
Title:	Chief Executive's Report
Purpose:	To update board members on key operational activity undertaken since our March Board meeting and to seek approval to the BTVLEP Delivery Plan for 2019/20 (item 2) and for the change in repayment dates for the Satellite Application Catapult for the Innovation Centre (item 3).
Recommendation:	That Board Members note the content of this report and comment on any areas of specific interest or concern and; Endorse the BTVLEP Delivery Plan for 2019/20 (item 2) and Approve the proposed changes to the repayment schedule for the Satellite Applications Catapult (item 3).

1 Staffing Update

Following the departure of Jackie Campbell I have asked two members of the Skills Team, Marina Jackson and Paddy Patterson to help support interim cover arrangements for the next few months. Marina will be helping to lead the planning arrangements linked to schools and education programmes and Paddy will extend his current work on apprenticeship programmes to support the development of the Skills Advisory Panel and the Sector Action Groups. Given the importance of the skills agenda I will be looking to recruit a permanent replacement in the autumn, following consideration and agreement to the business plan, that will address all staffing issues.

Another long-standing member of the BTVLEP team has secured an exciting new opportunity, Rupert Waters our Head of Research and Insight has secured the role as Head of Economic Development at Heathrow Airport. Not only does this provide a great opportunity for Rupert but it also provides Buckinghamshire with an important and informed connection with this key strategic partner. I have asked Rupert to attend the July Board meeting, before departure on the 22 July, to benchmark our work on evidence base and labour market intelligence and to consider our future data capture and utilisation capability.

Both the skills and research functions are vital to the continued strength of the LEP and we will ensure that these roles are appropriately resourced within the new Team Bucks structure as highlighted earlier within this board pack.

2 BTVLEP Delivery Plan 2019/20

As part of the process of aligning the work of all LEPs, the LEP Network have provided a standard format for new annual delivery plans. The plans are intended to provide a high-level summary of annual objectives and opportunities for each LEP and need to be submitted to the Cities and Local Growth Unit by the end of May. A draft copy of the BTVLEP submission is attached as **Appendix 1** to this report.

3 Enterprise Zone Update

In January BTVLEP Board approved an amendment to the Satellite Applications Catapult / BTVLEP Funding Agreement to provide for an additional £1.2m Aylesbury Vale Enterprise Zone funding to expand and enhance the project.

Full details of the amendments required to the Funding Agreement have now been established and will be incorporated into Deeds of Amendment to each part (Grant Agreement, Loan Agreement, and Legal Charge). Most of the amendments are minor in nature. However, there is one material change that requires Board agreement as outlined below.

The SAC are requesting changes to the 2 repayment dates for the 50% 'loan' element of the funding. This is principally due to the delays to the original delivery dates meaning that the first repayment date (December 2020) is not practical, and to provide some 'breathing space' for the SAC to fully establish and grow the enlarged Innovation Centre alongside the Space Cluster at Westcott before the second repayment date.

The proposed changes are as outlined below:-

Payment No	Original Repayment Provisions	Proposed Repayment Revisions
1.	First repayment of £560,000 (35% of loan) to be paid <u>3 years after the date of the Original Agreement (5th Dec 2017)</u> - i.e First repayment due on 5th Dec 2020.	First Repayment to be paid <u>3 years after Practical Completion</u> - so estimated c. January 2023 (PC currently forecast in Jan 2020)
2.	Second repayment of £1,040,000 (65% of loan) plus all accrued interest to be made <u>5 years after the date of the Agreement for Lease between SAC & Rockspring</u> - estimated to be mid 2024 (assuming AFL completed mid 2019).	Second repayment to be made <u>6 years after Practical Completion</u> - currently estimated to be January 2026 (assuming PC in Jan 2020)

The Westcott Innovation Centre is an important asset for growing the Buckinghamshire economy as envisaged in the LIS. Accordingly I recommend agreement to the proposed revised repayment provisions for the following principal reasons:-

- a) the first repayment date is now unrealistic given slippage to the delivery programme due mainly to delays outside SAC's control in securing planning consent for the A41 / Westcott access improvements, and caused by the approvals process to secure the additional AVEZ funding to support increased project scale and scope;
- b) Delaying the second repayment date by approximately 2 years from the original estimated date provides a reasonable period for the expanded Innovation Centre to be successfully established at Westcott.

