

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

Held Friday 22 September 2017 from 9.30am at Bosch, Broadwater Park, Denham, Uxbridge UB9 5HJ

Present: Cllr Ralph Bagge, South Bucks District Council
Cllr Steve Bowles, Aylesbury Vale District Council
Cllr Isobel Darby, Chiltern District Council
Cllr Martin Tett, Buckinghamshire County Council
Cllr Katrina Wood, Wycombe District Council
Rebecca Bunting, Buckinghamshire Business First (Buckinghamshire New University)
Michael Garvey, Buckinghamshire Business First (Chandler Garvey)
Guy Lachlan, Buckinghamshire Business First (Classic Oils Ltd)
Eman Martin-Vignerte, Buckinghamshire Business First (Bosch)
Andrew Smith, Buckinghamshire Business First (Pinewood)

In attendance: Scott Dickinson, SDG Economic Development (Part meeting)
Mark Kemp, Buckinghamshire County Council
Richard Turl, BIS South Central & West
Richard Harrington, BTVLEP Chief Executive
Ian Barham, BTVLEP Partnerships Manager
Jackie Campbell, BTVLEP Skills Development Manager
Anthony Sowden, BTVLEP Enterprise Zone Manager
Heather Dean, BBF Head of Business Support
Sarah Fraser

MINUTES

1 WELCOME FROM BOSCH

- Dr Steffen Hoffmann welcomed the BTVLEP Board to Bosch and outlined some of the major developments underway in the organisation.
- Bosch feel they have a dominant role to play in developing the technology of the future. The key issue remains the availability of a suitably skilled workforce, particularly those from an engineering background (and, within this, particularly young women).

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- Cllr Steve Bowles declared an interest in Aylesbury Vale Broadband, an AVDC joint venture.
- Rebecca Bunting and Andrew Smith declared interests in discussions re LGF skills capital projects.

3 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING - 7 July 2017

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

3.1 Matters arising:

- 3.1.1 • **LGF monies** - Discussion around unallocated LGF monies will be brought back to the Board throughout the Autumn, linked to discussions around the Bucks Growth Strategy.
- 3.1.2 • **AVDC** - SB will be stepping down as Deputy Leader of AVDC but will continue to hold the economic development portfolio and will continue to represent AVDC at BTVLEP Board meetings.

4 BUCKS GROWTH STRATEGY

- The Board reviewed the Bucks Growth Strategy which has been developed in response to a request from central government for a note of the county's strategic infrastructure ask which will be considered in parallel with Housing Infrastructure Fund submissions.

- Government is looking for submissions that have as much consensus as possible from the local area and a document from Bucks with no contention will help smooth the process.
- AVDC has not as yet contributed to the Bucks Growth Strategy and this will be requested again, noting the four Bucks District Councils have agreed to respond to the NIC review through the Central Growth Board submission being prepared.
- The document prepared considers the needs of the north of the county in terms of improved infrastructure, transport links etc, but also reflects the needs of the middle and south of the county.
- As previously agreed at Cross Corridor Leaders' meetings, the 4 LEPs in the region will lead on the Corridor's overarching Economic Industrial Strategy. The Board suggested the 4 LEPs should be cross referencing each other's requirements under this heading to ensure a shared growth strategy.
- Enterprise Zones will have a significant role to play in maintaining the agility already displayed in pulling together the Bucks strategy and should feature more prominently in the strategy.
- With abstentions from Cllr Katrina Wood and Cllr Steve Bowles, the Board endorsed the report and requested the asks contained therein be developed as part of a direct Buckinghamshire submission to the NIC and central government by the end of September.

5 HOUSING INFRASTRUCTURE FUND

- BTVLEP to forward a letter of endorsement to Local Authorities to accompany the bids being submitted to the Homes and Communities Agency's Housing Infrastructure Fund.

6 DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE GROUP (DIG) SUBMISSION

(SB declared an interest in Aylesbury Vale Broadband which has submitted expressions of interest in providing services.)

