

Open

Title:	Chief Executive's Report
Purpose:	To update board members on key operational activity undertaken since our July Board Meeting.
Recommendation:	That Board Members note the content of this report and comment on any areas of specific interest or concern.

1 LEP Assurance & Monitoring

The half yearly assurance and performance monitoring review will take place on September 23rd. Ahead of this review an independent check on our assurance processes has recently been completed and I am pleased to report that we have received a clean bill of health from the HMCLG team. To support the ongoing quest for improvements in transparency and compliance we have agreed to participate in a peer review exercise with Stoke and Staffordshire LEP.

2 Growth Hub & National Brexit Readiness

Ahead of the scheduled departure from the European Union on October 31st a national programme of business readiness workshops has been organised over the coming weeks, see [Brexit Readiness Events](#). Growth Hubs have also been given direct additional resources to support a wider programme of business engagement from the end of October until April 2020. The four Growth Hubs in the Arc, together with Greater Anglia LEP have been allocated a total of £260k to support this events programme. In addition Business Support Organisations have until the end of September to bid for an additional £10m fund Brexit readiness fund to support business preparation [Brexit Readiness Fund](#).

3 LEP Network

There have been significant changes at the LEP Network of late, Mark Livesey Former Deputy Chief Executive of Cheshire and Warrington LEP has been appointed as the new Chief Executive and Chairman of Hertfordshire LEP Mark Bretton has been appointed as the new Network Chair.

A meeting of the Network Chairs was held on September 11th to consider proposals to refresh the network to improve resilience and to improve visibility across Government departments. Amongst the recommendations were proposals to develop a stronger regional alignment, with Buckinghamshire LEP recognised as part of an Arc Grouping and a requirement to develop the marketing and promotional capacity of the Network alongside the assurance & compliance roles it has been asked to undertake on behalf of MHCLG.

4 Future Towns Fund

The new Government has signalled a significant shift in economic policy placing a much greater emphasis on town development rather than just cities. Additional funding was announced within the Chancellor's Spending Review for 100 towns to be the first beneficiaries of a new towns fund, although no Buckinghamshire locations were included within this first tranche there are opportunities for all of our

towns to bid for regeneration funds through this route. Positive news was however received for the Buckinghamshire LEP backed Future High Streets Fund application from High Wycombe which was approved providing an initial allocation of £150k to develop the business case for significant investment.

5 Aylesbury Garden Town Masterplan

The Masterplan for the Aylesbury Garden Town was considered by the Garden Town Board at its meeting on September 10th. The Masterplan has been drawn up by Alan Baxter Associates and is a comprehensive, town-wide plan which co-ordinates the delivery of new garden communities, green infrastructure, sustainable movement networks, economic and social objectives and the regeneration of the town centre. The Board considered a draft Vision document for public consultation in October followed by the Masterplan that is intended to go to public consultation in January 2020 following final approval of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan VALP that is expected in November. A copy of the masterplan is attached as **Appendix 1** to this report.

6 Future Funding, Strength in Places and European Funding

Buckinghamshire LEP currently has two open calls for the remaining funds within our 2014-2020 European Growth Programmes. A PA2 Call for £1.3million through our European Social Fund is seeking organisations that can support life long careers support linked to our Local Industrial Strategy priority sectors and providing strengthening employer commitment to investing in skills and creating employer-led learning networks, that can aggregate demand for skills. Successful applicants will also have to demonstrate how the programme will increase the number of STEM skilled people available to work in the Buckinghamshire area, reduce the number of businesses frustrated by the challenges of recruiting and retaining staff with STEM related specialisms as well as supporting the delivery of Advanced & Higher-Level Apprenticeships.

A further PA3 Business Support Fund worth approximately £860k has also been issued which aims to support businesses to become investment ready and improve access growth finance. The fund will also support businesses and social enterprises to develop new or higher quality products; open up new markets (particularly international markets); develop shorter supply chains; and/or implement new/improved business processes and develop an improved culture of research and innovation. Both calls are open until October.