4 LEP Network Update

The LEP Network last met on the 29th April where there was a reflection on the recent Prime Ministerial meeting and agreement that a stronger and more co-ordinated approach is needed in future with the appointment of sub groups and specialists from within the Network leading on prioritised areas. The director membership of the LEP Network company is also due a refresh and more female Chairs and board members are requested to represent at this level to ensure that the gender balance matches that sort of LEPs in the LEP Review. The feedback from government officials anticipates a busy June/July period post European election with a focus on spending review preparation. During this period government expects to publish the four Arc Local Industrial Strategies.

To support greater consistency across the LEP Network an operational benchmarking exercise is underway to help provide an anonymised assessment of a number of operational areas including staff and board member job descriptions, training programmes, financial partner contributions and salary commitments. This exercise is timely as it will provide a useful reference point for our business planning.

A number of board members have been invited to a LEP Network sponsored workshop and dinner at the Mansion House in London on May 16th this event is supporting the development of the Local Industrial Strategies and to highlight the strength of regional innovation and the potential for transformative regional growth.

There will shortly be a major change at the head of the LEP Network with Warren Ralls, formerly of BTVLEP, set to take up a new role with the British Business Bank. Warren will have responsibilities across the South East of England and has confirmed that he is keen to engage with the four Arc LEPs to discuss the concept of a British Business Bank supported investment fund across the Arc.

5 Growth Hub Update

2018/19 has been a year of intense delivery and consolidation for the Growth Hub and the team has delivered significant impacts.

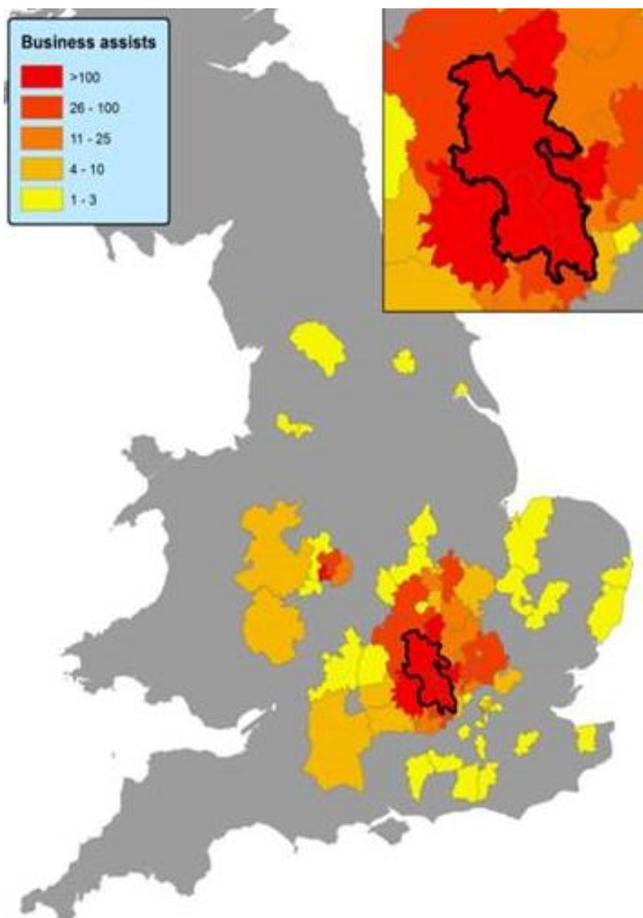
Over the last 12 months Buckinghamshire Business First has:

- provided information and assistance on a total of 35,131 occasions (average – 18 times per day) and has worked with 1,811 individual companies with a value to the local economy of over £4,000,000
- given out £2,806,610 in grants directly to 365 businesses.
- helped the businesses we worked with to create 580 jobs as a result that help with a value to the local economy in excess of £10,000,000
- helped 114 businesses to introduce new products or services to the market
- held the Brexit Summit to update businesses with the latest information and to ensure government agencies could hear the business viewpoint from the coalface.
- held the Business Festival Fortnight with fringe events in March with over 500 visitors to 27 events at 18 venues.
- now got business hubs available with co working spaces and meeting rooms for members use in High Wycombe (Bucks New University), Chesham (Library) and Buckingham (Vinson Building

at University of Buckingham). Currently we have about 100 businesses using these facilities on a regular basis.

- had 146 Entries for the Buckinghamshire Business Awards which was a great opportunity to showcase all our great businesses to both Government and our Buckinghamshire business community .

BTVLEP is one of the few LEPS in the country who have a collaborative Growth Hub which works pan LEP areas in partnership with others and current activity extends across the Oxford to Cambridge ARC geography as follows:



Date for the diaries: Business Leaders Dinner 4th July, Crowne Plaza, Gerrards Cross.

