

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

Held Friday 18 March 2016 from 9.30am at AVDC Offices, The Gateway, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury, Bucks HP19 8FF

**Present:** Cllr Ralph Bagge, South Bucks District Council  
Cllr Neil Blake, 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 (Chandler Garvey)  
Guy Lachlan, Buckinghamshire Business First (Jones & Cocks Ltd)  
Eman Martin-Vignerte, Buckinghamshire Business First (Bosch) (Part meeting)  
Conor McKechnie, Buckinghamshire Business First (G E Healthcare)  
Andrew Smith, Buckinghamshire Business First (Pinewood)

**Apologies:** Cllr Steve Bowles, Aylesbury Vale District Council  
Rebecca Bunting, Buckinghamshire Business First (Buckinghamshire New University)

**In attendance:** Anna Holbrook, Network Rail (Part meeting)  
Julia Gregory, Buckinghamshire County Council (Part meeting)  
Hal Painter, BIS South Central & West  
Richard Ambrose, Bucks County Council  
Richard Harrington, BTVLEP Chief Executive  
Jim Sims, BTVLEP Development Manager  
Ian Barham, BTVLEP Partnerships Manager  
Ruth Farwell, BTVLEP Skills Strategy Manager  
Philippa Batting, Buckinghamshire Business First  
Sarah Fraser

## **SUMMARY MINUTES**

### **1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

- Andrew Smith declared an interest in discussions around iver infrastructure opportunities.
- Michael Garvey re-declared an interest in discussions re UK Space Agency investment at Westcott, in that Chandler Garvey has recently been appointed by the owner, Rockspring, as letting agent on vacant buildings at the Westcott site.

### **2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING – 29 January 2016**

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

#### **2.1 Matters arising**

- **Planning champion** - Michael Garvey was confirmed as being the BTVLEP's Planning Champion and would be meeting with the Bucks Planning Officers' Group.

### **3 STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE IVER AREA**

#### **3.1 Western Rail Access to Heathrow**

- The opportunities/progress made to date with Western Rail access to Heathrow were discussed and Board members encouraged to contribution to the consultation taking place.

- The Board raised questions regarding:
  - Plans for managing increased traffic during the construction phase.
  - Plans for disposing of the significant amount of spoil generated during construction.
  - Whether DfT are considering the overall impact of developments in the south of the county.
  - How many long term jobs will be generated by the Western Rail development.

### 3.2 Heathrow Planning Group

- The Heathrow Planning Group offers a forum to consider what Buckinghamshire's mitigation in respect of expansion at Heathrow airport might include. Bucks County Council and South Bucks District Council are jointly engaging with Heathrow on this subject.
- Other road/rail scheme promoters to be invited to present their development plans at future BTVLEP Board meetings.
- The BTVLEP Board will be focussing on the wider economic impacts and opportunities associated with development. It is important that Bucks firms are linked in to development on the supply side and that young people are being taught the skills they need in order to take full advantage of job opportunities presenting themselves.
- There is a pressing need to work towards unlocking road infrastructure and to monitor high GVA land availability ensuring the right road infrastructure is in place to get a full return.
- The next round of Local Growth Funding may offer opportunities for looking at major cross-boundary infrastructure initiatives.
- The Board recognised the clear economic benefits to be derived from better road/rail links etc. Consideration also needs to be given to the digital economy and how this may link with the developments taking place.
- The issuing of the national infrastructure statement will offer a real opportunity to lock the small business economy to Heathrow.

## 4 **STRATEGIC ALLIANCE/STRATEGIC TRANSPORT FORUM**

- BTVLEP is represented on the Strategic Transport Forum by Cllr Steve Bowles.
- BTVLEP's strategic infrastructure investment opportunities have been outlined for the Forum and an indication given of the items to be included in the Forum's strategic work programme for the year ahead, as agreed by the Board.
- The National Infrastructure Commission will be looking at future projects including unlocking growth, housing and jobs in the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford corridor.
- The Strategic Alliance/Strategic Transport Forum are gaining significant traction as an emerging sub national transport body. Lord Adonis, Chairman of the National Infrastructure Commission, will be attending the next Strategic Alliance Board meeting.
- It was agreed the Strategic Alliance would be a useful forum for considering the impacts and opportunities presented by, for example, the infrastructure schemes in development around Iver, in turn presenting this work to DfT for consideration of the overall impact of infrastructure development/investment.

## 5 **SEP REFRESH**

- In the absence of revenue funding, the BTVLEP needs to make its capital funding allocation work better.
- A key element of this will be in ensuring a skilled and work-ready workforce. The Skills Board will be focussing on a number of areas including: the creation of a pipeline of students with an interest in technical/STEM skills from primary education upwards; retention of school leavers and the development of alternatives to traditional higher level education; retention of graduates within the county; and how to attract talent currently outside the county.
- The process for bidding to the next round of the Local Growth Fund (LGF3) will be confirmed in the next few weeks; BTVLEP executive are to revise draft timings in the SEP refresh process outlined to ensure these meet with Government's requirements.

