

Open

Title:	Chief Executive's Report
Purpose:	To update board members on key operational activity undertaken since our May Board meeting and to seek approval to the draft BTVLEP Annual Report.
Recommendation:	That Members note the content of this report and comment on any areas of specific interest or concern and to approve and permit finalisation of the draft Annual Report 2018/19.

1 Cities and Local Growth Unit Staffing Update

This will be the last meeting for Richard Turl as our Cities and Local Growth Hub relationship manager. Over the past 3 years Richard has been an invaluable member of our extended team providing advice and insight into the Government machinery. Our loss will be Thames Valley Berkshire LEP's gain, as he becomes their dedicated relationship manager helping with the development of their Local Industrial Strategy this autumn. Richard will be replaced by Kevin Hactor who joins the Cities and Local Growth Unit Arc team from Cambridgeshire County Council. Kevin will also be supported by Bethan Hacche, formerly of Cambridge University, which should substantially increase our support capacity within the growth unit.

Simon Ridley, Director General (DG) for Decentralisation and Growth, has moved to take up a new role in the civil service at the Department for Exiting the European Union. Plans for Simon's permanent successor will be made soon. In the meantime, Tom Walker, became acting DG for Decentralisation and Growth on 1st July until the end of September. Tom will be returning from a two year stint as Deputy Chief Executive at Homes England, and prior to that he was Director of the Cities and Local Growth Unit.

In other moves responsibility for Planning will move under the overall leadership of Jeremy Pocklington, the DG for Housing and Building Safety. Simon Gallagher and Steve Quartermain will continue in their current Director roles now, but reporting into Jeremy. In addition, Catherine Frances, the DG for Local Government, will take overall responsibility for MHCLG's work on Brexit, including partnership work with local government on No Deal planning, and for the time being will also support the Strategy and Comms functions.

2 LEP Staff Update

I am pleased to announce that Catherine Godward has joined the team as the Skills Advisory Panel Research Manager, Catherine brings with her a wealth of research experience notably within the Screen Skills Council. We are also out to advert for the replacement of Rupert, that will be the first incorporated LEP appointment. Also see Broadband update below.

3 Core Funding and LEP Board Structure

Attached as Appendix 1 of this report is a copy of the core capacity funding submission to government earlier this year. We were disappointed not to receive £100,000 that had originally be allocated but that ultimately rested upon satisfactory resolution of overlap. We are however expecting to receive £200,000 in additional capacity funding this FY, though not yet received. Match funding contributions will need to be processed shortly and BCC will in touch on our behalf. We have already quantified and fed in the private sector director's time contribution.

Given recent developments with LEP incorporation, local industrial strategy and progression of the Arc it would be timely to discuss how we structure and optimise our configuration to cover new responsibilities. Such new requirements will include the operation of a bank account and contractual employment arrangements. The industrial strategy proposes the creation of new Boards that we will need to configure and see Appendix 2 attached detailing new Growth Board arrangements to feed into the Arc that will also require BLEP private sector director representation.

4 Skills Programme & Skills Advisory Panel

The expanded Skills Advisory Panel met on July 3rd, the focus of this meeting was in considering the process for undertaking the labour market self-assessment for the Department of Education and the role the skills sector groups would play in validating the desk research. The meeting also brought together the skills sector group leads to ensure that their respective work programmes were aligned with the Local Industrial Strategy requirements.

Preparations are going well for the Skills Show on October 18th and 19th with over 3000 young people already confirmed as attendees for the Friday schools day.

5 Growth Hub Update

It's been a very busy first quarter for the BBF Growth Hub. Bids have been submitted to complement the delivery of business support in Buckinghamshire to the value of £1.06 million for an Innovation Support Service, £1.6million for a Digital Support Service and £2.2 million for an extension to the current Growth Programme. There is a further extension bid for Low Carbon worth £2.2 million due to be submitted by the 31 July.

The Growth Hub has also worked closely with the Bucks New University team to facilitate bid submissions to ERDF worth in excess of £2.6million with aligned delivery between the University and the Growth Hub

The Arc Growth Hubs (Oxford, SEMLEP, Buckinghamshire, and Cambridge & Peterborough) have recently met to discuss operating models, delivery capacity and opportunities for Arc wide initiatives. Because of its strong track record for delivery and audit compliance over pan LEP geographies Buckinghamshire (BBF & Ngage) are well placed to support Arc wide delivery.

As ERDF is a National programme collaborative pan LEP delivery responses for the recently released LEP ERDF calls around SME competitiveness and low carbon should receive favour with MHCLG.

In terms of current delivery all outputs are on target for Qtr 1 with a special mention for the Growth Programme which comes to an end on 31 July and which has delivered above and beyond its original targets. Beneficiary businesses have attributed an increase of £9.6 million in forecasted turnover to the support they received from the BBF Growth Hub team.