Visit Buckinghamshire update

One of the key roles for Visit Buckinghamshire is to articulate the market that is available and ensure it is exploited to best advantage, recognising that the Visitor Economy is currently under exploited in the county. To date activities have included:

Stakeholder engagement

Over the past year there has been engagement with 100's of tourism businesses via face to face appointments, telesales calls, attendance at networking events and workshops, exhibitions, and sitting

on the board of local and national steering groups. There has also been close liaison with County and District Councils in addition to other stakeholders

County/District Councils

All the Local Authorities now contribute to Visit Buckinghamshire and the website, in addition to making a contribution to the two group exhibitions that have been attended.

Wycombe District Council have funded the Marlow Midsomer Trail which included the research, and content for the leaflet, a print run of 10,000, and a launch event. They also put on a workshop which was open to all businesses in the area, on how their business can benefit from Midsomer.

There has also been collaboration on how the tourism offering for Princes Risborough can be developed.

Visit Bucks have a regular feature in the quarterly Wycombe District Times magazine.

Marlow has also been signed up to the Great West Way, a Discover England fund as follows:

<https://www.greatwestway.co.uk/>

Visit Bucks continues to promote the extensive events programme Aylesbury Vale District Council and the Aylesbury Town Centre partnership organise. This included the first Waterside Festival in the Aylesbury Canal basin in September 2018. Such was the success of the event it will now become an annual event. We also support the WhizzFizz Festival too and create stand-alone pages on the VB website as follows:

<https://www.visitbuckinghamshire.org/whizzfizzfest>

<https://www.visitbuckinghamshire.org/waterside-festival>

Buckingham Town Council is keen to develop their visitor offer and a networking event was recently held with over 30 local Buckingham businesses in attendance. This will hopefully be the first of quarterly meetings which will hopefully kick-start collaborative working.

Other Stakeholder Engagement

Bucks New University. Launched our three projects in Food & Drink, Accessible Tourism and TV & Film Tourism with the Travel & Tourism Students in March. These students, as part of their degree course will be mapping out what we have and creating a 2/3 day itinerary around the three subjects. The results will be presented at the beginning of June.

The Film and Creative media students will then hopefully as part of their degree course film these itineraries in the early Autumn.

UK Inbound – Visit Bucks have become members of UK Inbound, the only membership organisation which represents the UK inbound tourism market and tour operators. To date we have attended their annual convention in Glasgow, are working on a familiarisation trip to Bucks in July, and we have a page of editorial content on things to do in Bucks in one of the key UK Group travel publications.

Visit Britain/Visit England – Finally making some headway here. We have the agreement from VB to upload a Food & Drink itinerary to their website which is a start. We have also made good contacts with their country managers, and ensured they are kept up to date with all the goings on in the county. We have planted the seed of Accessible Tourism and how we are best placed to take the lead on this should another round of Discover England funding become available.

Buckinghamshire Strategic Tourism Group

The Visit Bucks programme is overseen by the Buckinghamshire Strategic Tourism Group whose members include:-

- Steve Gardem – Director Roald Dahl Museum
- Kim Hallet – Director of Business Development, Waddesdon Manor (Chair of the group)
- Ruth Page – Culture and Learning Services Manager, Bucks CC
- Becky Salisbury – Owner, Salisbury Pubs
- Nick Downie – PR Manager, Stoke Park
- Arthur Le Cour –Owner, Hand Held Tours
- Laura Cotton - Centre for Bucks Studies, Bucks CC
- Philippa Batting – MD, BBF
- Lucy Dowson – Tourism Development Manager, VB
- Annette Venters – Chilterns Conservations Society
- Mary Tebje – Director, Visit Chilterns
- Val Mott – Director, Motts Travel
- Adrian Champney - Head of Funding, BBF

The Visit Bucks project team attend a range of other Steering Groups on a regular basis to ensure co-ordination of activity, these groups include:-

- Bucks & The Chilterns Regional Tourism Strategic group
- Visit England's Rural and Coastal DMO Steering group
- Visit Chilterns Networking Group
- Aylesbury Marketing Group
- Clay Vale LAG
- Aylesbury Garden Town Stakeholder Group
- Bucks CC Cultural Strategy steering group

Members Engagement

The Visit Bucks Advisory Service programme supported by HS2 has enabled us to offer generic business advice to tourism businesses which has included Orchard View Farm and Bucks Railway

centre. A number of Visit Bucks members have been supported in collaboration to deliver new joint programmes, events and visitor experiences.

