
Title: Buckinghamshire Local Industrial Strategy & Oxford Cambridge Arc Productivity Programme

Purpose: To update members on the co-creation and Whitehall engagement process currently underway to finalise the production of the Buckinghamshire Local Industrial Strategy and to share with members the final version of the Economic Vision for the Arc and future work priorities for the Oxford - Cambridge Arc Productivity Group.

Recommendation: That members note the progress towards finalising the Buckinghamshire Local Industrial Strategy and in the development of a co-ordinated programme of LEP led activity within the Arc, underpinned by the shared Economic Vision, to ensure that business productivity is integral to the wider growth plans.

1 Local Industrial Strategy Production Timetable

It is now envisaged that the Buckinghamshire Local Industrial Strategy will be published ahead of the summer recess along with the other 3 local strategies within the Oxford to Cambridge Arc. This timetable is slightly delayed from the original estimates due to the extended engagement and learning process within Whitehall on the final stages of the other trailblazing strategies for the West Midlands and Manchester both of which are expected to be published shortly.

A joint meeting was held on April 16th between LEP representatives from across the Arc together with representatives from the Cities and Local Growth Unit and the Local Industrial Strategy team to consider the revised timetable and to agree a consistent format and look for the family of four strategies within the Arc. The four LIS documents will include common (Arc) front and back sections extrapolated from the LEP jointly commissioned Economic Vision (see section 3). The central sections of each LIS will be distinctive of local area and drawn from the detail of the individual Industrial Strategies.

Dan Turner from the Local Industrial Strategies Team, who together with Richard Turl has been BTVLEP's primary Whitehall contact in the latter stages of this co-production process, has been invited to join us for this board meeting to update on the final steps leading up to the strategy publication.

2 Departmental & Local Engagement Activities

Over the past few weeks there has been an extensive programme of engagement with officials from across government departments to discuss elements of the Local Industrial Strategy to ensure consistency with government policy and to identify opportunities to promote specific initiatives and proposals within departmental structures.

These discussions, which are currently ongoing, are helping to inform the final shape of the individual chapters within the published documents and most notably the Oxford-Cambridge Arc chapters that will be consistent within all four individual strategies.

To provide board members with a flavour of these discussions, the table below provides a high-level summary of the main areas of discussion to date:-

Clean Energy

- Link to South East Energy Hub and establish a bespoke Arc specific sub-set
- Explore Enterprise Energy Zones – linked to existing Enterprise Zone programme
- Support Distribution Network Operator Alignment and Co-ordination

Digital

- Link with DfT to establish series of digital spines and nodes along major transport corridors
- Simplified and ringfenced Arc wide bidding process for national digital resources
- Prioritise Arc wide 5G infrastructure investment

Business Environment

- Build on the current Growth Hub services to develop a comprehensive and co-ordinated Arc wide business leadership programme targeted at potential scale-up and priority sector innovators.
- Arc wide investment fund or (infrastructure for business)– comparable to Midlands Engine Investment Fund.
- Establish a suitably resourced and independent Arc wide International Investment and Export service
- Extend research into cross Arc business cluster and network activity and connectivity

Environment

- Commitment by LEPs to provide link to Local Nature Partnership and Environment 25 year plan policies and Natural Capital Plan within individual LIS'
- Develop the Arc as a testbed /Living Lab for rural innovation
- Develop Arc wide biodiversity offsetting standards in advance of national standard implementation
- Ensure that these issues are consistent with place group objectives and are integral to new settlement discussions.

Skills & Ideas

- Vocational Learning - Arc wide review building on Local Area review process
- Apprenticeship pooling and flexibilities - led by Cambridge & Peterborough MCA
- Support post Careers and Enterprise Hub careers sustainable programme
- Work alongside University Network to establish “Golden Year” employment brokerage with Arc Global business network

3 Oxford Cambridge Arc Productivity Group

As board members are aware, the 3 LEPs in the Arc together with the Mayoral Combined Authority commissioned PWC to produce a joint Economic Vision building upon the 4 individual Local Industrial Strategies and identifying joint themes and opportunities for closer regional collaboration.

Earlier versions of the vision draft have been shared with board members and a copy of the final document is attached as **Appendix 1** to this report. The production of this Vision has been supported by the Arc Productivity Group, one of 3 working groups reporting to the Arc leadership forum.

Now that the Vision has been completed the focus of this group will be extended develop other areas of economic collaboration with businesses, academic institutions and local authorities including:-

- Provide a focal point for gathering information and undertaking analysis of the key assets and opportunities for economic growth across the Arc.
- Develop a work programme in support of proposals to implement the Economic Vision that will enable the economic growth and improvement in productivity set out in the Vision and the LIS documents to be delivered.
- Provide advice, support and assistance to the other work streams, and have regard to their work to ensure integrated planning for jobs, homes, infrastructure and more sustainable and active travel .

LEP Chairs and Executives met on 30th April and agreed an initial collaborative focus on Inward Investment, Investment Fund, Skills and Business support underpinned by two cross cutting themes of Digital coverage and Business infrastructure included connected business park development.

The BTVLEP Chair has been appointed to oversee the Productivity Group workstream and represent at Arc leader level. Each LEP has also nominated a representative for each of the Arc work streams with Oxlep leading on productivity, SEMLEP on connectivity and BTVLEP on place. The MCA is support where necessary. While agreed this format is yet to bed down as all Leps are individually represented on each Arc group in any event.

Members are asked to :- Note the progress towards finalising the Buckinghamshire Local Industrial Strategy and in the development of a co-ordinated programme of LEP led activity across the Arc to ensure that business productivity is integral to the wider growth plans.