

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

Held Friday 20 May 2016 from 9.30am at The Clare Charity Centre, Wycombe Road, Saunderton, Bucks HP14 4BF

Present: Cllr Ralph Bagge, South Bucks District Council
Cllr Steve Bowles, Aylesbury Vale District Council
Cllr Martin Tett, Buckinghamshire County Council
Cllr Fred Wilson, Chiltern District Council (Alternate)
Cllr Roger Wilson, Wycombe District Council (Alternate)
Philippa Batting, Buckinghamshire Business First (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)
Cllr Isobel Darby, Chiltern District Council
Cllr Katrina Wood, Wycombe District Council

In attendance: Ian Boll, Bucks County Council (Part meeting)
Julia Gregory, Bucks County Council (Part meeting)
John Callaghan, Wycombe District Council (Part meeting)
John Rippon, Bucks County Council (Part meeting)
Ulrika Dallo Bucks County Council (Part meeting)
Paul Battye, Bucks County Council (Part meeting)
Richard Turl, BIS South Central & West
Richard Ambrose, Bucks County Council
Richard Harrington, BTVLEP Chief Executive
Ian Barham, BTVLEP Partnerships Manager
Ruth Farwell, BTVLEP Skills Strategy Manager
Sarah Fraser

SUMMARY MINUTES

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- There were no new declarations of interest at this meeting.

2 CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

- The Board discussed the importance of clear, aligned local government arrangements.
- Bucks Local Authorities are considering a number of options recognising the current local government financial model is unsustainable. Central Government considers LEPs have a central role to play in these discussions and it was suggested the BTVLEP should lead the process of obtaining an independent review on the best way forward for Bucks.
- Discussions on local government arrangements are due to be considered by District Councils shortly. LA Board members were asked to press for agreement to the BTVLEP leading on co-ordination of the independent review.

3 **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING – 18 March 2016**

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

3.1 Matters arising

- **Carried forward - Western Rail** - RH to press for information on the number of long term jobs to be generated by this development.
- **PWLB** - HM Treasury is aware BTVLEP wishes to extend its PWLB facility to end March 2017.

4 **LOCAL GROWTH FUND 1/2 PROGRAMME UPDATE**

- Deployment of LGF 1/2 funding has been delayed on a number of projects for various reasons.
- Business cases were presented and approved for the High Wycombe Town Centre South Quadrant and the A355 Road Improvement schemes (noting the Board's proviso that South Bucks District Council be asked to safeguard land relating to the A355 scheme for future dual carriageway).
- The Board considered the independent consultant's review of the responses received to the open call for Skills and Business Incubation projects and agreed to progress business case for 3 of the projects with a view to approving these in July; to continue working on 2 other project with the hope of being able to progress these to business case; and to reject the final bid received.
- The Board noted the updates provided on other LGF1 and LGF2 projects.

5 **STRATEGIC ECONOMIC PLAN REFRESH/LOCAL GROWTH FUND 3**

5.1 Strategic Economic Plan (SEP)

- The first draft of the refreshed SEP had been circulated previously and Board members were asked to forward any comments they may have for inclusion.
- LEPs involved in England's Economic Heartland Strategic Alliance (including BTVLEP) have been asked to consider alignment of priorities within their SEPs going forward.
- The final document will be more streamlined/focussed, including a clear strategic vision and will be presented to key stakeholders following submission.

5.2 Local Growth Fund 3

- BTVLEP will make a "soft submission" to LGF3 mid-June outlining the LEP's headline financial ask and priorities, allowing for a check and challenge session to take place prior to final submission by 28 July.
- An open call for bids has been issued. Work is also underway with partners, and looking at the priorities in the Buckinghamshire Infrastructure Investment Plan.
- Board member will receive an update on the bids received following closure of the call.
- Funding available through LGF3 will be less than in previous rounds; £475m for Transport Majors, £2bn will be available to developers for housing, leaving £1.8bn available, recognising the critical imperatives around certain parts of the country.
- Ministers have confirmed this is to be a competitive process and a bid that "pitches the locality", making Bucks stand out, will be helpful
- The situation with overlapping LEPs continues to complicate the picture for Bucks, although a way forward has been agreed with SEMLEP.
- Central Government has highlighted the need for clear governance arrangements.