Website

The Visit Buckinghamshire website is consistently growing with member sign ups which in turn adds content to the website, events, profiles and offers, as well as content that the Visit Bucks team create which includes new pages, areas and articles.

This year we have added a variety of pages including ones that were seasonal for example, Valentine's Day and Easter. We also created themed and event pages to promote the David Bowie statue reveal, The Royal Wedding and the first Waterside Festival.

A new Members Toolkit area has also been created which members can access, which gives them information regarding tourism updates, marketing materials, logos and imagery.

<https://www.visitbuckinghamshire.org/member-toolkit>

Since March 2018, over 130 articles have been written covering topics such as the best firework displays, the best museums in Bucks, perfect picnic spots, 100-year celebrations of WW1 and Christmas! Look at a few below:

<https://www.visitbuckinghamshire.org/article/10-christmassy-things-to-do-in-buckinghamshire>

<https://www.visitbuckinghamshire.org/article/the-best-museums-in-buckinghamshire>

<https://www.visitbuckinghamshire.org/article/perfect-picnic-spots-in-buckinghamshire>

<https://www.visitbuckinghamshire.org/article/womens-suffrage-events-in-buckinghamshire>

6 Skills Update

The first meeting of the Bucks Skills Advisory Panel (SAP) took place at Westcott on May 1st. The panel now includes direct representation from the Department of Education who congratulated Buckinghamshire on providing the single most comprehensive response to the call for business engagement in supporting the national roll out of the T level programme.

The meeting also considered how the £75,000 development funding secured to support greater insight into business skills and labour market needs should be utilised including the recruitment of a research assistant, the purchase of detailed data sets and the development of the BBF virtual advisor assessment to capture more specific skills insight.

The meeting also learned that advance bookings for the Bucks Skills Show on October 18th and 19th were significantly ahead of previous years, with over 2,500 young people already booked onto the event. A remarkable success story. Options are now being considered to see how the capacity can be extended at the current event location.

7 Broadband Update

The current round of broadband and digital infrastructure contracts is assured and overseen by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, through the Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) team. This team has officially been funded until April 2020, with a significant expectation that the team will continue to exist beyond this point, but clarification being sought on where the funding will come from to support this function. As such, BDUK have currently stated that they will no longer be accepting new contracts to

extend broadband and digital infrastructure until the team's funding arrangements are finalised. In this time, BDUK are also working to update the State Aid OJEU frameworks which the contracts are based on, so that new contracts can be based on a framework which has been updated to reflect new national legislation, such as GDPR.

Due to this, the Broadband Programme Team are continuing to finalise the Phase 3 Broadband Rollout to rural businesses who are currently without superfast connections, whilst maintaining the Connected Counties contract. It is the aim of the team to continue working on these issues, whilst preparing for a fourth contract, based on the guidance of the Board to utilise gainshare to improve businesses' connectivity. The Broadband Programme Manager will also work with the County and District Councils regarding the estimations of upcoming gainshare, in order to assess whether it may be possible to create a series of concurrent broadband infrastructure contracts each aiming at specifically improving either business or residential connectivity.

8 England's Economic Heartland

At the recent leaders meeting of the England's Economic Heartland it was agreed to extend the membership to include representation from Hertfordshire and Swindon helping extend the reach of the sub-regional transport body, but that the primary focus would remain in the Oxford to Cambridge Arc. The Department of Transport representatives present welcomed the maturity of the business plan and work programme but said that matched funding for the year ahead would be considered on a project by project basis.

It was also reported that the EEH Annual Conference for 2019 would be hosted at the University of Hertfordshire on July 19th and would include sessions looking at the infrastructure investment priorities being presented for the Comprehensive Spending Review and the Heartland's priorities for the Major Road Network.

9 Communications Update

BTVLEP are amongst the supporters for this year's Silverstone Technology Cluster Conference taking place on May 21st. The continued development of the cluster and its ability to influence other business networks from across the Arc is a major theme in both the Local Industrial Strategy and the Arc Economic Vision and has driven the desire to support this event and to also strengthen relationships with the Cluster Network.

Work is currently underway on the BTVLEP Annual Report for this year, advance copies will be shared with Board Members ahead of the next board meeting.

Members are asked to :- note the content of this report and comment on any areas of specific interest or concern and;

Endorse the BTVLEP Delivery Plan for 2019/20 (item 2) and

Approve the proposed changes to the repayment schedule for the Satellite Applications Catapult (item 3).