

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

Held Friday 14 March 2014 from 9.30am at  
Pinewood Studios, Pinewood Road, Iver Heath, Bucks SL0 0NH

**Present:** Cllr Neil Blake, Aylesbury Vale District Council  
Cllr Hugh McCarthy, Wycombe District Council (Alternate)  
Cllr Nick Rose, Chiltern District Council  
Cllr Martin Tett, Buckinghamshire County Council (Part meeting)  
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)  
Andrew Smith, Buckinghamshire Business First (Pinewood)

**Apologies:** Cllr Adrian Busby, South Bucks District Council  
Cllr Richard Scott, Wycombe District Council

**In attendance:** Richard Harrington, BTVLEP Chief Executive  
Warren Ralls, BTVLEP Partnerships Manager  
Jim Sims, BTVLEP Development Manager  
Sarah Fraser

## **SUMMARY MINUTES**

### **1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

- Cllr Hugh McCarthy and Cllr Nick Rose declared an interest in discussions around the Natural Environment Partnership as both are Board members.
- All Board members acknowledged an interest in discussions around the Strategic Economic Plan.

### **2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING – 24 January 2014**

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

### **3 STRATEGIC ECONOMIC PLAN (SEP)**

- Government had stated that in the SEPs it is looking for transformational action; items that make a difference in the local area; a clear demonstration of the additionality offered by supporting specific projects; and a clear indication of the level of private sector involvement.
- Feedback had been received on the draft SEP submitted including challenges to the BTVLEP on national agenda issues eg housing. BTVLEP's role was felt to be in attracting more infrastructure, supporting Local Planning Authorities, and promoting the strong story that Bucks has in relation to housing.
- It was suggested the SEP should link with/reflect, where possible, the content of LA Local Plans.
- The SEP provides an outline of what is important to Bucks and why; the projects that support these aspirations; and a note of Bucks' "negotiated asks", these being the things that the county would like to do but that are not easily achievable via the pots of funding currently available to government.
- With regards to the "negotiated asks" the SEP must clearly demonstrate to government the increased return they would achieve by investing any additional funding available in Bucks over other areas.

- Suggested SEP projects had been through a robust process of prioritisation having due regard for the necessity to be able to deliver initial phases in 2015/16, to demonstrate value for money and economic impact, but also to include projects of a scalable nature that will roll on passed 2015/16. Projects to be rolled into a multi-year deal must demonstrate revenue generation to help deliver projects over the term of the multi-year deal.
- In the event that Bucks' allocation under the SEP is not sufficient to facilitate the entirety of the priority projects identified a further prioritisation process will be implemented.
- The shortlist of key priority projects identified would be submitted to government without individual ranking, a statement being added to the SEP to this effect. The full list of projects required in Bucks will be appended to the SEP to demonstrate the scale of the prioritisation that has already taken place.
- Briefing sessions will be arranged for all councillors and a summary briefing document provided prior to submission of the SEP.
- Within the negotiated asks, infrastructure investment has been identified as a key problem for the county and Bucks would like to understand and negotiate how we retain or attract back more of the surplus that the county generates for the economy to invest in infrastructure.
- It was suggested including a headline around the growth that could be unlocked by addressing the skills mismatch experienced by employers.
- The Board recognised the need for robust governance procedures but asked that these revolve around Buckinghamshire Advantage and Buckinghamshire Business First. The EU Implementation Group would be led by a BTVLEP Board member with membership being drawn from the other groups needed to meet governance requirements.

#### 4 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

##### 4.1 Broadband

- The Board supported submitting a bid for additional funding available through the Superfast Extension Programme and work would be undertaken to secure match funding through the most appropriate sources by the 30 June 2014 deadline. The Board also strongly supported extending the current contract with BT if this option is available.
- It was suggested a proportion of the funding be spent in further promoting take up of the service.
- The Board reiterated its desire to see a consistent message coming from planning authorities giving a strong steer to developers to include fibre to the premises in all new planning applications; acknowledging that this was not a statutory requirement.
- The Board felt that the LEP had a role to play in:-
  - Working with the Local Planning Authorities to develop a common broadband policy.
  - Lobbying government to treat broadband as a utility, possibly with the other GTV6 LEPs.
  - Pressing to ensure that there is an open structure and consumers are not tied to a certain provider because they negotiated a deal with the developer.

##### 4.2 Local Sustainable Transport Fund

- The Board agreed to provide letters of support to BCC's LSTF revenue bids, funding for which sat outside the Local Growth Fund.

##### 4.3 EU Structural and Investment Funds

- The Board noted the delay in distributing EU funds due to the Judicial Review brought by Sheffield City Region and Liverpool LEPs.

##### 4.4 Bucks Advantage

- Pending completion of a few procedural matters, Bucks Advantage was now ready to launch. A Board meeting to effect the resignation of the Aylesbury Vale Advantage directors and the appointment of new Bucks Advantage directors had been arranged for 25 March.

#### 4.5 SEMLEP/BTVLEP

- Agreement has been reached with SEMLEP on how to manage bidding on/delivery of projects within the overlapping geography in AVDC.
- It was agreed that the wording in the Memorandum of Understanding between SEMLEP/BTVLEP could bear review. Suggested amendments will be made and shared with SEMLEP for consideration.

### 5 **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

#### 5.1 Unitary Research

- The Board noted Bucks Business First (BBF) will be commissioning a piece of independent work to look at the cost/benefits of the three most likely outcomes of a local government reorganisation in response to the business community's desire to see the most cost-effective local government structures.
- The results of this research could provide the evidence base for future decision-making.

#### 5.2 LEP Network

- The reconstituted LEP Network would be in place with effect from 26 March (the date of the LEP Network Annual Conference).

#### 5.3 Enterprise Education

- A follow up meeting is planned with Lord Young and Operation Enterprise discussing how to improve enterprise in education. Lord Young has requested LEPs to come up with innovative ideas above and beyond what is done in the course of normal day to day LEP operations to bring enterprise into schools.
- The profiling of students in Bucks in order to help them navigate the skills system has proved a popular initiative in Westminster.

### 6 **SUB GROUP UPDATES**

#### 6.1 Skills Sub Group

- The Skills Sub Group is working on the "Showcasing Careers in Buckinghamshire" project, the first element of which is establishing the Apprenticeship Gold Standard campaign.

### 7 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

#### 7.1 Chiltern District Council

- Cllr Isobel Darby, who would be taking over as CDC Leader Elect on 13 May would join the BTVLEP Board meeting on 9 May, prior to which an induction meeting would be set up.

#### 7.2 HS2

- Work continued pursuing mitigation opportunities in the event that HS2 proceeds.

#### 7.3 BBF Business Hub - Chesham

- The new Business Hub in Chesham operated by BBF and the Chesham & Amersham Chamber of Commerce had opened recently, another example of organisations working together to provide a boost to local businesses.

### 8 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Friday 9 May 2014, from 9.30am, venue tbc.