

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

Held Friday 16 September 2016 from 9.30am at Silverstone Park Innovation Centre, Towcester NN12 8GX

**Present:** Cllr Ralph Bagge, South Bucks District Council  
Cllr Neil Blake, Aylesbury Vale District Council (Alternate)  
Cllr Martin Tett, Buckinghamshire County Council  
Cllr Fred Wilson, Chiltern District Council (Alternate)  
Cllr Katrina Wood, Wycombe District Council  
Rebecca Bunting, Buckinghamshire Business First (Buckinghamshire New University)  
Michael Garvey, Buckinghamshire Business First (Chandler Garvey)  
Guy Lachlan, Buckinghamshire Business First (Jones & Cocks Ltd)  
Andrew Smith, Buckinghamshire Business First (Pinewood) (Part meeting)  
Adam Stronach, Buckinghamshire Business First (Harwood Hutton) (Alternate)

**Apologies:** Cllr Steve Bowles, Aylesbury Vale District Council  
Cllr Isobel Darby, Chiltern District Council  
Eman Martin-Vignerte, Buckinghamshire Business First (Bosch)

**In attendance:** Thomas Graham, Careers & Enterprise Company (Part meeting)  
Kerry Senatore, Careers & Enterprise Company (Part meeting)  
Sally Reynolds, Silverstone Circuits Ltd (Part meeting)  
Richard Turl, BIS South Central & West (Part meeting)  
Fiorella Mugari, Bucks County Council  
Richard Harrington, BTVLEP Chief Executive  
Ian Barham, BTVLEP Partnerships Manager  
Ruth Farwell, BTVLEP Skills Strategy Manager  
Jim Sims, BTVLEP Development Manager  
Philippa Batting, BBF Managing Director  
Sarah Fraser

## SUMMARY MINUTES

### 1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- Michael Garvey re-declared an interest in respect of investment at Westcott.
- Andrew Smith declared an interest in relation to LGF3 discussions with Pinewood about providing a Games Centre.
- Martin Tett declared an interest in discussions on the response to the National Industrial Strategy consultation in relation to his position as Chair of England's Economic Heartland Strategic Alliance Leaders' Board.

### 2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING – 22 July 2016

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

### 3 THE CAREERS AND ENTERPRISE COMPANY

- The Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC) have provided funding to help establish a network of Enterprise Advisers across the country, which supports the BTVLEP's ambition to improve engagement between schools and employers.

- The Enterprise Adviser programme is well embedded in Bucks and BTVLEP's Skills Strategy, the county already achieving over 90% of its schools engagement target.
- The next steps are around maintaining momentum, finding ways to assist the network of Enterprise Advisers providing appropriate training, and supporting the Enterprise Co-ordinators in their work.
- Nationally, there will be increased focus and funding directed at those areas where people are disengaged. Engagement levels are high in Bucks and, as a result, less funding will be focussed on the county than other areas. One example of where investment will be made is in assisting schools to access the World Skills Competitions, supporting STEM activities.
- The Careers and Enterprise Company aims to provide clear, consistent information for young people making decisions about their future and relating this to labour market needs.
- It was suggested CEC consider running a trial/pilot in Bucks providing psychometric testing for students helping them understand their own drivers and the attributes they may be able to bring to an employer; this is less about tangible exam results and more about attitude and character.
- CEC agreed to try and assist Bucks with take up of apprenticeships in specific sectors where the response has been low.
- The Board questioned how the impact of the work being carried out by CEC and the Enterprise Adviser network is being measured, suggesting that this should include something around attitudinal change rather than just measuring activity.

(Thomas Graham and Kerry Senatore left the meeting)

#### **4 BUCKS' RESPONSE TO THE NATIONAL INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY**

- The current consultation has been issued by a BIS Select Committee and another, formal consultation on the National Industrial Strategy is likely later in the year.
- The Prime Minister has been clear on her interest in wider, sub-national collaborations and, reflecting discussions with the National Infrastructure Commission, it was suggested it may be advantageous to submit a response based on a wider EEH geography in addition to that of BTVLEP.
- Further to papers/presentation provided, the Board agreed:
  - To respond to the consultation from a Buckinghamshire perspective ensuring the county's local priorities and world class assets/clusters are highlighted and outlining the impact of these not only on the county but across the wider South East.
  - To contribute to and co-ordinate a response from the England Economic Heartland Strategic Alliance.
  - To highlight that productivity growth will only come through innovation and, as this is not predictable, space must be allowed for both failure and success.
  - Government needs to create an environment (both physical and non-physical in terms of skills etc) in which businesses can be innovative.
  - Government needs to invest in success if an industrial strategy is to work.

#### **5 GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK AND BTVLEP AWAYDAY**

- In light of central government's desire for LEPs to be taking on more responsibilities the Board agreed to arrange a facilitated awayday to review governance, consider how to make best use of supporting organisations in, to discuss how to improve board operation and to include meeting with the new central government BTVLEP Sponsor.

