



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP (BLEP) BOARD MEETING

Held Friday 17 July 2019 from 9.30am at Silverstone Innovation Centre, Technology Park, Silverstone NN12 8GX

Present: Andrew M Smith, Pinewood Studios (Chair)
Richard Harrington (Chief Executive)
Philippa Batting, Buckinghamshire Business First
Adrian Brown, Berkeley Strategic Land Limited
Rebecca Bunting, Independent
Hiren Gandhi, Blaser Mills
Michael Garvey, Chandler Garvey
Alistair Lomax, University of Buckingham
Cllr Isobel Darby, Chiltern District Council
Cllr David Johncock, Wycombe District Council (Alternate)
Cllr John Read, South Bucks District Council (Alternate)
Cllr Martin Tett, Buckinghamshire County Council (part meeting)

Apologies: Eman Martin-Vignerte, Bosch
Cllr Steve Broadbent, Wycombe District Council
Cllr Nick Naylor, South Bucks District Council
Cllr Steve Bowles, Aylesbury Vale District Council

In attendance: Joan Hancock, Buckinghamshire County Council (part meeting)
Lee Stevens, Buckinghamshire County Council (part meeting)
Rebecca Dengler, Buckinghamshire County Council (part meeting)
Thomas Fitzpatrick, Buckinghamshire County Council (part meeting)
Richard Turl, BEIS South Central & West
Kevin Hoctor, BEIS South Central & West
Richard Ambrose, Buckinghamshire County Council
Ian Barham, BLEP Partnerships Manager
John Rippon, BLEP Programme Manager (part meeting)
Rupert Waters, BLEP Head of Economic Research
Catherine Godward, BLEP Skills Advisory Panel Research Manager
Sarah Fraser, Buckinghamshire LEP

SUMMARY MINUTES

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING – 10 May 2019

- The minutes of the meeting held on 10 May 2019 were agreed as an accurate record.

3 BUCKINGHAMSHIRE ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

- The data presented indicated that whilst the county continues to perform well on the surface this masks data showing Buckinghamshire is “falling behind” in terms of growth and productivity achieved.
- Workstreams identified in the Local Industrial Strategy will help halt and reverse ‘slippage’ seen in results.
- The evidence base underpinning the Local Industrial Strategy, and other strategy documents directing the BLEP’s work, is vital and provides the basis for engaging with Government on policy discussions.

- Going forward, more detailed information will be provided on labour market intelligence, supporting the work of the Skills Advisory Panel, as well as providing an overview for BLEEP Board members.
- Issues of out-commuting were acknowledged, reflecting the county's proximity to London, Oxford and Milton Keynes, recognising the role enterprise zones will have in bringing forward increased industrial space in an attempt to help address this problem.
- 'Team Bucks' needs to be fully aligned, working together tailoring 'plan-making'/maximising opportunities.
- It was noted ONS statistics only reflect established patterns, not where huge potential may exist.
- The Board acknowledged the enormity of the issue of affordable housing within the county if Buckinghamshire is to retain young talent, but also recognised the need to focus on addressing strategic issues arising from the evidence base, eg access to finance for SMEs, and providing a structure that is supportive of innovation, if the county is to materially increase productivity.

The Board:

- **Requested information split down to District level on "Growth By Sector".**
- **Requested information by District on travel to work patterns, reflecting on the number of people both living and working in the county, and those in/out commuting and the roles they are performing.**

4 LEP GOVERNANCE AND POST INCORPORATION TRANSITION

- Some Board members felt discussions on "Economy Team Bucks" are premature and should be held pending establishment of the new unitary authority, recognising Councils are the "custodians of Place".
- The Board acknowledged the need for a holistic, non-parochial, efficient and effective approach to delivering economic development in the county, particularly in light of the earlier presentation highlighting Buckinghamshire is falling behind in terms of growth and productivity. It was suggested these conversations are required urgently to ensure provision of far more aligned economic development provision in the county, particularly in delivering the ambitions in the Local Industrial Strategy.

The Board:

- **Endorsed the updated Assurance and Accountability Framework but requested the addition of a section on Board effectiveness/self-review to be led by the LEP Chairman.**
- **Supported the continued engagement with the Housing Growth & Economy (Economy & Regeneration) workstream for the new Buckinghamshire Council.**
- **Approved the Memorandum of Understanding with Buckinghamshire County Council.**
- **Were asked to forward missing details in the "Economy Team Bucks – Future Delivery Options" papers.**

5 BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY (LIS) AND ARC PRODUCTIVITY GROUP

- It was reported the Buckinghamshire LIS would be published on Friday 19 July 2019, along with the LIS documents for the other 3 LEP areas within the Arc – a link to be forwarded to Board members.
- The Board noted the 67 action points arising from the strategy and that there would be no additional resource available to achieve these actions which, it was anticipated, would make a huge difference to the Buckinghamshire economy, hence the need for complete alignment of current resources available.
- With regards to the Arc, it was suggested that whilst the potential of the area is well-understood, the 'region' is not considered to be an area of "need" or of "deprivation" and, therefore, a strong case will need to be made to gain investment required. Discussions are being held re submissions to the Spending Review for which the Arc LEPs are developing a strategic outline business case around the 4 themes of Productivity, Place-making, Connectivity and the Environment.
- In considering the "Key Themes and Priorities" paper, the Board suggested: digital infrastructure should provide fibre to the premises in all locations; that mobile coverage needs significant improvement if the Arc is to be a "global player"; and that 'digital connectivity' should sit under the Business Environment theme because of its universal importance, particularly to the space and creative sectors.

