

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

Held Friday 11 September 2015 from 9.30am at GE Healthcare, Pollards Wood, Chalfont St Giles, Bucks HP8 4SP

**Present:** Cllr Ralph Bagge, South Bucks District Council  
Cllr Steve Bowles, Aylesbury Vale District Council  
Cllr Isobel Darby, Chiltern District Council  
Cllr Martin Tett, Buckinghamshire County Council  
Cllr Katrina Wood, Wycombe District Council  
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)  
Adam Stronach, Buckinghamshire Business First (Harwood Hutton) (Alternate)

**In attendance:** Nigel Milton, Heathrow Airport (Part meeting)  
Hal Painter, BIS South Central & West  
Richard Ambrose, Buckinghamshire County Council  
Richard Harrington, BTVLEP Chief Executive  
Ian Barham, BTVLEP Partnerships Manager  
Jackie Campbell, BTVLEP Skills Manager  
Heather Dean, Buckinghamshire Business First  
Sarah Fraser

## **SUMMARY MINUTES**

### **1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

### **2 WELCOME FROM GE HEALTHCARE**

- Conor McKechnie welcomed the BTVLEP Board to GE Healthcare and outlined the history/scale of current operations of GE with particular reference to what is happening locally in Bucks.

### **3 HEATHROW AIRPORT**

- Heathrow's plans for expansion were presented and mitigation measures/benefits that will accrue to the area as a result were outlined.
- The main concern for Bucks will likely be the impact on journey times by road and discussions are already underway with Local Authorities about how to address specific issues.
- Airport expansion will deliver a significant number of new jobs and apprenticeships and the airport is developing links with local schools and colleges.
- A final decision on the Airports Commission's report is expected by the end of 2015.
- BTVLEP wish to work very closely with Heathrow to ensure any expansion is balanced with appropriate mitigation for the county.

### **4 APPOINTMENT OF BTVLEP VICE CHAIR**

- Cllr Steve Bowles was appointed unanimously to the role of Vice Chair.

## 5 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING – 17 July 2015

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

### 5.1 Matters arising

- **5G** - The University of Surrey will provide an update on the 5G project at the November Board meeting.
- **England's Economic Heartland Strategic Alliance**
  - A bid has been submitted to Government on behalf of Bucks, Oxon and Northants focussing on a strong united transport offer.
  - It is anticipated synergies in other areas, skills etc, will quickly become apparent.
  - Discussions are underway into the possibility of broadening the geography covered.
  - Feedback received on the submission has been supportive, although BIS has indicated the submission will not work as a devolution deal due to lack of governance reform.
  - Updates on the Strategic Alliance will form a BTVLEP Board standing agenda item.

## 6 COMPREHENSIVE SPENDING REVIEW AND LOCAL GROWTH FUND UPDATE

- The BTVLEP had decided not to submit a response to Government's consultation on the CSR due to the tight deadline imposed not allowing sufficient time for careful consideration of a devolution deal.
- BTVLEP has submitted an expression of interest for an Enterprise Zone initiative (full application due to be submitted on 18<sup>th</sup> September - subject to approval) and proposed Local Growth Fund projects.
- Government's advice to the BTVLEP is to submit a devolution proposal as soon as possible and certainly by the end of the year if the ambition is for this to be included within the budget.
- The risks in delaying submission were outlined as: BTVLEP losing the opportunity to set its own agenda; finite resources in Government to review proposals means those submitted late will be further delayed; the lack of submission raises questions on how the local partnership is working.
- The benefits to agreeing a devolution deal were outlined as being largely around increased flexibilities and certainty of future funding. With the prerequisite that devolution deals are fiscally neutral there may be additional rewards for those areas who are innovative, move quickly and work in strong partnership. There may also be opportunities around business rate retention.
- The Board raised serious concerns re the conflicting messages from Government on devolution, asking for clarity on what this means for localities and the process by which devolution will be progressed.
- The Board acknowledged the need to come to a position of principle on how to move forward with regards to bidding to future Local Growth Fund pots.
- It was agreed:
  - To approach Rt Hon Greg Clark's office with regards to him meeting the BTVLEP Board to provide clarity on Government's aspirations for devolution and the process for achieving this, and on how Local Growth Fund monies will be distributed.
  - Local Authority Board members will discuss reform, establishing a way to work more closely together and with the business community through the LEP to ensure the robust partnership working required by central government.
  - To progress the Enterprise Zone(s) proposal circulated with the Board papers.
  - To support the future LGF propositions outlined, focussed on stimulating higher levels of business productivity in partnership with large corporate businesses.

## 7 SKILLS REPORT

### 7.1 Skills Hub

- Funding has been approved by the Careers and Enterprise Company enabling recruitment of two Enterprise Coordinators responsible for helping foster relationships between employers and educators.
- The skills hub will have a physical presence alongside BBF/BTVLEP at the Clare Charity Centre.
- Employers will be asked to register a profile on the Skills Hub website and post offers of support (offers to speak to students, visits to premises etc) to be matched with educators' needs.

- A hard launch event for the Skills Hub is planned for head teachers in early November.
- Thought is being given to creating an Enterprise league for schools and, individually, students are being encouraged to keep a record of all enterprising activity they undertake.
- The next focus for skills will be on work experience, education leavers and apprenticeships.
- It was suggested linking the skills website with, for example, the Pinewood vacancy website and the Skill Finder site.

## 7.2 Skills & Employability Board

- The draft terms of reference for the Skills & Employability Board were approved.

## 7.3 Area Based Review of Post 16 Education

- The Board requested more information on what is involved with undertaking area based reviews of post 16 education, the suggested parameters of the review, and more information on what is actually needed in the local area.
- Area Based Reviews to be added to the agenda for discussion at the next Board meeting.

## 8 **INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN REPORT**

- Recommendations re the Bucks Infrastructure Plan had been made by the Bucks Advantage Board.
- The BTVLEP supported the process and timings proposed for gaining agreement to the Infrastructure Plan, the aim being to have this completed by Spring 2016. Where there are items that are more difficult to agree these will be flagged as such to gain agreement to an overall strategic plan, on the understanding this will be a living document subject to change.

## 9 **GROWTH HUB REPORT**

- The refresh of the BBF Board has been completed and five new directors appointed. The BBF Board will be discussing refreshed representation on the BTVLEP Board paying careful attention to the need for geographic, sectoral and size representation as well as the need for both continuity and freshness.
- BBF are working with approximately 200 businesses per month, widening and deepening interventions at the level of the firm for example giving more one to one business advice.
- The Growth Hub will be undertaking a business simplification review in the coming months charting all business support offered in the area.
- The main issues being reported by businesses currently are:-
  - Concerns around growth.
  - Lack of knowledge of the business support environment.
  - Availability of grant funding.
  - Availability of start up loans.
  - Lack of an appropriately skilled workforce.
  - Lack of appropriate apprentices to meet apprenticeship availability.
  - The impact of the introduction of the living wage (although not mentioned by businesses the Growth Hub believes this will have an impact on businesses in Bucks).
- BBF are bidding for funding to be able to provide support to businesses to get them investment ready and will work to develop better links with angel investor networks. This supplements opportunities available for European funding and the funding for access to finance provided through the BTVLEP.

## 10 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Friday 20 November 2015, from 9.30am, venue tbc.