

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

Held Friday 24 January 2014 from 9.30am at
The Clare Charity Centre, Wycombe Road, Saunderton, Bucks HP14 4BF

Present: Cllr Adrian Busby, South Bucks District Council
Cllr Sue Polhill, Aylesbury Vale District Council (Alternate)
Cllr Nick Rose, Chiltern District Council
Cllr Richard Scott, Wycombe District Council
Cllr Martin Tett, Buckinghamshire County Council
Philippa Batting, Buckinghamshire Business First (Alternate)
Michael Garvey, Buckinghamshire Business First (Stupples Chandler Garvey)
Guy Lachlan, Buckinghamshire Business First (Jones & Cocks Ltd)
Alex Pratt, Buckinghamshire Business First (Serious Brands)
Adam Stronach, Buckinghamshire Business First (Harwood Hutton Ltd) (Alternate)

Apologies: Cllr Neil Blake, Aylesbury Vale District Council
Ruth Farwell, Buckinghamshire Business First (Bucks New University)
Andrew Smith, Buckinghamshire Business First (Pinewood)

In attendance: Richard Harrington, BTVLEP Chief Executive
Warren Ralls, BTVLEP Partnerships Manager
Jim Sims, BTVLEP Development Manager
Paula Buck, Service Director, Bucks County Council
Sarah Fraser

SUMMARY MINUTES

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- There were no new declarations of interest at this meeting.

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING – 13 December 2013

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

2.1 Matters Arising

- 2.1.1 • **Broadband Development and 5G** – A meeting has been set up with the other members of the GTV6 LEPs to look at under what terms they may wish to contract with the University of Surrey to establish the 5G pilot test bed.
- 2.1.2 • **Blind Spot LEPs** - The GTV6 LEPs will consider whether the group wishes to be involved in the research to be undertaken by raising the profile of LEPs in non-city areas in an effort to get key messages into political party manifestos.
- 2.1.3 • **Autumn Statement** - Discussions had been held with Greg Clark re the withdrawal of the New Homes Bonus element in the Single Local Growth Fund and its replacement with funding streams that Bucks and other areas were, in effect, ineligible to bid to. The advice received was that the BTVLEP were welcome to write to government to register disquiet but the situation was unlikely to change.

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

3 **EU STRUCTURAL AND INVESTMENT FUNDS 2014-2020**

- The outcome of the recent EUSIF consultation events, the detail of the revised submission, and the structure of the proposed Investment Committee were presented and discussed.
- The Board questioned how to ensure the portion of the EU allocation being made to SEMLEP relating to the Aylesbury Vale overlap was utilised on projects within Bucks as this money is not ring-fenced. It was confirmed that there was no way to enforce this happening.
- The Board approved the financial model underpinning the final EUSIF submission, and the principle of the establishment of an Investment Panel, co-chaired by a representative from DCLG and the BTVLEP Chairman in the first instance, to determine what and where to invest Bucks' EU allocation, and make recommendations to the BTVLEP Board.
- The Board asked that governance structures established safeguarded the use of public money but were as streamlined as possible, reflecting the relative paucity of the EU allocation being made to Bucks.
- The possibility of supporting a small number of projects over the entire term of the funding period was discussed, as was the availability of match funding from partner organisations and the ability to leverage funding via the growth deal.
- The final EUSIF submission is due with Government by 31 January 2014.

4 **STRATEGIC ECONOMIC PLAN UPDATE**

- The draft SEP submission was forwarded to government prior to Christmas and positive feedback had been received at a meeting with Rt Hon Greg Clark, Lord Heseltine and Baroness Kramer on 21 January.
- The over-riding message received was one of delivery, delivery, delivery; the quote of the day from Lord Heseltine being "you cannot eat vision".
- With regards to the overlapping AVDC geography with SEMLEP, it had not been possible to submit aligned SEPs but discussions continued about how to manage business support, housing delivery, transport and development projects etc in the overlap area.
- Particular issue appeared to rest with transport discussions; the BTVLEP having the relationship with the local transport authority. Discussions have been initiated with central government and both Oxfordshire LEP and SEMLEP to find a way forward. It was thought that the reality of trying to build roads and other infrastructure with reference to numerous transport authorities, aligning approvals and timescales etc would be very difficult.

5 **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

5.1 39 LEPs

- The Task and Finish group established to look at reconstituting the LEP Network has progressed well with establishing the framework for the new network which will be funded by the LEPs (£5k for each) with matched funding from DCLG.
- To compensate for the enormous amount of work undertaken by the BTVLEP on behalf of the 39 LEPs, a request has been made either for a direct payment, or ongoing free membership of the LEP Network.

