

**Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership  
Annual Performance Review 2018-19 Notes**

**Location:** Marsham Street, London

**Date:** 24 January 2019

**Time:** 12.00 - 14.30

**Attending:**

**LEP**

- Andrew Smith (AS) – Chair LEP
- Richard Harrington (RH) – LEP CEO
- Ian Barham (IB) – LEP Partnership Manager
- Richard Ambrose (RA) – Buckinghamshire County Council S151 officer

**Government**

- Rowena Limb (RL) – CLGU
- Peter Northover (PN) – CLGU
- Richard Turl (RT) – CLGU
- Rebecca Warner (RW) – CLGU
- Prianka Chotai (PC) – CLGU
- Karl Murphy (KM) – DfT

**Notes and Actions**

**Actions from 2017 Annual Conversation**

<b>Action #</b>	<b>Action Point</b>	<b>Date completed</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>1</b>	The LEP is an un-constituted body and you will look to move toward the company limited by guarantee model subject also to the outcome of HMG's LEP Review and the outcome of the Modernising Local Government decisions.	As part of LEP review response by March 2019	The LEP is committed to become incorporated by the LEP Review deadline. They have appointed Black Radley Consulting to support the process. The Board endorsed the approach at its last meeting on 11 January 2019.
<b>2</b>	The LEP's data return shows that the LEP Local Growth Funding spend against profile for 2017/2018 is 21%. This is due to jump to 75% in quarter 4 with Board support for the Eastern Link Road business case, with the planning agreement secured for the Aylesbury Woodlands development subject to the finalisation of section 106 arrangements. Confirmation of the release of this funding would place the LEP's expenditure in a clearly healthier position	Complete	The funding has been released and profile is currently 71% of total programme and expected to be 84% by end of March 2019.

## **Governance**

### **Compliance actions following spot check.**

- RW confirmed that following the Oversight & Compliance teams spot checks to review compliance with the National LEP Assurance Framework (November 2016) and the LEP Governance and Transparency Best Practice Guidance (January 2018) all actions were complete.

### **LEP Review / Scrutiny / Assurance**

- AS gave an overview of the LEP's approach to Governance that was informed by his experience of running a number of organisations. AS reaffirmed the detailed response submitted in Annex C, D and E of the LEP's APR return.
- AS confirmed the LEP was moving at pace to implement the LEP Review in full including incorporation by the end of March 2019. The LEP already met the 2022/23 diversity target. Recruitment to the Board was now open and not just through Bucks Business First. Two new private sector board members were appointed at the 11 January 2019 Board. AS gave an example of the LEP's Whistleblower policy which was overseen by Thames Valley Berkshire LEP to ensure it is independent of any local authority influence.
- AS acknowledged that addressing the LEP Review's requirement to remove overlaps was now related to wider local government reorganisation in the county and that a Ministerial steer would be required on LEP geography in this area. In the meantime, the LEP would continue to work on their existing footprint.
- RH confirmed the LEP was updating their LAF to meet the 31 March 2019 deadline.
- RH spoke about scrutiny by the Board and the Section 151 officer. He said the LEP is subject to Local Authority scrutiny, through local scrutiny committees. The LEP has presented to all the District Council scrutiny committees this year. RH also confirmed that Buckinghamshire County Council have audited the LEP's compliance with the NAF this year to look at what can be improved.
- RA as S151 confirmed he has been to all Board meetings and feels free to speak and act independently from his county responsibilities. He thinks the LEP is effective in its decision-making. He also confirmed that the LEP commissions regular audits and that recommendations made by him to LEP were actioned straight away. He had only identified minor recommendations, for example making it easier to find documents on the LEP's website.
- AS said that the LEP feels well supported by CLGU Area leads, DfT, DCMS and other departments.
- IB confirmed the LEP's website is now clearer and that the Board responded positively to request for change. The LEP has held training sessions for all its Board members.
- RL asked what churn there is on the Board. AS said that existing directors following incorporation will be on the Board for one further term of 3 years. He

also stated that he believes local government leaders have worked well with the LEP.

- RL asked about relationship with the local government board members. RH said the LEP adheres strongly to the Nolan Principles. When asked about his own relationship to the County Council, RH confirmed that his appointment letter states he is assigned to the Chair of the LEP. He did, however explain that he is responsible for the oversight of the County's highway's function. He emphasised that this had been beneficial at a strategic level, but acknowledged that with the LEP Review's requirement for an independent LEP secretariat such an arrangement would be precluded in the future.

