

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

Held Friday 22 July 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 Isobel Darby, Chiltern District Council
Cllr Warren Whyte, Buckinghamshire County Council (Alternate)
Cllr Katrina Wood, Wycombe District Council
Klaus Allion, Buckinghamshire Business First (ANT Telecoms) (Alternate)
Philippa Batting, Buckinghamshire Business First (Alternate)
Rebecca Bunting, Buckinghamshire Business First (Buckinghamshire New University)
Michael Garvey, Buckinghamshire Business First (Chandler Garvey)
Eman Martin-Vignerte, Buckinghamshire Business First (Bosch)

Apologies: Cllr Martin Tett, Buckinghamshire County Council
Guy Lachlan, Buckinghamshire Business First (Jones & Cocks Ltd)
Andrew Smith, Buckinghamshire Business First (Pinewood)

In attendance: Dominic Williams, Hewdon Consulting (Part meeting)
John Rippon, Bucks County Council (Part meeting)
Tracey Aldworth, Aylesbury Vale District 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
Jim Sims, BTVLEP Development Manager
Sarah Fraser

SUMMARY MINUTES

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- All Board members present expressed an interest in discussions on the Local Growth Fund 3 submission relating to the various projects included in the submission.

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING – 20 May 2016

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

2.1 Matters arising

- **Independent research, Local Government Review** - Private sector Board members expressed disappointment at the Local Authorities' decision to progress their own research into possible future local government structures rather than co-ordinating through the LEP.
- **PWLB** - A number of private sector proposals have been received to utilise the £36m PWLB facility. No public sector proposals had been received at the date of the meeting.
- **Refreshed Strategic Economic Plan** - JS to provide feedback to WDC on their comments.

3 LOCAL GROWTH FUND 3

3.1 Check and Challenge Session Feedback

- The session with central government officials had been very helpful.
- Feedback given had covered five key areas:
 - **Governance** - This will be a key determinant in allocation of funding. LA Board members will provide text to be included in this section of the final submission.
 - **National Infrastructure Commission Review** - Central government are keen to see how the review features in the thinking around LGF3 submissions. The BTVLEP's history/approach as a highly collaborative LEP has been highlighted and the joint response to the NIC review through England's Economic Heartland Strategic Alliance has been pointed to as an example of this.
 - **Private sector leverage** - Government wishes to get the best return possible for all funding deployed. The recyclable nature of many projects in the BTVLEP's submission means actual returns over the life of the projects will be much greater than the initial return quoted. Further detail has been requested on the actual rate of return to be achieved.
 - **Capacity to deliver** - BTVLEP's capacity to deliver was questioned. It is important that "Team Bucks" pull together to demonstrate the strength of the partnership and a firm partnership commitment to delivery going forward.
 - **Prioritisation** - Early submissions indicate the LGF3 'pot' will be oversubscribed at a rate of 3:1. Officials have asked that the final submission show clear prioritisation of projects and for those projects that might not be awarded funding, what the alternative route to market will be.
- The strength of the proposition around the Bucks Enterprise Zones will be highlighted; and following DfT's comments, the leverage on the Bucks transport projects will be subject to further review.

3.2 Draft LGF 3 Submission/SEP Refresh

- Hewdon Consulting presented the rationale behind the proposed scheme prioritisation.
- Narrative within the Strategic Economic Plan will require recasting prior to submission on 28 July.
- Devolution and confusion around government's preferred governance route of having a Mayor in place and what this will entail/mean, particularly for non-metropolitan areas, was key. Progress is being made on producing up-to-date research on potential local government structures in Bucks and impartial experts are being utilised to help move this thinking forward.
- Central Government has been clear engagement with the business community is key on devolution etc. The opportunity to co-commission/co-author questions (including on local government structures) in the full business survey to be conducted by BBF on its 8,500+ members was discussed.
- The scale of both the growth in Bucks, and the scale of the funding gap for critical infrastructure needed to enable delivery of this, was ambitious.
- The Board agreed the prioritisation of projects outlined by Hewdon Consulting and the process for finalising the bid submission and supporting documents over the coming week.

4 DFT LARGE LOCAL MAJORS SCHEME

- The Board considered the proposed bid for DfT Large Local Majors Scheme funding for the A418 Strategic Transport Corridor study and business case development.
- This scheme will greatly assist in delivering the economic growth planned in and around Aylesbury. The Board asked that the proposal clearly demonstrate how this scheme will assist other areas. The proposition is aligned with the LGF3 bid and with the National Infrastructure Commission review.
- The Board endorsed the proposed bid, which will be taken for discussion at the England Economic Heartland Strategic Alliance Board.

5 LOCALLY LED GARDEN VILLAGE SUBMISSION

- The Board gave in principle support to the Garden Village Expression of Interest being developed by AVDC for submission to government. Complementary to the LGF bid being prepared.

6 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

6.1 5G Investment Proposal

- The Board endorsed the £600k 5G investment proposal at Westcott.

6.2 Broadband Programme

- The Board approved £675k from Local Growth Funding as the LEP's contribution to Phase 2 of the BDUK Broadband programme. The Board asked the executive to discuss with Connected Counties the use of the BTVLEP's profit share towards delivery of Phase 2 of the programme and taking part in the open market review determining places to engage in Phase 3.
- Re capital financing for Phase 2, it was confirmed South Bucks District Council has £50k funding available. Consideration will be given as to how best to include this funding in the Broadband 'pot'.
- AVDC's contribution to Phase 2 is to be reduced to £400k (originally £800k). WDC has indicated it will be able to make up the additional £400k to ensure connection for premises within the district.

6.3 Growth Hub Update

- The biggest issue being experienced by the Growth Hub relates to the delay in receiving EU funding.
- Subsequent to receipt of further information, the Board approved an additional £75k grant funding from the Growing Places Fund to support the Visit Bucks development programme.

6.4 Skills Capital and Incubation Funding Update

- The Board approved the progression to formal contract with the NFTS for £1.5m of LGF funding to support the equipping of a state of the art digital production studio facility; and with ATG for £93,500 LGF funding to provide a range of inspiring and engaging activities to enable young people to be involved in engineering, design and technology.

6.5 Enterprise Zone

- It was hoped to appoint a short term contractor in the role of Enterprise Zone Manager whilst recruitment to the full time post continued.
- Opportunities with the Enterprise Zone will be showcased in a national forum at MIPIM.
- It was confirmed that Andrew Percy MP has taken over as Enterprise Zone Minister.

6.6 Skills Board Update

- The Board noted the skills update provided within the Chief Executive's report.
- The latest Ofsted report had deemed Amersham & Wycombe College as inadequate. Staff at the college had been praised for trying to do the best for students. Significant issues remained with governance of the college and a new interim Chair has been appointed who is progressing the merger with Aylesbury College.
- The University of Buckingham will be launching the Higher Education Festival on 8/9 September.

6.7 eGames Investment Proposal

- Further to discussion at the last Board meeting, more detailed information had been provided on the eGames investment proposal, to borrow £250k in order to put on a promotional event at the Olympic Games in Rio to encourage gamers to take part in eGames tournaments and events.
- The proposal was thought to be low risk, offering Bucks significant profile, sitting well with the LEP's ethos of recycling funding, and mapping on to one of Bucks' key sectors, the Creative Industries.
- The proposal was approved for support by the Board on the understanding that the BTVLEP's support will be acknowledged in an appropriate way.

7 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Friday 16 September 2016, from 9.30am, venue tbc.