5.2 Governance

- A paper will be brought to the next Board meeting around the governance of the BTVLEP which will consider whether additional sub groups need to be established or lead roles assigned to Board members to take specific pieces of work forward.

6 **CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT**

6.1 Public Works Loan Board

- The Chancellor had confirmed in his Autumn Statement there would be additional PWLB money available in the future and the BTVLEP would forward bids to this when appropriate.

6.2 Housing Growth

- In discussion with Rt Hon Greg Clark MP it had been pointed out that Bucks' housing growth has been double that of core cities and that we are able to evidence we are a high growth economy, but suffering with poor infrastructure which is a limiting factor on jobs growth.

6.3 Growing Places Fund Update

- The BTVLEP was reported as being contractually committed now to all growing places fund projects, one of which had already returned the money loaned.
- It was agreed to consider at the next meeting how recycled funds might be reallocated.
- The ability for the Broadband project to return the investment made rested greatly upon the level of uptake of the service. The BTVLEP had a role to play in promoting services and providing information on the benefits available/investment needed.

6.4 Bucks Advantage

- The final Bucks Advantage (BA) constitution documents had been circulated with the Board papers, all Member organisations now having approved these.
- The Board approved the documents and the establishment of the company. The current BA shadow board will generate a list of potential private sector directors for Member organisation agreement.
- It was noted that the list of assets in Aylesbury Vale Advantage (AVA) was in the process of being finalised and once this was complete and agreed, AVA would reform into Bucks Advantage, and the new Bucks Advantage directors would take up their role and start to prepare the organisation's business plan etc.

6.5 Skills Project Proposal

- The project proposed looked at bringing schools and business closer together, co-ordinating the significant ad hoc activity already taking place on this agenda, on a pilot basis but considering how to run as a bigger project.
- Buckinghamshire New University had agreed to contribute up to 50% of the project costs; Local Authorities and BBF were asked to consider contributing the residual funding required.
- There were a number of other initiatives happening in the county that would need to be considered within the scope of the project and those co-ordinating the project proposal were asked to include a defined strand of work where teachers in technical subjects spend time within industry to view practical applications at work.
- Discussions had been held with Sue Imbriano at Buckinghamshire County Council looking at further opportunities to bid for ESF funds.
- It was agreed that a comprehensive proposal would be prepared referencing the above and detailing the outputs that would be provided through the project, for consideration at the next Board meeting.

7 **FINANCE UPDATE**

- The biggest financial issue for the BTVLEP remained around match for core government funding. Significant match has been provided via the secondment of Buckinghamshire County Council, Buckinghamshire Business First, and Aylesbury Vale Advantage staff. District Council officers have provided time to support the work of the BTVLEP and the establishment of BA but this time needed to be clearly under the direction of the BTVLEP Board and a clear audit trail available, if it is to be included in documents being forwarded to government.

8 **SUB GROUP UPDATES**

8.1 Skills Sub Group

- It was reported that Bucks now sat within the South/South West Skills Funding Agency grouping. The SFA had stated that they were keen to engage with the BTVLEP at a strategic level as the LEP was seen as a strategic planner of skills in the area.

8.2 Infrastructure Sub Group

- The Broadband project was moving forward with the first cabinet coming online shortly. Joint Board meetings were being held with BT to ensure that the project progressed as planned and that value for money was achieved.
- The Infrastructure Sub Group team had been instrumental in providing information for inclusion in the SEP submission and thanks were offered to all members of the group. With the introduction of Bucks Advantage shortly, consideration was now being given to reconfiguring the Infrastructure Sub Group.

9 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

9.1 Wilton Park Development

- It was reported that the Wilton Park development was out to consultation on the planning document. The competing developer has applied for a Judicial Review re the MOD's decision to sell the site to Inland Homes and this may delay the project.

9.2 HS2

- The Supreme Court decision recently had not helped Bucks' plight in relation to HS2. Buckinghamshire County Council are working on Version 2 of the mitigation plan. It was felt that the county needed to start being more proactive in terms of some of the mitigation requests being made.
- It was thought that elements of the HS2 mitigation plan should likely be included in the final SEP submission being forwarded.
- The position of the Local Authorities and BTVLEP was still very much in opposition to HS2 but in the event that it goes ahead there was a need to be clear on what the county would require to mitigate the impact of the development.

10 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Friday 14 March 2014, from 9.30am, venue tbc.