- The SEP Refresh Sub Committee established following the last Board meeting (Cllr Ralph Bagge, Cllr Steve Bowles, Klaus Allion, Richard Harrington, Jim Sims, Philippa Batting) will update the SEP considering Board members' comments prior to the document being brought back to the full Board for approval.

## 6 ENTERPRISE ZONE GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

- The Board agreed the establishment of an Aylesbury Vale Enterprise Zone Strategic Board to manage/oversee the needs of the Enterprise Zone utilising the existing Aylesbury Vale Advantage Legacy Board structure.
- Whilst transacting AVEZ business this Board will be chaired by Guy Lachlan and will include Richard Harrington as a member.
- The Strategic Board will consider all the benefits associated with Enterprise Zone status.

## 7 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

### 7.1 UK Space Agency/Westcott

- Work on the business case for a National Space Propulsion Test Facility at Westcott is believed to be progressing well although the business case is yet to be seen. The Board will be updated as information becomes available.

### 7.2 5G Application Assessment

- The Board supported the independent's assessors recommendation that the 5G Step Out Facility be focussed at Westcott Venture Park (Michael Garvey abstained from voting).

### 7.3 Broadband

- Phase 1 of the BDUK Broadband programme has been extremely successful with take up in Buckinghamshire being amongst the highest in the country. The Board offered its thanks to the project team for an excellent performance; the Bucks project being regarded as an exemplar nationally.
- As a result of the high take up and other savings BTVLEP and Buckinghamshire County Council will be able to benefit from a gain share offer from BT in the sum of £1.1m (split £0.5m and £0.6m respectively, proportionate to the initial investment made). The Board will fully deliberate where reinvestment of this funding will be best channelled.
- Part of Bucks' mitigation agreement in respect of HS2 will see fibre being installed along the HS2 track being constructed.

### 7.4 Local Growth Fund 1/2

- **Iver Sustainable Transport Scheme** - The Board approved the deferral of the Iver Sustainable Transport scheme and to vire this funding, on the understanding that sustainable transport links and investment are a feature of any future infrastructure bidding for the Iver area.
- **Amersham & Wycombe College** - The Board agreed an increased allocation for Amersham & Wycombe College (from £2.3m to £2.69m) to take account of an increase in match funding available to the college due to securing planning permission for their hockey pitch. In approving the increased allocation the Board asked that a legally binding condition be tied to this funding that, in the event the area based review adversely affects the college's future, LEP funding will be returned prior to any closure.
- **High Wycombe Town Centre Major Projects** - Information on the business case to be forwarded prior to May to take to Wycombe District Council members.
- Government has been kept apprised of the reasons for delays in progressing specific projects. However, proof of the ability to deliver may be one basis upon which future funding allocations will be made.
- Board members were urged to press project sponsors for progress in anticipation of presenting a full suite of signed business cases at the next Board meeting.
- The ability to move quickly to signed business case may be one criteria in the assessment of suitability for funding of future projects.

## 7.5 PWLB

- The Board agreed to accept Treasury's offer to extend the £36m of Public Works Loan Board funding facility to the end of 2016/17.

## 7.6 BTVLEP Budget

- AS reported he would be meeting with the Chairmen of Buckinghamshire Business First, Bucks Advantage, the Skills Board, and the ESIF committee to ensure there are no areas of duplication across the 5 organisations and that operations are as streamlined as possible.
- The Board approved the overall apportionment of costs provided.

## 7.7 Growth Hub

- The Board considered the issues being experienced in delivering business support services in Aylesbury Vale with the decision by SEMLEP to deliver this service via their own employed staff rather than in partnership through the BBF Growth Hub.
- The Board affirmed its desire to see funding destined for Aylesbury Vale spent within the district and offered support to Buckinghamshire Business First in discussions to try and find an appropriate way forward to the benefit of Bucks businesses.

## 7.8 Skills Board

- The next Area Based Review meeting will consider seven major proposals, two of which relate to Bucks:
  - 1 The opportunity for Amersham & Wycombe, and Aylesbury Colleges to come together as a single college for Bucks under the same governance arrangement but retaining coverage of the three locations in Bucks.
  - 2 East Berkshire is proposing the Amersham College site comes under the control of West Hertfordshire and the Flackwell site comes under East Berkshire's management. The colleges will then be divested of several aspects of the curriculum. This will leave Aylesbury College standing alone with the two FE sites in the south of the county under the control of two other colleges.
- It was suggested the latter programme would not be to Bucks' benefit. The final decision on these proposals will be made by the individual college's governing body.
- The Board expressed deep concern at the possibility that anything other than a Bucks based proposal was accepted on the basis that skills needs must be matched to the needs of local Bucks based businesses. Thames Valley Berkshire LEP has indicated that, like Bucks, it believes education should follow natural county boundaries and they will not be supporting East Berkshire's proposal.
- It was agreed to arrange letters of support from BTVLEP and BBF for a Bucks based solution.

## 7.9 Infrastructure Planning

- Board members were asked to encourage colleagues to progress projects to business case approval as quickly as possible.

## 7.10 Third Sector

- The Natural Environment Partnership may be invited to the next BTVLEP Board meeting to provide an overview on their prioritised activities.

## 8 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Friday 20 May 2016, from 9.30am, venue tbc.