#### **6 LOCAL AUTHORITY UNITARY AND COMBINED AUTHORITY DISCUSSIONS UPDATE**

- Central Government continues to display a strong appetite for decentralisation.

- The demands for increased housing stock, the growth in the population overall (but with a shrinking working age population), the increasing diversity in population and income, and the challenges to the public sector to continue to deliver services in a far more integrated way than has been the case to date, within the context of diminishing budgets, in Buckinghamshire had all been well documented.
- The BCC research results support the findings of the independently crowd funded research carried out by Buckinghamshire Business First (BBF) in 2013.
- The business community has a strong desire to be engaged in the consultation process around restructure (as evidenced in the recent business survey carried out by BBF, the full results of which would be publicly available by 23 September) and Local Authority Members were encouraged to ensure engagement through BBF.
- As a LEP, it was agreed the Board will need to come to a view on future local government structures as this will be required by central government in consultation.
- The Board requested sight of briefing information given to those conducting the two discrete Local Authority pieces of research being undertaken in Bucks and that the outcome of the results commissioned by the District Councils be shared as soon as possible (BCC's research already having been reported).
- In the absence of the District Councils' report, a decision will need to be taken as to how to respond to any consultation request received.

## 7 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Further to the report previously circulated:

### 7.1 LGF1/2 and Growing Places Fund update

- The Board endorsed the business case for investment in the Westcott Business Incubation facility (£1m loan and £1m grant) and delegated authority to the BTVLEP Chief Executive to progress to formal offer.
- The Board also agreed the cost model envelope for the Taplow Sustainable Travel scheme and again delegated authority to the BTVLEP Chief Executive to progress to formal offer. RH was asked to approach Thames Valley Berkshire LEP re Maidenhead's decision not to participate in this scheme.
- The Board discussed utilisation of Growing Places Funds and considered the security offered in lending to high risk companies (recognising earlier discussions about the need to encourage innovation and provide the space for companies to fail as well as succeed), and the costs involved in employing a professional fund manager, unless one could be found to carry out this work pro bono.
- Consideration is to be given to maintaining the revolving nature of GPF funds by, for instance, taking a share of the ownership of companies that are being created/supported.
- The principle of utilising recycled GPF funds to form a pot from which to make further loans to be recycled was agreed.

### 7.2 LGF3 Initial Feedback and Engagement Programme

- BTVLEP's LGF3 submission has been received by central government, the LGF3 'funding pot' being 3x oversubscribed. Information will be going to Ministers w/c 19 September.
- Local areas will need to decide project prioritisation in utilising devolved funding.
- The Board agreed in principle to a loan of £1m to Silverstone Heritage Centre as part of the £8m funding contribution being sought towards the cost of the centre pending a firm proposal from the BTVLEP Executive team. This was seen as a very low risk loan, which supported a number of the BTVLEP's aims/ agreed growth sectors.

### 7.3 Greater Aylesbury Garden Town Submission

- Following in principle support being given at the last meeting, and with the detail of the final bid not available as yet, the Board delegated authority to the BTVLEP Chief Executive to review the final Garden Town proposal and endorse if appropriate.

#### **7.4 Growth Hub Update**

- Results arising from questions on Broadband coverage in the recent BBF survey were shared. AVDC's Broadband work is progressing well and it was hoped to have connected 10 of the harder to reach villages by the end of the year, with take up rates to date being good. The intention is to have a ring of fibre around Aylesbury for connections to feed off.
- In terms of activity, BBF continues to provide support to businesses across the county, the hub at Saunderton is in constant use and membership of BBF is approaching 9,000 businesses; the reach of the Growth Hub is significant and provides an excellent conduit to the business community.

#### **7.5 Skills Update**

- The Skills Board has agreed targets for the coming year, including targets around schools and employer engagement. An alliance has also been agreed with the Growth Hub around skills work to ensure activity is better aligned.

(Andrew Smith left the meeting, Richard Harrington took over as Chair)

#### **7.6 Enterprise Zone**

- Work is progressing well at the various sites and it is anticipated approximately 250k sq ft of new floor space will be coming out of the ground early in the new year.
- An Enterprise Zone Manager has been appointed to assist with the appraisal and business case process.

#### **7.7 Annual Report**

- Final reports are expected by the end of October.

### **8 SILVERSTONE HERITAGE CENTRE**

- The Board received a presentation from Sally Reynolds on the plans for Silverstone and particularly for the Heritage Centre, the visitor numbers to which it was anticipated would assist in rejuvenating the entire site, increasing the success of other projects being undertaken at Silverstone and acting as a catalyst for future activity.
- The centre will promote engineering as a career choice and will also assist in providing funding for training teachers how to encourage students with an aptitude for engineering.
- The bid will be considered by the national board on 14 November and, if successful, it was hoped to begin development in the early part of 2017.

### **9 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Friday 18 November 2016, from 9.30am, at Ercol Furniture Ltd, Summerleys Rd, Princes Risborough HP27 9PX