6 Enterprise Zone Update

The EZ Board met on 10th July to receive an update on programme see Appendix 3. All three sites are actively under development. At Silverstone the tier 2 utilities contract has been let and commenced on site June 2019, with completion due in December 2019. The Silverstone Sports Innovation Campus (SSIC), effectively phase 2 of the Sports Hub that BLEP funded, is undergoing SEMLEP Due Diligence on going. SSIC partners submitted updated Options Appraisal and Risk Analysis (June 2019). Final SEMLEP decision expected in July 2019. At Westcott the SAC Innovation Centre is progressing with detailed planning application submitted by SAC – 13th May 2019 and A41 access improvements detailed planning consent confirmed 28th June 2019. At Arla / Woodlands the S106 negotiations concluded and planning conditions agreed (subject to final landowners sign off – documents issued to landowners for confirmation of approval); Issue of Planning Consent anticipated in August 2019 alongside Hampden Fields Consent. Symmetry Park: Construction on-going, Unit 1 (7,711m²) under contract with Occupier; anticipated Practical Completion by December 2019 and it has been established that the Olleco waste management facility (completed in late 2017) sits within the EZ boundary. Consequently, business rates income of over £200,000 per annum is accruing to AVEZ since November 2018.

During the next period to September 2019 the principal areas of focus for each EZ site will be:

Silverstone: –

- work with TotalSim, MEPC and University of Buckingham to progress the Sports Innovation Campus through the SEMLEP ‘Due Diligence’ process;
- seek confirmation from MEPC of extent of and delivery programme for Phase 2 Employment Units, including the proposed Digital Manufacturing Innovation Centre.

Westcott: –

- work with Rockspring / BCC Highways to confirm costs, funding arrangements and finalise implementation programme for A41 Access Improvements;
- finalise legal agreements for the SAC Innovation Centre; SAC to issue tenders for construction; planning consent to be secured;
- work with Rockspring to progress c.3,000m² ‘move on’ floorspace in EZ Space Cluster (co-ordinate with Innovation Centre proposals).

Woodlands –

- secure issue of outline planning consent;
- seek to progress / conclude landowner negotiations;
- Marketing of Woodlands Site from September 2019.

7 Broadband Update

The Connected Counties programme has continued its delivery of superfast broadband to both Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire; and the Buckinghamshire target to get superfast connectivity to 95% of its premises by December 2019 was achieved in August 2018, and now stands at 95.42%. Since delivery began in 2013, the programme has delivered approximately 50,000 superfast connections to residents and businesses and will roll out more structures as the current contract continues. Contract 2 is scheduled to complete its delivery phase on 31st December 2019, but due to a clause in the contract which allows for a 40 working day extension period, some final structures will be completed and commissioned through to February 2020, when the contract will enter its end of life and monitoring phase which looks at take-up rates and potential gainshare.

As Buckinghamshire's Broadband Team continue to assess connectivity needs in the area, as well as the funding available for further rollout, the team has been expanded to include a new Broadband Project Manager James Robinson. This role, funded by Buckinghamshire County Council, will work alongside the Broadband Programme Manager to continue oversight of the current contracts, plan and procure the next phases of broadband deployment, and also help to deliver the digital aims outlined in the Local Industrial Strategy.

8 Heathrow Expansion Update

The second phase of consultation for the potential expansion of Heathrow Airport is now underway. The Airport Expansion Consultation runs from 18th June until 13th September 2019 and gives the public the opportunity to provide feedback on Heathrow's proposals for the future layout of the airport, including the new runway and other airport infrastructure such as terminals and road access. The public will also be able to have their say on plans to manage the environmental impacts of expansion, including a proposed Heathrow Ultra Low Emissions Zone, Heathrow Vehicle Access Charge and a proposed 6.5-hour ban on scheduled night flights.

Consultation events are being held in Buckinghamshire at Gerrards Cross on July 16th, Beaconsfield on August 1st and Richings Park on August 22nd

<https://aec.heathrowconsultation.com/events/>

Buckinghamshire LEP are supporting the development of the Heathrow Economic Development Strategy as part of the Heathrow Strategic Planning Group. Arup have been commissioned to undertake an economic visioning exercise which will support task and finish reviews in relation to the innovation, business support and skills programmes of the airport.

9 Inward Investment

The Department of International Trade (DIT) have released the final figures for Inward Investment statistics for the year 2018/2019. In Buckinghamshire, 16 inward investment projects were secured bringing a further 347 jobs into the county. Of the investments, 3 were in the automotive sector and 3 in the biotechnology and pharmaceutical sectors.

We are also participating alongside colleagues from across the Oxford-Cambridge Arc in producing an inward investment portfolio for the region. This publication will be available from early autumn and will be used by international trade posts. The Arc LEPs will again be present at

MPIM UK in the Autumn and will work closely with DIT colleagues in the interim to have ready the Internalisation Plan proposed in the Local Industrial Strategy.

10 Communications Update

I was joined by a number of board members including our Chairman to support the first Bucks PropFest at the Waterside Theatre in Aylesbury on June 6th. Over 100 property, development and construction professionals attended the event to learn about the investment opportunities in Buckinghamshire. Now assembled I propose to work with a sub set of this group to understand and propose how we may work with the development management system to accelerate the delivery of schemes that match our priorities.

I also had the pleasure of attending the second Enterprise Festival at the University of Buckingham, I was particularly delighted to see a much stronger representation of young people from Buckinghamshire schools attending including the winners of the “App Challenge” supported by the Skills Hub.

A copy of the draft annual report for 2018/2019 is attached as Appendix 4 to this report, members are asked to provide any feedback directly to Richard Burton by July 24th.

Members are asked to:-

note the content of this report and comment on any areas of specific interest or concern and;

comment on the draft Annual Report 2018/19.