

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

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

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
Philippa Batting, BBF Managing Director (Alternate)
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)

Apologies: Eman Martin-Vignerte, Buckinghamshire Business First (Bosch)

In attendance: Ian Harper, University College Aylesbury Vale (UCAV) (Part meeting)
Sean Mackney, University College Aylesbury Vale (UCAV) (Part meeting)
David Williams, Bucks Healthcare NHS Trust (BHT) (Part meeting)
Tim Middleton, Buckinghamshire New University (Part meeting)
Rachael Shimmin, Chief Executive, Buckinghamshire County Council (Part meeting)
Sarah Ashmead, Director Strategy and Policy, Bucks County Council (Part meeting)
Tony Reeves, Deloitte (Part meeting)
Karen Satterford, Chief Executive, Wycombe District Council (Part meeting)
Martin Tugwell, England's Economic Heartland (Part meeting)
Richard Turl, BIS South Central & West
Richard Ambrose, Director of Finance, Buckinghamshire County Council
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
Sarah Fraser

SUMMARY MINUTES

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- Rebecca Bunting declared an interest in discussions on LGF skills capital projects.
- Cllr Steve Bowles declared an interest in discussions on LGF skills capital projects, Aylesbury Vale District Council owning the UCAV building.
- Michael Garvey re-declared an interest in respect of investment at Westcott, Chandler Garvey acting as letting agent on vacant buildings at the Westcott site.
- Andrew Smith declared an interest in relation to Pinewood's involvement with the LGF3 discussions on an E-games centre.
- All Local Authority Board members declared an interest in the agenda item on modernising local government. Private sector Board members also declared an interest as BBF directors in this regard (BBF receiving some funding from Bucks County Council) and Andrew Smith additionally declared that Deloitte are auditors for Pinewood.

2 LGF SKILLS CAPITAL PROJECTS

- Presentations were given by University College Aylesbury Vale (on behalf of BEST) and NHS/BNU for the Buckinghamshire Lifesciences Partnership, on two projects seeking LGF skills capital funding.
- Both the digital and life sciences sectors were described as multi-billion pound economies which continue to grow and present real opportunities for Buckinghamshire.
- The Board requested more information on the financial modelling (and the robustness of this), and the risks inherent with each project. Additionally, the Board sought reassurance that UCAV is able to offer the infrastructure needed in terms of mobile signal and wifi prior to the Digital Innovation Hub set up.
- With regards to the Buckinghamshire Lifesciences Partnership proposal, the Board suggested the proposal would benefit from being more focussed on the financial benefits associated with helping people to live better quality lives. Stronger emphasis should be made of the aim of retaining businesses and expertise in Buckinghamshire and nurturing the Lifesciences pipeline.
- It was agreed to appoint an independent appraiser to undertake further due diligence on both projects. Applicants were encouraged to undertake market research, bringing back fully costed business cases to the January 2017 Board meeting for further consideration.

3 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING –16 September 2016

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

4 LGF3 UPDATE/AUTUMN STATEMENT

- The final LGF3 allocation is still awaited.
- Lobbying has been undertaken to maintain the level of the indicative allocation.
- Bucks will not have scored well on local governance although the county's case will have been helped by progress being made towards restructuring local government. Bucks has done very well in the assessment of sign off and assurance processes.
- BTVLEP has focussed on three projects for delivering with LGF3 revolving funding (South East Link Road; Silverstone Innovation Centre; expansion at the University of Buckingham). Being able to support these three projects will make a huge difference to Bucks' economic growth.

5 ENGLAND'S ECONOMIC HEARTLAND (EEH) STRATEGIC TRANSPORT FORUM

- Government has recognised the significance of the EEH area to the national economy. The recent National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) report supports this and highlights the barrier to growth offered by current infrastructure.
- The NIC report does not fully consider the impact of the digital economy and EEH is questioning this and housing numbers assumptions made.
- The NIC has made strong reference to the skills agenda and has made links into the industrial strategy.
- A recommendation has been made to the Chancellor to pull forward £100m funding for East West Rail development and £27m to facilitate planning the next phase of the Oxford/Cambridge Expressway. The EEH will have a significant part to play in influencing the best routes for the Expressway.
- The second part of the NIC report is being prepared, the final part due in Autumn 2017. The NIC see this as "a chance in a lifetime opportunity" to tackle barriers to growth in a sustainable way.
- The EEH area sits within the top three areas in the country in terms of GVA growth and the desire is to retain and improve on this position. Investment in infrastructure to unlock the potential of Enterprise Zones across the patch is also key to this goal.
- The NIC's remit is far broader than transport and there appear to be clear references in the report to local partners needing to work on this wider agenda.

6 LOCAL AUTHORITY MODERNISING LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROPOSALS

- Central government has requested a view on the proposal to form a unitary government forwarded by Buckinghamshire County Council. Legal advice has been taken regarding conflicts of interest.
- Central government has issued guidelines for consideration of bids for unitary status including indicating proposals covering population under 300k or over 1m would be difficult to approve.

- The Board received presentations from Buckinghamshire County Council and Deloittes/Wycombe District Council on the proposal/strategic options case put forward for modernising local government.

6.1 BCC Proposal

- The Board questioned the level to which BCC's proposal will ensure engagement with local people and how this will be managed. Board members wanted to understand what plans had been put in place to retain skills/experience within the county of those staff who would be lost in any restructure.
- Work has been done to ensure democratic legitimacy with a suggested reduction in the number of Councillors across the County in an interim measure pending a full scale boundary review.
- BTVLEP's main focus remains on growing the economy and the Board wish to understand the opportunities available. Consideration needs to be given to long term infrastructure requirements and the need to create new jobs to reflect planned housing growth, etc.

6.2 District Councils Strategic Options Case

- The District Councils' review into modernising local government structures was presented as a Strategic Options Case upon which consultation would take place in the coming months. The aim has been to consider a model that is sustainable going forward.
- The Board queried the size of individual unitaries proposed as these fall outside parameters suggested by central government as acceptable, and questioned what role the local bodies would take on if an over-arching body is responsible for statutory responsibilities.
- BTVLEP's focus is on the economy and Board members wanted to hear the options for driving growth.
- The presentation focussed on the need for holistic public services transformation bringing together key partners and jointly commissioning services. Conversations with key stakeholders (including the BTVLEP) will take place in the next few months to look at possible models and systems.
- Deloittes offered the opinion the private sector members of the LEP should provide the business community's perspective on the unitary options being put to central government.
- Recognising conflicts of interest, it was agreed a response will be forwarded to the Secretary of State by the private sector Board members noting the Board is aware there is another report in the very early stages of preparation and the BTVLEP wishes to reserve the right to comment on this when available.

(LA Board members left the meeting to allow the private sector Board members to form a response)

- It was agreed the response to the Secretary of State would make clear:-
 - The response is from the private sector Board members only.
 - Board members are representing the views of 9k businesses in Buckinghamshire.
 - BTVLEP is commenting on the BCC proposal in the absence of any other proposals but reserves the right to comment on proposals forwarded to government subsequently.
 - Board members focussed on the economic benefits and are supportive of the proposal.

The Board meeting reconvened and Local Authority Board members who were informed of the outcome of the private sector Board members' discussions.

7 **CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT**

- The Chief Executive's report was noted. RH agreed to contact Board members individually regarding any items requiring a resolution and, in return, Board members were asked to contact RH on any issues arising with his report.

8 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- It was reported an article is expected to appear in the Daily Mail on LEP finances.

9 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

- Friday 27 January 2017, from 9.30am, at Buckinghamshire New University, High Wycombe.