Elsewhere across the country there remain significant allocations of European Funding un allocated and it is expected that a national reserve fund allocation will be launched before the end of the year. Having now allocated potentially allocated our initial funding this presents a significant opportunity for Buckinghamshire.

7 Skills Update - SAP report activity and Careers and Enterprise Company Awards

I am please to report that the Buckinghamshire Careers Hub has been recognised as the strongest in the country by the Careers and Enterprise Company. This recognition has been secured by the comprehensive and proactive programme of careers support provided by Buckinghamshire's Enterprise Advisor Network.

At the forthcoming Careers and Enterprise Awards at the end of September, a number of Buckinghamshire Schools and Businesses are shortlisted for awards, the Misbourne School in Great Missenden is shortlisted for national School of the Year, and the Buckingham based IT Company The Cloudy Group are nominated for SME of the Year having worked alongside our Skills Hub in developing an App Challenge for schools in the Aylesbury area.

8 Enterprise Zone Update

Silverstone

- MEPC Phase 2 Commercial Development: MEPC have committed to delivery of Phase 2a (September 2019). This will comprise 12,841m² employment floorspace in 9 units ranging from 595m² to 3,716m². MEPC have advised that detailed negotiations ongoing with occupiers for 4 units, with one unit to comprise the Digital Manufacturing Innovation Centre that secured £3.4m SEMLEP LGF funding in May 2019;
- Tier 2 Utilities: Main Contract works fully underway, with completion due in December 2019. £1.86m (37%) of the £5m EZ funding expended to date;
- Silverstone Sports Engineering Hub: Official Opening event and open day held on 10th September; SSEH has agreed HoTs with Sport England for the provision of the Swim Flume facility within the Hub – representing a £1.75m investment by Sport England;
- Silverstone Sports Innovation Campus: SSIC partners considering refocussing the project on a phased basis – initially bringing forward the R & D Swimming facility to complement the Swim Flume, with the velodrome / academic facilities to follow. LGF Bid to SEMLEP likely to reduce to c £7.5m for the Swim Facility to be delivered by 2021. Funding and delivery of other phases to be considered.

Westcott

- Satellite Application Catapult (SAC) Innovation Centre: -
 - Public funding MOU between BCC and AVDC agreed;
 - SAC analysing tenders for construction – programme for delivery of building by May 2020.
- A41 Access Improvements: - Rockspring working to discharge of planning conditions to enable start on site in November with forecast completion by May 2020; Issues relating to funding increases and acquisition of third party land to secure implementation are ongoing.
- SAC Disruptive Innovation Space Centre: Proposal for DISC submitted to Government (August 2019). The proposal is to build and fit out a facility in the Westcott Space Cluster to meet an emerging need from companies entering the UK Space sector who want to access specialist equipment and manufacturing facilities without the heavy cost of ownership. The DISC will allow users to rent access to cleanrooms, test chambers, assembly rigs etc on a need's basis, at commercial rates, until design concepts are proven and ready for production. The DISC lowers the entry barrier to market and creates a level playing field for UK based companies who want to create new products, applications or services. The c.£30m project (requiring £15m public funding support) could create a 3,500m² facility at Westcott and has potential to create 2,000 direct / indirect jobs in the space sector and deliver 300m GVA within 10 years.

ARLA / Woodlands

- Woodlands: S106 negotiations concluded and planning conditions agreed (subject to final landowners sign off – documents issued to landowners for confirmation of approval). One landowner currently refusing to sign S106 without additional indemnification for liabilities being provided by BA;

- Symmetry Park: Construction of 3 units on-going, Unit 1 (7,711m²) under contract with Occupier. Units 2 (5,110m²)& 3 (10,219m²)available; anticipated Practical Completion by December 2019.

9 Communications Update

I will be presenting on the Westcott opportunity at the National Space Conference in Newport on September 24th this provides an excellent showcase to highlight to a national audience the progress already made at the Enterprise Zone site and the significant potential as identified within our Local Industrial Strategy.

Our communications team are currently developing a new integrated Skills Hub Website and are refreshing the Bucks LEP branding guidance following the incorporation earlier this year.

Board members are asked to:

- **Note the content of this report and comment on any areas of specific interest or concern.**