

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

Held Friday 12 December 2014 from 9.30am at
The Clare Charity Centre, Wycombe Road, Saunderton, Bucks HP14 4BF

Present: Cllr Neil Blake, Aylesbury Vale District Council
Cllr Adrian Busby, South Bucks District Council
Cllr Isobel Darby, Chiltern District Council
Cllr Hugh McCarthy, Wycombe District Council (Alternate)
Cllr Martin Tett, Buckinghamshire County Council
Ruth Farwell, Buckinghamshire Business First (Bucks New University)
Michael Garvey, Buckinghamshire Business First (Stupples Chandler Garvey)
Guy Lachlan, Buckinghamshire Business First (Jones & Cocks Ltd)
Alex Pratt, Buckinghamshire Business First (Serious Brands)
Martin Reed, Buckinghamshire Business First (Thomas International) (Alternate)

Apologies: Cllr Richard Scott, Wycombe District Council
Andrew Smith, Buckinghamshire Business First (Pinewood)

In attendance: Nigel Milton, Heathrow Airport Limited (Part meeting)
Stephen Walford, Buckinghamshire County Council
Richard Harrington, BTVLEP Chief Executive
Ian Barham, Interim BTVLEP Partnerships Manager
Jim Sims, BTVLEP Development Manager
Marcus Rogers, BTVLEP contractor
Rupert Waters, Buckinghamshire Business First
Sarah Fraser

SUMMARY MINUTES

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- Martin Tett and Adrian Busby declared an interest in discussions on Heathrow airport.

2 HEATHROW AIRPORT FUTURE OPTIONS

- Nigel Milton, Director of External Affairs for Heathrow Airport Limited, presented one possible option for expansion at Heathrow airport and benefits this might bring to Buckinghamshire.
- Expressions of support for the proposal would be more actively sought from LEPs in the Spring.
- Local resident/political support for the plans reflected split opinions.
- The benefits for local businesses in Buckinghamshire to be gained through expansion at Heathrow are being reviewed and the results will be shared with the BTVLEP once available.
- The impact on the environment had been considered within the initial case made.
- Alternative options for increasing air capacity in the UK will be presented at a future BTVLEP Board.

3 AUTUMN STATEMENT KEY POINTS

- The Board received a presentation on the key items arising from the Autumn Statement.
- The Autumn Statement supported Bucks' sector work in terms of science and innovation but concern was expressed at the top slicing of the transport maintenance grant to provide a competitive element; this will likely see funding moving out of Bucks complicating local long term road repair plans in place.

- Following the General Election a realignment of LEP geography was thought likely, with Combined Authorities possibly taking up “dual key” responsibility with LEPs for economic development. The importance of all the Local Authorities working closely together, with the LEP, and with its delivery mechanisms was highlighted if the county was not to lose out.

4 **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING – 24 October 2014**

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

5 **SKILLS UPDATE**

- The Board received an update on progress on the BTVLEP’s skills agenda.
- Procurement is underway for resource to manage the skills projects, to reconstitute the Skills Board and to provide the link between the Skills Programme Board and the BTVLEP Board.
- Job Descriptions have been prepared for the two substantive posts in question and it is planned to commission to these posts early in the New Year.
- Membership of the Skills Programme Board is being reviewed to increase employer presence.
- The Board mandated RH to proceed with recruitment to the skills posts identified.

6 **LOCAL GROWTH FUND ROUND 1**

- The latest iteration of the Monitoring & Evaluation Framework, and the Strategic Communications Plan had been included within the Board papers.

6.1 Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

- Discussions had been held with the accountable body section 151 officers to ensure robust processes are in place to protect public money but also allowing for swift consultation and subsequent action.
- The Board agreed the attendance of accountable body section 151 officers at future meetings.
- It was agreed the BTVLEP executive would collate documentation around current processes liaising with Section 151 officers on this to ensure all due diligence requirements were met.

6.2 Strategic Communications Plan

- This will be a public document, once finalised, as required by central government.
- The Board requested communications only be sent when there was something meaningful to report (either positive or negative) rather than to a fixed timetable.