6 **CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT**

6.1 Skills Update

- Work to improve school/business engagement is progressing well and targets are on track.
- The wider team are looking at expanding work based qualifications and working with partners to develop degree level apprenticeships, one of the aims of which will be to retain talent within Bucks.

- The skills strategy will depend upon real partnership working to deliver planned outcomes. Employer engagement and the need for employers to articulate what they need in their workforce, is key.
- The Area Based Review steering group has recommended Bucks' preferred option (a single FE college for Bucks as a result of a type B merger of Amersham & Wycombe and Aylesbury colleges). This has been accepted by the respective governing bodies. Courses will continue to be offered across all three sites, where sensible, and specific operating specialisms will continue. A new Board will be formed for the new entity built upon existing Boards and LEP representation has been suggested.

6.2 Growth Hub Update

- The Growth Hub has had an exceptional year in terms of the number of businesses engaged, the number of jobs created, grants distributed, and particularly the GVA BBF has been responsible for. Business hubs at Saunderton and Chesham are busy and the recently opened space at Porters Lodge has been extremely successful and is 'growing on' tenants.
- The new BBF website has recently been launched facilitating members trading with each other and building sustainability for the organisation through co-investment.
- The Growth Hub has contributed to the SEP refresh discussions and has asked for continued support for the Business Support offer in the county.
- The Board approved the request for a £75k loan from Growing Places Funding (GPF) to support the continuance of the Visit Bucks website/operation (20,000 visits per month are currently received by the website from all over the world) and the creation of a Destination Management Organisation. This sum to be repaid over 10 years. The Visitor Economy has been identified as a Bucks growth sector and has the potential to create a significant number of jobs by 2020.
- The Board also approved, in principle and subject to provision of further detail from the executive, an additional £75k grant funding towards the above from GPF in return for a number of prescribed outputs (eg increases in overnight stays, visitor number and jobs created). The business community is already supporting this process and making a contribution in return for promotion opportunities. Despite GPF traditionally only being used for projects with an ability to recycle funding, the Board considered this to be a special case with particular merit that would benefit from pump priming to facilitate greater growth.
- The Growth Hub are also to submit a bid to LGF3 for funding to support the visitor economy.

6.3 Broadband

- Phase 1 of the BDUK contract has been completed; a workshop re Phase 2 will be held in May.
- Phase 1 has been extremely successful and information on the gain share arrangement in place for over achievement on uptake will be brought back to a future meeting when a decision will be taken on how to use the funding returned to the BTVLEP (BCC will be unable to reinvest its share of the funding returned back into Broadband).

6.4 Economic Heartland Strategic Alliance

- The LEPs across the Strategic Alliance geography are working together to align their Strategic Economic Plans in respect of joint programmes under discussion, and liaising with Highways England etc on these as well.
- Historically the Strategic Alliance has focussed on transport projects but the scope of discussions will likely extend in response to requests by Lord Adonis and the National Infrastructure Commission.

6.5 Enterprise Zone

- The Board approved the draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). Subject to approval by Bucks County Council on 23 May (AVDC Cabinet having already given approval), the MoU will be taken to the Secretary of State and negotiations on the incentive package will commence with landowners.

6.6 LEP Network

- Buckinghamshire is leading the way on establishing a Creative and Cultural Industries Group with the LEP Network. A meeting is planned with other interested LEPs on 15 June.

6.7 NEP

- Representatives of the Natural Environment Partnership will be invited to a future BTVLEP Board meeting to discuss the NEP's priorities/areas of shared interest.

7 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- The Buckinghamshire Business Awards are due to be held on Thursday 16 June.

8 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Friday 8 July 2016, from 9.30am, venue tbc.