

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

Held Friday 22 March 2013 from 9.30am at Pinewood Studios, Pinewood Road, Iver Heath, Bucks SLO 0NH

Present: Cllr Michael Edmonds, Aylesbury Vale District Council
Cllr Neil Marshall, Wycombe District Council
Cllr Adrian Busby, South Bucks District Council
Cllr Fred Wilson, Chiltern District Council (Alternate)
Cllr Martin Tett, Buckinghamshire County Council
Alex Pratt, Buckinghamshire Business First (Serious Brands)
David Pritchard, Buckinghamshire Business First (Manches) (Alternate)
Martin Reed, Buckinghamshire Business First (Thomas International) (Alternate)
Andrew Smith, Buckinghamshire Business First (Pinewood)
Lisa Williams, Buckinghamshire Business First (John Lewis) (Alternate)

Apologies: Ruth Farwell, Buckinghamshire Business First (Bucks New University)
Michael Garvey, Buckinghamshire Business First (Stupples Chandler Garvey)
Cllr Nick Rose, Chiltern District Council
Rob Spurrett, Buckinghamshire Business First (ComDev)

In attendance: Philippa Batting, Buckinghamshire Business First
Richard Harrington, Aylesbury Vale Advantage
Marcus Rogers, Buckinghamshire County Council
Sarah Fraser, Buckinghamshire Business First

SUMMARY MINUTES

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- Andrew Smith and Cllr Adrian Busby restated their interest in discussions around the proposed development at Pinewood Studios, item 9 on the agenda.

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING – 15 February 2013

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

2.1 Matters Arising

- **Item 3.1.1 Matters Arising – Broadband** – BTVLEP to write to government (Maria Miller and Eric Pickles) lobbying for FTTP to be included as a prerequisite on all new build applications.
- **Item 3.1.8 – Natural Environment Partnership** – Discussions had been held with the Chairman of the NEP to find a mechanism for the NEP to feed into the BTVLEP.
- **Item 8.2 – Infrastructure Sub Group – Luton Airport consultation** – A BTVLEP response is to be submitted to this consultation, subsequent to approval by the Board.

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

3 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

3.1 Implications of the Budget and government's response to the Heseltine Review

- The government has accepted 81 of the 89 recommendations within the Heseltine Review and work is underway to implement single pot funding through LEPs from 2015.

- Funding will be allocated largely, but not exclusively, through a competitive bidding process based on the content of the strategic plans to be developed by LEPs. Assessment criteria for strategic plans will include: level of ambition; clarity of prioritisation of key strategic projects and vision for the area; evidence of deliverability; strength of partnership working; pooling of resources; strength of governance arrangements; and transparency of publication of data.
- A case conference in Whitehall is being planned to demonstrate what could be achieved within Bucks with the right funding, influence and support.

3.2 Appointments & Remuneration Committee Feedback

- The Heseltine Review is proving to be a 'game changer' as far as LEPs are concerned and pace and momentum are critical. A very particular set of skills is needed in the LEP team, as is a detailed knowledge of the local environment in order to undertake the complex analysis needed to put together the BTVLEP's bid to the single pot. The Committee had, therefore, decided to follow a closed process and interview known candidates for the relevant roles within the LEP.
- Following interview, Richard Harrington has been offered the role of LEP Chief Executive.
- The final decision around the appointment to other roles will rest with the LEP Chief Executive.

4 **CONSULTATION RESPONSE PROCESS**

- LEPs, whilst not statutory consultees, have been tasked with encouraging growth, and are increasingly being asked to comment on proposals of economic import, both policy and application related.
- The establishment of a formal process for the construction of consultation responses was considered; this would be a framework within which to operate but with the flexibility to apply business acumen.
- The Board agreed that broadly it wished to respond to applications if specifically requested by the applicant (dependent upon the nature, scale, value and strategic import of the application and its relevance to the BTVLEP's strategic plans); or where the board, itself, considered that it wished to respond. The question of project significance would be assessed by the Chairman in conjunction with input from the Secretariat including the Chief Executives group and the BTVLEP sub groups.
- Whilst the BTVLEP would not normally seek to respond to planning applications relating to housing, if housing was seen as a constraint to business development then the LEP might wish to comment, to ensure the need for an appropriate balance between employment and housing was recognised.
- The executive will produce process documentation encompassing the broad framework outlined.