5.1 Space Applications Catapult

- The Board noted the scale of the opportunity available at Westcott to work with the Space Applications Catapult to turn the enterprise zone into a key centre for space development in the UK. Similar ambitions

are held for Pinewood, Silverstone, Arla/Woodlands. It was anticipated the Local Industrial Strategy will provide the starting point for these discussions to take place with partners.

- The Space Applications Catapult's has asked to work with the LEP on expressions of interest to Government in October which, if successful, will release £50k to develop a full Treasury business case.
- Discussions are being held at Arc level re the overall transport strategy for the 'region' to ensure this is fit for purpose in light of growth/housing ambitions. In addition, a Major Road Network bid is being discussed with the aim of making the A41 dual carriageway. It was suggested there is a need for a new spatial plan to be developed by the new unitary authority in close collaboration with the LEP.

The Board:

- **Noted the update on the Buckinghamshire LIS and the Arc Productivity Group.**
- **Endorsed the activity to be undertaken to progress the Buckinghamshire specific and Arc wide actions in relation to the Local Industrial Strategy and the Spending Review.**
- **Requested more information on the Highways England event on 24 July.**
- **Endorsed the LEP team working with the Space Applications Catapult on expressions of interest to Government around establishing Westcott as a key centre for space development in the UK.**

6 LOCAL GROWTH FUND UPDATE

- The Board noted there remains a significant amount of work to do in terms of delivery of the LGF programme, largely around transport schemes.
- Re South East Link Road, discussions are underway with Network Rail around shared value.
- Re Iver Relief Road, it is hoped to use previous Local Transport Body funding to support this (and other) schemes, but more detailed work is required over the next 12 months to understand costs involved, how different developers will be affected and to prepare the scheme and planning application. The Board requested a briefing on this project to share with the relevant Member group.

The Board requested:

- **A note of specific issues being experienced with schemes, particularly the South East Link Road.**
- **Confirmation of whether BCC colleagues will be seeking to recover the A355 Beaconsfield Road from developers in order to unlock housing.**

7 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Further to the report previously circulated, the following was noted:

7.1 Skills

- There have been x2 meetings of the new Skills Advisory Panel (SAP) and the group has established a clear remit following changed requirements from central Government requesting highly research based work for which the LEP has recruited Catherine Godward to provide research and data support.
- The panel's work, which is evolving, will focus on work force planning and particular sectors.

7.2 Growth Hub

- Buckinghamshire Business First (BBF) will be meeting with Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority to discuss provision of business support services locally; Cambridgeshire & Peterborough as the lead on business support across the Arc, having previously recommended a single body co-ordinating business support services across the entire geography.
- District Councils' Economic Development teams are effectively signposting businesses to BBF/Visit Bucks.
- BBF has received excellent results in recent external scrutiny and evaluation.

7.3 Enterprise Zones

- The enterprise zones were reported to be performing well, although there remain some challenges in gaining consents on Woodlands.

7.4 Broadband

- The current programme is on schedule and the Broadband team has been strengthened with the appointment of 2 managers working across the various programmes.

7.5 Heathrow

- The consultation exercise on the expansion at Heathrow is now live and will continue over the summer.
- The LEP is involved in a number of working groups looking at SME Engagement, Skills, and Economic Development, and is also involved in the recently established Transport Forum.
- Whilst there is a considerable focus on the growth the expansion can unlock, there seems to have been only perfunctory consideration given to the surface access side eg use of electric cars, home working etc.

7.6 Communications

- Board members were asked to feed back any comments on the LEP Annual Report circulated.

7.7 Growth Board

- Government has called for the establishment of Growth Boards in the 4 Arc LEP areas. BLEP will be invited to join the Buckinghamshire Growth Board enabling economic output to be considered in conversations around housing etc.

8 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- Board members were thanked for their input into the Local Industrial Strategy noting there will be significant work going forward to implement this which will require Board members' assistance.
- The Board offered its thanks to Rupert Waters and Richard Turl, this being the last LEP Board meeting for both, for the work undertaken on behalf of the LEP over the last few years.

9 **DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS**

Wednesday 25 September 2019, **10.30am**, venue tbc (but will be Aylesbury)

Wednesday 13 November 2019, **10.30am**, The Epilepsy Society, Chalfont St Peter