- The Board noted the report and additional paper provided highlighting a shortfall of £306k funding to support delivery of the Buckinghamshire broadband programme.
- Buckinghamshire has been extremely successful in its work with BT, with the county having the highest take up of services across the country. Despite this, businesses and residential customers continue to clamour for greater connectivity. This has led to the extension of the broadband programme with the associated management expenses required, as discussed previously.
- The Board requested information previously shared with DIG officers on how the £306k will be used, the job description for those managing the programme, and the planned outputs to be delivered.
- BTVLEP officers to provide additional information around the number of people in each district to benefit from the programme, cost of lines etc. The DIG has also been asked to consider the use of 'in kind' support in the form of officer time in place of direct financial support for the programme, and it would be useful to see how this might be utilised.
- The Board again recognised the likely need to find alternative solutions to connect the final 5% hard to reach areas in the county. The need to liaise closely with planning authorities was highlighted, particularly in AONB areas, to ensure viability of any innovative solutions to supplying connectivity.
- The Digital Strategy will be written in conjunction with external consultants and BTVLEP partners and will 'sit below' the finalised Buckinghamshire Growth Strategy.
- This subject will be brought back to the next Board meeting for decision, the current programme funding running out at the end of March 2018.

7 LOCAL GROWTH FUND

7.1 Silverstone Cycle & Innovation Hub

- The Board noted the change in the Business Case provided by TotalSim Ltd addressing potential state aid issues. An Independent Appraisal has been undertaken and due diligence is being progressed, with a view to moving to contract by December 2017 and opening by April 2019.
- The Board expressed strong support for this project, considering it to be a significant opportunity. Capital requirements were reviewed and suggestions made re offsetting any risk arising.
- The Board approved the business case subject to the above (and reviewing any risk associated) and to verification with external companies re proposed operational costs.

7.2 Skills Capital Projects

(Rebecca Bunting declared an interest in the project being brought forward by Buckinghamshire New University. Andrew Smith informed the Board that Creative Media Skills is a tenant of Pinewood Studios.)

- Further to the independent assessment provided, the Board asked the BTVLEP executive to work with Creative Media Skills, Aylesbury College and Buckinghamshire New University to develop full business plans, responding to outstanding questions, in order to bring forward proposals suitable for funding.
- Consideration will be given in discussion with the Skills Board as to how the remaining skills capital funding is utilised and how this might support Buckinghamshire's inward investment aspirations and the Buckinghamshire Growth Strategy. Proposals will be brought back to the Board as appropriate.
- The executive were asked to review the outcome of the Bazalgette review to establish whether there are opportunities for Buckinghamshire to bid for additional funding.
- Karen Mitchell, Aylesbury College Principal, will be invited to the next meeting to outline progress following the merger with Amersham & Wycombe, and to discuss curriculum development.

7.3 Eastern Link Road

- As discussed at previous Board meetings, this project has run into issues due to delays in obtaining planning consents as a result of highway capacity concerns in Aylesbury. This project fell within LGF1 funding and the original agreement saw funding being released on planning consent.
- The Board acknowledged the strategic importance of the project and approved release to the promoter of £550k of the £10.5m project to allow for planning consent to be taken forward and Section 106 arrangements agreed. The Planning Authority will be meeting on 25/26 October.

8 **CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT**

- The Board noted the Chief Executive's report circulated with the Board papers. There had been no significant change in the financial state of the BTVLEP since the last Board meeting, and significant progress has been made on infrastructure and LGF 2/3 projects.

8.1 LEP Review

- The review is considered a positive endorsement of LEPs and is being carried out ahead of announcements of new funding streams. It will consider geography, delivery and assurance frameworks, and there may be pressure brought to bear on LEPs not in a Combined Authority to incorporate.
- The Board suggested the review should focus on effectiveness, strategic links, and what LEPs have delivered for their businesses - to be fed back to Central Government.

8.2 European Programme Update

- Further to the information provided, the Board mandated the BTVLEP Executive to amend the ESIF strategy in relation to low carbon calls in order to extend the reach of the programme, particularly in terms of new energy development and multi-modal transport.

8.3 Assurance & Accountability Framework

- The Board approved the revised Assurance & Accountability Framework which has included a more detailed operational process around release of grant and loan funding approved by the Board.

9 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

- Friday 17 November 2017, 2pm, Pinewood Studios, Pinewood Road, Iver Heath SL0 0NH.