
Title: Oxford to Cambridge Growth Arc

Purpose: To provide an update on the Oxford to Cambridge Growth Arc productivity programme and business case development ahead of the next spending review.

Recommendation: That Board members note the content of this report and consider how they may wish to support the development of the Arc wide business cases and productivity programme.

1 Arc Productivity Group – business case development opportunity

The Arc productivity group met on Monday 9th September, the focus of the meeting was to consider the development process for up to 5 business cases identified through the economic vision and Local Industrial Strategy process.

These business cases are covering the following 5 areas of opportunity:-

A Skills Productivity Programme

- Using insight from data into the Skills Advisory Panels to improve access to skilled staff and better use of resources to train the current and future Arc workforce.

Inward Investment

- Develop and deliver Arc Internationalisation plan and co-ordinated and bespoke Foreign Direct Investment and Investment Prospectus
- Secure inward investment, support Arc propositions with LEP area offers and investment opportunities.

Support for High Growth Businesses

- Identify and support high growth businesses across the region
- Retain high growth businesses and enable growth across the Arc of high growth businesses
- Provide tailored and targeted coaching combined with small capital grants

Provision of commercial premises for high growth business

- Understand and address market failure and provide the right types of space to deliver the growth needed across the Arc – supporting targeted organisations to advance the delivery of new employment space.

Investment Scale-Up Fund

- Provide patient & scale-up capital and grant funding to support business and Skills investment across the region
- Providing core funding for High Growth Capital Grants

To support this process the Blue Marble Consultancy Group has been engaged to develop the initial business plan framework and to discuss the emerging proposals with key partners. Slides giving a further summary of the 5 potential business cases are attached as **Appendix 1** to this report. Their involvement is also helping to ensure that the final business plans are complementary to those being produced by the other Arc wide groups as well as the work of the Arc Universities Group. It is envisaged that the business plan development will be concluded later in 2019 ahead of the possible CSR in early 2020.

As part of the International work plan for the Arc, a cross LEP team have been working alongside the Department of International Trade to develop a refreshed investment prospectus for the Arc, the aim of this is to support a co-ordinated presence with potential investment opportunities across the Arc as part of the Department of International Trade Pavilion at MIPIM Cannes in 2020.

The meeting also received an update on the progress of the Arc Universities Group from Alistair Lomax who has recently been appointed as the programme co-ordinator for the Arc Universities Network and from Tim Stocks from James Stocks and Co outlining a potential lending platform for SME Constructors wishing to advance their output across the Arc.

2 Wider Arc Activity – Place, Environment and Connectivity work streams

All of the other Arc work streams are in the process of developing their respective work programmes. The most advanced of these is the connectivity work programme led by the England's Economic Heartland who have also been working with the Blue Marble group in developing future investment opportunities. In addition Richard Harrington engaged in a Place group workshop on the 19th August that in turn advised the Arc Ceo group on 13th September of progression of the of Arc Spatial Framework ASF workstream and in particular around guiding principles for a new plan that would sit alongside the statutory planning framework. It is recommended that the upcoming Arc Leaders meeting on the 27th September spend an hour discussing the ASF, utilising a facilitator (Catriona Riddell), seeking to get endorsement of the common objectives, principles and status of the ASF and a clear direction to develop a detailed brief to be brought back for their agreement (via Arc Chief Executives) in November/December (date to be confirmed). Finally, John Rippon is representing the Arc LEPs at an initial meeting of the Environmental group.

3 Oxford to Cambridge Expressway

In August Buckinghamshire LEP together with a number of other business groups were invited to a briefing from Highways England on the proposed Oxford to Cambridge Expressway. The briefing provided no further insight onto the preferred route for the road, but provided a useful opportunity to highlight some fundamental points around whole Arc business productivity and innovation that should be incorporated into the public consultation currently scheduled for this autumn. Highways England have agreed to work with Bucks LEP to ensure that the business community are able to fully engage in the consultation. [Oxford to Cambridge Expressway](#)

4 Arc Funding

In preparation for the Comprehensive Spending Review opportunity in 2020 a collaborative approach will be taken to the presentation of investment opportunities. Regular meetings have now been established between the HMCLG Arc team and an officer working group for the Buckinghamshire Growth Board of which Buckinghamshire LEP is represented. We are also establishing a separate and complementary dialogue with the team to help deliver our Industrial Strategy propositions as they mature.

Board members are asked to:-

- **Note the content of this report.**
- **Consider how they may wish to support the development of the Arc wide business cases and productivity programme.**