### **Delivery**

- RH said that delivery is going well. By end 2018/19 financial year and midterm of the LGF programme the LEP expected expenditure to be 84% of their total allocation. It was 71% at quarter 2 of 18/19. RH said that Growing Places Fund had been recycled and the LEP is now continuing to invest this in new projects.
- RH said that the delivery of the Aylesbury Woodlands Eastern Link Road scheme had been challenging and high risk, but delivery would now open up the EZ site.
- RW asked about programme management. IB said that there has been positive overall programme delivery and noted that skills projects and complex transport projects have also gone well. He said that where there were slippages strong programme management from the LEP has mitigated this and projects are back on schedule.
- AS said that the Board was ruthless in redeploying funding if projects were not going to deliver VFM and meet the programme's 2021 timeframe.
- KM acknowledged there were potential challenges in transport project delivery. E.g the Aylesbury South East Link Road scheme and the shared value issue with Network Rail through the construction of the bridge as part of the scheme.
- RH confirmed the EZ had been very successful with 1 million sq ft of consented floor space.
- RL asked the LEP to talk about their pipeline of projects. RH said the Bucks Growth strategy (November 2017) and the LEP's Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) and original Strategic Infrastructure Plan directed the LEP's approach to investment alongside the emerging Local Industrial Strategy.
- RL asked if the LEP has done any evaluation or has future plans. RH said there were specific project delivery lessons from the Eastern Link road. More broadly the LEP will undertake a wider evaluation once the LEP Review was implemented during 2019/20.

### **Outputs**

- PN asked the LEP about their outputs. IB said the LEP pro-actively collect outputs and that the latest housing projections are exponentially above their original profile. This reflected the degree of risk the LEP had taken to delivering challenging infrastructure projects which had unlocked significant amounts of

land, though IB added that there was live work in train to re-evaluate outputs across the whole programme.

### **Project Assessment**

- RW asked about project management and risk assessment. RH said that the LEP has established a sub-board which scrutinises projects and puts recommendations to the Board and that the LEP commissions consultants to review business cases and make recommendations on VFM and deliverability.

### **Branding and Communications**

- As outlined in their Annex C, AS confirmed that the LEP has examples of conformity to the branding, though that there is more they will do to secure ministerial promotion of their LGF-funded projects.

### **Strategy**

#### **Approach**

- RL asked how the LEP is using its SEP. RH said the SEP was refreshed in July 2016 (as part of bidding for LGF3) and had since been refined and evolved into Bucks 2050 Strategy published in November 2017. RH reflected that work on delivery of their trailblazer Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) is more focussed on targeting productivity growth investments. The LIS had allowed the LEP to take a step back and identify specific drivers of productivity. The LEP sees the LIS process as an uplifting one although they anticipated the co-creation as they move to a final product would be challenging.
- RH said they are working with their neighbours on an economic vision for the corridor being developed by PWC. He confirmed the LEP is working well with other anchor institutions, such as universities and other public sector organisations.
- PN asked how the LEP assesses interventions and what these are assessed against. RH said the SEP is the bedrock of their activity, but the LIS had refined their targeting of investment.

### **Local Stakeholder Engagement**

- AS confirmed that the LEP worked well with local MPs and as evidenced through the LIS consultation had wide ranging business engagement including, but not limited to, the 12,000 members of the Bucks Business First group (70% of all Bucks businesses).

### **LEP Role**

- RL asked how the LEP has added value to local growth activity. AS said the LEP is better placed than some national organisation to deliver change as evidenced in the transformative activity both at Pinewood and Silverstone.
- RT asked how the LEP is developing the LIS considering there is an unresolved overlap with SEMLEP. RH said that the LEP is working hard to ensure this is not a barrier to developing a LIS and that the LISs were complementary in their focus and not duplicating activity or strategy.
- AS more generally reflected that as part of the LEP Review bringing LEP chairs together more frequently had been very positive.

## Action Points

Action #	Action Point	Owner	Date to be completed	Status
1	LEP to keep CLGU sighted on progress to deliver their LEP Review commitments, notably incorporation and the AGM.	LEP	By March 2019	
2	LEP to keep CLGU updated on its work to review its evaluation of the existing and forecast outputs of its LGF programme	LEP	By end 2019	
3	LEP to increase its retweets of Jake Berry and secure Ministerial quotes at key LGF milestones	LEP	Immediately and as required	
4	LIS – Bucks to finalise their LIS by May/June, working closely with CLGU	LEP	May / June 2019	
5	DfT to continue to work closely with Bucks CC and the LEP to support the delivery of the retained scheme and help to address 3 <sup>rd</sup> party delivery challenges.	Karl Murphy	By March 2021	
7	LEP to commission an independent review of LGF programme delivery and impact.	LEP	By March 2020	