue of graduate retention in Bucks.
- A meeting had been held with the SEMLEP Skills Sub Group sharing information re how both LEPs are tackling Skills issues and looking at opportunities for collaborative working.
- Tackling the lack of availability of skilled workers in manufacturing/engineering is high on the Sub Group's agenda and it was thought connections at the EEF and in local businesses may be able to help in this regard.
- It was agreed that simplifying the process for accessing the significant funding available to SMEs in relation to skills would greatly assist local businesses.

7.2 Infrastructure Sub Group

- Whilst not a statutory consultee, the Board had previously agreed to take a definite position with regards to consultations it was asked to comment on, guided by the objectives, priorities and aspirations set out in the BTVLEP Plan for Sustainable Economic Growth.
- It was agreed a process paper for handling consultations would be provided to the Board for approval at its next meeting reflecting reference to the BTVLEP Plan; provision of an understanding of contentious issues; established precedence in previous responses; and reference to the evidence base available.
- The BTVLEP (with 1 abstention), having already noted its desire to protect suitable employment land and space, agreed to forward letters of support to each of the relevant Local Authorities in respect of their applications for specific site exemptions under the Permitted Development Rights for change of use from commercial to residential as these were all considered to be appropriate.
- With regards to the Luton Airport consultation, if an extension could be negotiated to the closing date of 18 February the secretariat would provide a clear briefing paper and proposed wording for a suggested response to be approved by the Board.

8 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

8.1 Single Pot Funding

- More information around Single Pot Funding was expected in the Budget announcements.

8.2 Labour Party

- It was agreed to keep a watching brief with regards to informal engagement with Shadow Cabinet Ministers where this might assist with establishing Bucks within Whitehall.
- Chuka Umunna MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, had expressed interest in learning more about the BTVLEP as it was believed that this was the only LEP with representation on the Board from the Creative Industries.

9 GOVERNANCE

9.1 Governance and Accountability Document

- The Board reviewed and updated the governance document.

9.2 Reappointment of Key Roles

- The Board unanimously agreed the reappointment of: Alex Pratt as Chairman; Arif Hussain as Vice Chairman; Ruth Farwell as Chairman of the Skills Sub Group; and Michael Garvey as Chairman of the Infrastructure Sub Group. All agreed to continue in post.

9.3 Appointments & Remuneration Committee

- The role and responsibility of the LEPs had changed dramatically in the last 12 months and the need to appoint appropriate resource to the BTVLEP was acknowledged.
- The Board agreed the establishment of an Appointments & Remuneration Committee to manage identification and appointment of key LEP roles. Terms of reference, membership and powers to deploy relevant funding were all agreed.
- Activity would proceed in short order as there was a need to confirm to BIS/DCLG how the funding available to support the LEP work would be utilised.
- Updates on progress would be reported to the Board as plans took shape.

10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Friday 22 March 2013, from 9.30am at Pinewood Studios, Pinewood Road, Iver Heath SL0 0NH.