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**Title: Buckinghamshire LEP Governance & post Incorporation Transition**

**Purpose:** To update board members on compliance, incorporation, progress made on alignment of operational arrangements and future service delivery.

**Recommendation:** That Members note the content of this report, endorse the updated Assurance and Accountability Framework and support the recommendations for aligned and integrated Buckinghamshire LEP & BBF team delivery as part of “Economy Team Bucks.” Members are also asked to support the continued engagement with the Housing Growth & Economy (Economy & Regeneration) workstream for the new Buckinghamshire Council.

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**1 LEP Assurance Framework & Compliance Review**

At the end of March a new company limited by guarantee was established for the Buckinghamshire LEP. As part of this process it was agreed that the Articles of Association should remain relatively streamlined and that much of the operational detail for the new company be included within an updated Articles of Association. These articles should also reflect the new requirements from the National Assurance and Accountability Framework including members terms of office, board gender representation and the advertising and promotion of funding opportunities. An updated copy of the Assurance Framework is attached as **Appendix 1** to this report for your approval. In early June we were required to complete a compliance check on our governance arrangements. As a result we have further amended the Assurance Framework clarifying a number of minor matters the most substantive relating to the defined term for Chairs and Deputy Chairs, succession planning, register of interest, scrutiny and open advertisement of funding opportunities.

**2 Transition Development**

The incorporation of the LEP has in part changed its relationship with the accountable body and will require a planned transition approach in the areas of finance, legal obligations and employment. We envisage that these new arrangements will be developed and adopted over the course of FY 2019/20. Given the live nature of the Local Growth Fund the immediate priorities are the establishment of a MOU with our accountable body. **Appendix 2** details a first draft of an MOU between Buckinghamshire LEP and Buckinghamshire County Council, modelled on the agreement between OXLEP and Oxfordshire County Council, to assess the services expected as the accountable body for the LEP. The document at present only addresses financial issues and not for example staffing and legal issues that we will have to address in due course. It also represents a current state in respect of financial management of LGF fund that Buckinghamshire LEP currently contracts with BCC. In future however conflicts of interest may arise between the

two contracting parties where one has accountable body obligations we are therefore discussing alternative financial management arrangements that we hope to roll out over the remainder of the financial year. Comments and queries are welcome on the draft BCC MOU. Once agreed a second MOU between the Buckinghamshire LEP and BBF will be circulated for consideration and approval to provide greater clarity and transparency on internal service delivery arrangements that are also being scoped at present.

### **3 Internal Operational Alignment**

As part of the transition process following this incorporation it was also agreed that closer operational alignment was preferable between the Buckinghamshire LEP and BBF teams to support greater operational efficiency, deliver extraordinary economic growth in Buckinghamshire and support the long-term sustainability within the new team. A headline plan outlining the opportunities from this arrangement is attached as **Appendix 3** to this report and has also been used to shape thinking as to how an integrated and aligned economic development delivery capability could operate at national, regional and local levels for the benefit of Buckinghamshire. This plan builds upon the work that we had previously commissioned of Peter Latchford, see **Appendix 4**, that sought to provide a rationale underpinning for a unified and enhanced level of economic delivery to match the aspirations and requirements of both Local Industrial Strategy and the Arc. **Appendix 5** sets out the initial timeline for the transition process.

Over the past couple of months the joint senior management team have met on a fortnightly basis to address operational efficiencies and to deliver this transition. As a result a number of operational arrangements have been streamlined, most notably, the alignment of the Skills Team with the Business Support service to provide a more robust and resilient management structure and to align with funding support and other services. The closer alignment has also been utilised to support the recruitment of a Skills Advisory Panel Labour Market Research Manager and will also be used to support the recruitment of a new Head of Research and Insight to replace Rupert Waters. Now that the Industrial Strategy is nearing completion work on a jointly integrated business plan would be a logical next step.

### **4 Working with Local Authority Partners**

Running in parallel with this operational alignment process our local authority colleagues have been stepping up the preparations for the establishment of the new Buckinghamshire Unitary Council from April 2020. The Buckinghamshire LEP CEO and BBF MD have been supporting this process as invited members of the Economy and Regeneration working group which is assessing how economy and regeneration services can be delivered and considering what resources may be allocated within any new structures. Given the scale of integration, the positive involvement of both BBF and Buckinghamshire LEP has been warmly welcomed to help provide support in this process and to help determine how services could be delivered within a wider “Economy Team Bucks” system.

**Members are asked to:-**

**Endorse the recommendations for economic service delivery as scoped by an integrated Buckinghamshire LEP & BBF team as part of “Economy Team Bucks” and support the continued engagement with the Housing Growth & Economy (Economy & Regeneration) workstream for the new Buckinghamshire Council.**