



Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Cities and Local Growth Unit
1st Floor, Fry Building, 2 Marsham Street,
London,
SW1P 4DP

11 March 2019

Richard Harrington
Chief Executive Officer
Buckinghamshire Thames Valley LEP

By email

Dear Richard

I would like to thank you, Andrew and the Accountable Body for participating in the Buckinghamshire Thames Valley LEP Annual Performance Review this year. With the publication of *Strengthened Local Enterprise Partnerships*, it has been a year of significant change and I am grateful for your continued cooperation. Your participation in the LEP Network Working Groups has helped greatly in shaping this year's assurance processes, culminating in the publication of the revised National Local Growth Assurance Framework.

As with last year, I am writing to communicate formally the outcomes of the 2018-19 Annual Performance Review, and to set out the actions that are required. The agreed note of the Annual Performance Review is attached. Alongside the Section 151 Officer letters to the Accounting Officer, the outcomes of the Annual Performance Reviews will be used to inform recommendations for funding for the 2019-20 financial year.

Performance Review

As set out in the 2018-19 Annual Performance Review Guidance, following the Annual Performance Review meeting, officials in the Cities and Local Growth Unit undertook a review to look at the performance of each LEP across the three themes: governance, delivery and strategy. Following feedback and wider discussion, it was decided not to award an overall marking for this year as initially indicated. It was felt that this was a fairer representation allowing the LEP to focus on each individual theme.

The review also sought to highlight any areas where there may be need for further development or where there is good practice to be shared. This involved reviewing the information provided for the Annual Performance Review meeting along with other sources including Spot Checks on compliance with the National Assurance Framework, Growth Deal data submissions and LEP governance processes and policies.

Following the conclusion of the Annual Performance Review process we have determined that the LEP is compliant with the National Assurance Framework. Feedback under each theme is set out below:

Governance

The LEP's governance is considered to be good.

It was noted that there has been a number of steps taken this year to improve the governance of the LEP including its independence from the county council and Bucks Business First. There is a strong culture of continuous improvement, led by you and Andrew, reinforced by a strong and committed board. Recruitment to the board is open and transparent and two new private sector board members were appointed at 11 January 2019 board. Your Section 151 Officer demonstrated that he is well engaged in the LEP's business and that the recommendations from local audits had been implemented to good effect.

The Annual Performance Review identified the following action to further improve the LEP's governance:

- Richard's relationship to the County Council was discussed and you confirmed that your appointment letter states you are assigned to the Chair of the LEP. You considered that your oversight of the County's highways function has been beneficial at a strategic level but acknowledged with the LEP Review's requirement for an independent LEP secretariat such an arrangement will be precluded in the future. It will be important to ensure clarity on this issue during the coming year.

Delivery

The LEP's delivery progress is considered to be exceptional.

You have made excellent progress over the last year on investing your Local Growth Fund allocation, with overall programme expenditure expected to increase to £45.2million (84%) by the end of 2018-2019 financial year. You outlined your proactive approach to redeploying funds where required and how you ensured that the LEP has a strong pipeline of investment aligned to your broader strategy for growth.

The Annual Performance Review also identified the following actions to strengthen project delivery:

- You will keep Cities and Local Growth Unit updated on your work to review your evaluation of the existing and forecast outputs of your LGF programme.
- With regard to external communication and branding you have committed to increase your retweets of Minister Jake Berry and secure Ministerial quotes at key LGF milestones.
- You will also continue to work closely with DfT and Buckinghamshire Country Council to support the delivery of the Aylesbury South East Link Road retained scheme.

Strategy

The strategic impact of the LEP is considered to be good.

You outlined how you have built on the your "Growth Strategy to 2050" published in November 2017 to look more closely at the drivers of productivity as you develop your Local Industrial Strategy. This work has required you to work closely with partners across the

Oxford to Cambridge Arc and good progress has been made to date in developing the detail of your draft LIS interventions.

The Annual Performance Review identified the following action to strengthen the LEP's strategic influence:

- Building on the LEP's work to develop its draft Local Industrial Strategy the next two months will be a crucial period in working with the Cities and Local Growth Unit and other Government Departments to agree the details of your proposed interventions, in order to ensure you can keep to the planned publication timetable.

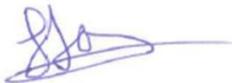
Next Steps

The previous sections of this letter set out some areas where we would like you to focus over the next twelve months and my team will be in touch to follow-up this letter. If you have not already done so you should publish the joint assurance statement you wrote with the LEP Chair ahead of your Annual Performance Review on the LEP website. You will receive further information on the decisions relating to your Local Growth Fund and core funding allocations for the 2019-20 year shortly.

As part of the Annual Performance Review preparation we asked you to provide us with information on where Government could better support you to fulfil the ambitions of your place. We have noted this feedback and will continue to work with you to explore these issues over the coming months. Further, we are committed to working with you over the coming months to support you to deliver local priorities and develop your area's Local Industrial Strategies.

I take this opportunity to remind you of the importance of following the communication and branding guidance as Minister Berry stated last year. This will continue to be a term of your grant offer letter.

Thank you once again for participating positively in the process.



STEPHEN JONES
DIRECTOR, CITIES AND LOCAL GROWTH UNIT

cc. LEP Chair and Section 151 Officer.