5 **AYLESBURY TOWN CENTRE MASTER PLAN**

- A progress report on the regeneration of Aylesbury town centre/future plans was tabled.
- The District Council has been proactive and entrepreneurial in investing in the town centre to date and had created a great foundation for future development.
- Strong partnership working between AVDC, BCC and Aylesbury Vale Advantage (and now the LEP) was acknowledged as key in achievements to date and being able to achieve all that is hoped for in future.

6 **INFRASTRUCTURE APPRAISAL TOOL**

- The infrastructure appraisal tool has been developed to assist in prioritising infrastructure schemes. This area of work is being driven very quickly due to tight timescales from DfT to provide projects for consideration under the devolution of funding for major transport schemes.
- c74 infrastructure projects in total have been identified, many, but not all, of which are transport projects. Assessment will be taken wider than a traditional approach to infrastructure, to include utility and broadband provision etc; LEP objectives; HMT and other government department requirements; and future needs for Bucks.
- The output of the assessments and a demonstration of how results have been arrived at, together with information on the infrastructure visualisation tool (a 3D GIS web based system) will be available at the 14 June 2013 BTVLEP Board meeting.

7 GROWING PLACES FUND UPDATE

- Aylesbury Town Centre project - contracts are being drawn up with agreement to repay the £2m GPF monies within two years. The Board mandated AP to check and sign the contracts once finalised to facilitate transfer of funding.
- The Handy Cross Hub and Hughenden Quarter Spine Road projects will be taken for Cabinet approval at Wycombe District Council on 8 April.
- The Broadband project - the procurement process is now underway and the Board agreed to delegate authority to the LEP executive with regards to the tendering exercise and to draw up contracts for the relevant body; the outcome to be confirmed to the Board.
- It was anticipated that all monies will have been transferred by the time of the next Board.

8 SUB GROUPS UPDATE

8.1 Skills Sub Group

- It was reported that the Chancellor had made mention of various pots of funding on skills that will come to the LEPs including Connections type work, Post 19 funding, and funding to provide the interface between schools and business.

(Cllr Adrian Busby left the meeting)

9 PINWOOD DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION

- The Pinewood team outlined the scope, benefits and opportunities of the proposed development; and the challenges that will arise if development does not proceed.
- Development on alternative sites providing a 'split lot' will not offer a satisfactory solution for film-makers who are unprepared to break production schedules, staging etc due to the high risks and costs involved.
- The South Bucks District Council Planning Committee will hear the application on 15 May, the consultation period running up until this date, a fundamental consideration being whether Pinewood are able to justify the very special circumstances to justify inappropriate development in the greenbelt and the harm so caused.
- The BTVLEP wished to consider and offer a view on economic matters which are of critical significance, and to look at the impacts and benefits of the proposals.

(Andrew Smith left the meeting)

- A recent survey of BBF members had found 91.4% to be in favour of the development.
- The Board agreed unanimously, with one abstention that it wished to provide a letter to the Local Planning Authority regarding the proposed development to South Bucks District Council in advance of the Planning Committee meeting on 15 May.

10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

10.1 Pinch Point Funding

- The first allocation of £120m local pinch point funding had been announced and the application for funding to support improvements to the A40/A4010 Chapel Lane had been successful with £1.2m to come to Bucks.

11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Friday 14 June 2013, from 9.30am, venue tbc, to be followed by a meeting with Whitehall department representatives, 12.30-2.30pm.