6.3 LGF Projects

- All projects are progressing to plan, recognising funding will not start flowing until April 2015.
- The Bucks Advantage Board will be scrutinising project progress.

7 **LOCAL TRANSPORT BODY UPDATE**

- Local Transport Bodies (LTBs) were created to receive public funding for transport projects; the decision taken by government subsequently to include LTB funding under the control of the LEPs.
- Buckinghamshire’s LTB allocation had been £8.3m capital funding for use within the county’s borders. A public report being available on the BCC website confirming investment decisions.
- Funding has been allocated over a specific profile: £2.1m in 2015/16 to deliver the Stocklake link to Aylesbury; and notional allocations of £3m in 2017/18 and £3.2m in 2018/19 associated with infrastructure delivery related to the release of reserve sites in High Wycombe.
- There has been no indication that there will be a role for the LTBs in the future; it was envisaged that responsibility for the evaluation of investments will fall under the remit of the LEPs.

8 LOCAL GROWTH FUND ROUND 2

- To meet government timescales, approval of medium term priorities had been gained from the BTVLEP Board via email. These had been submitted to government and had been well received; good feedback was also being received on the business cases submitted for each of the projects.

8.1 Transport Feasibility Studies

- The LGF Round 1 business cases had been well received but had taken considerable officer time to produce. This situation would need to be addressed and a way found to fund this time in future.
- Feasibility studies originally included in the Round 2 bid that were now to be funded by other means, eg the A421, would be removed and the list supplemented with new feasibility studies.

9 BUCKINGHAMSHIRE INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT PLAN

- The Buckinghamshire Infrastructure Investment Plan will consider a whole range of infrastructure; roads, rail, broadband, etc within its scope. Work will commence in January 2015 to be finalised by March 2015 and ready for May 2015, immediately post-election.
- The Board agreed the request for funding to go to the Buckinghamshire Advantage Board to commission this work to the timescales and costs provided.

10 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

10.1 LEP Network

- AP confirmed he would be stepping down as Chair of the LEP Network Management Board with effect from end March 2015. In the interim work would be undertaken to secure funding to assure the future of the LEP Network, and a manifesto created to share with government.

10.2 Greater Thames Valley LEPs - 5G Testbed

- Enterprise M3 LEP are leading; the first draft due diligence is being reviewed and the business case is expected w/c 15 December with a view to the partners to the project meeting in January 2015.
- It is expected the business case will outline the benefit to be brought to Bucks, specifically, as a result of the BTVLEP's investment, funding for which will start to flow in March 2015.

11 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

11.1 LEP Incorporation

- LEPs are split between those who have and those who have not decided to incorporate.
- The main advantages to incorporation, director indemnity and the ability to enter into contractual relationships, were currently managed through parent organisations and BTVLEP delivery bodies.
- The Board agreed to defer a decision on whether to pursue incorporation until after the General Election in May 2015 when the future for the LEP structure would become clearer.

11.2 Road Investment Strategy (RIS)

- The 'dualling' of the A421 will take place under the RIS, particularly the Oxford to Cambridge arc.
- The executive will be looking at how this development maps on the BTVLEP's SEP priorities.

11.3 ESIF Intermediate Body Status

- The BTVLEP had indicated a strong interest in taking on Limited Intermediate Body status safeguarding the ability to make decisions locally around projects supported with EU funding.
- Recognising the low Buckinghamshire EU allocation, the BTVLEP executive were asked to request proportionality in terms of the local funding committee's role and governance.

12 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

12.1 Friends Life Women's Tour

- The Board agreed to underwrite temporarily the £15,000 shortfall required to support the Friends Life Women's Tour whilst additional sponsors are secured. There was considered to be an extremely low risk to the BTVLEP; 80% of the race was taking place within the County; and there would be significant economic benefits to be gained.

12.2 County Hall Offices

- It was confirmed the Old County Hall offices had been opened up for use by small businesses.

13 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

- Friday 6 February 2015, from 9.30am, Stoke Park, Park Road, Stoke Poges, Bucks SL2 4PG.