

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

Held Friday 27 January 2017 from 9.30am at Bucks New University, Queen Alexandra Road, High Wycombe HP11 2JZ

Present: 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
Philippa Batting, BBF Managing Director (Alternate)
Rebecca Bunting, Buckinghamshire Business First (Buckinghamshire New University)
Michael Garvey, Buckinghamshire Business First (Chandler Garvey)
Guy Lachlan, Buckinghamshire Business First (Jones & Cocks Ltd)
Eman Martin-Vignerte, Buckinghamshire Business First (Bosch)

Apologies: Cllr Ralph Bagge, South Bucks District Council
Andrew Smith, Buckinghamshire Business First (Pinewood) (joined by phone for part meeting)

In attendance: Dominic Williams, Hewdon Consulting (Part meeting)
Ian Manktellow, Wycombe District Council (Part meeting)
Rachel Wileman, Buckinghamshire County Council (Part meeting)
Simon Bandy, Local Partnerships (Part meeting)
Deborah Andrews, Bucks County Council
Martin Tugwell, England's Economic Heartland (Part meeting)
Richard Turl, BIS South Central & West
Richard Harrington, BTVLEP Chief Executive
Ian Barham, BTVLEP Partnerships Manager
Jackie Campbell, BTVLEP Skills Development Manager
Sarah Fraser

SUMMARY MINUTES

1 WELCOME FROM BUCKINGHAMSHIRE NEW UNIVERSITY

- Rebecca Bunting welcomed the Board to Buckinghamshire New University which is a business focussed organisation concentrating on professional and applied research, but also offering vocational/niche area courses across four campuses. The university offers cutting edge facilities to its circa 10k students and has very strong alumni relationships.
- The University is celebrating 125 years this year; is an anchor institution in the region and has a huge impact in terms of social mobility and links to business.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- Rebecca Bunting declared an interest in discussions on LGF skills capital projects.
- Cllr Steve Bowles declared an interest in discussions on LGF skills capital projects, Aylesbury Vale District Council owning the UCAV building.

3 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING - 18 November 2016

- With one amendment made to reflect BTVLEP had approached the Secretary of State to query whether it would be useful to submit an opinion on the proposals forwarded regarding modernising local government in Buckinghamshire, the minutes were agreed as an accurate record.
- Proposals re Modernising Local Government would be the subject of a separate meeting. This aside, all other outstanding actions had been completed or were on the agenda.

4 **LGF SKILLS CAPITAL PROJECTS**

- The Board considered further assessment of the two skills capital bids received, both projects appearing to be financially sustainable.
- The projects will be monitored through contract targets/outputs required set with a centre operator responsible for both sites.
- The UCAV proposal is for around £750k to equip the existing shell at UCAV including two laboratories as an innovation centre. A mobile outreach centre will also be provided which can be taken into schools to encourage students into STEM careers. The proposal is considered relatively low risk.
- The Buckinghamshire Lifesciences Partnership's proposal is for approx £700k to fit out incubation space. The proposal assumes a modest charge for use of space with the balance of costs being met by ERDF funding in the first couple of years allowing the growth of paid occupancy, this will be the subject of a proviso in the contract, including an expectation that tenants will pay market rent or vacate space within defined timescales. Tenant monitoring will form part of the central operator's brief. The risks with this type of project are higher than in a straightforward innovation centre but the risks of being left behind by not having this type of facility in the county are far greater.
- The Board agreed the funding requested for both projects.

5 **CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT**

5.1 Local Growth Fund

- Good progress is being made on the early rounds of Local Growth Fund projects and formal notification of BTVLEP's allocation under LGF3 at £20.48 million is expected imminently and it was agreed to fast track consideration of LGF3 business plans for early approval.
- The projects to be supported are:
 - Development at the University of Buckingham Vinson Centre for Liberal Economics, Innovation and Entrepreneurship (Skills - £3m).
 - Silverstone Innovation Centre (Business - £2m).
 - Stoke Mandeville Relief Road (Transport & Infrastructure - £13.5m).

5.2 Annual Conversation

- The Annual Conversation had gone well and Government were congratulatory on progress made. There was recognition of the scale of BTVLEP's ambition and an appreciation of the willingness not to avoid difficult discussions/decisions.
- Government recognised the BTVLEP is prepared to take on challenges, has an appetite for a degree of risk, and operates under a structure tuned to local circumstance and priorities.
- The prime concern for Ministers is that LGF monies are utilised fully and BTVLEP is working to accelerate delivery on Local Growth Fund projects.
- Buckinghamshire County Council has deferred further progress on the Taplow Sustainable Transport Scheme. There remains strong commitment to the scheme, however, investigation is being undertaken into less heavily polluted routes in light of DfT guidelines.

5.3 Budget

- The draft BTVLEP budget had been included within the Board papers.

5.4 Public Works Loan Board (PWLB)

- It was agreed to return the unutilised £36m PWLB funding to HM Treasury.

5.5 Broadband

- The Board considered the response to the "Extending Local Full Fibre and 5G Networks" consultation and noted businesses are still experiencing issues in getting fibre to the premises at reasonable rates.
- An update on the 5G project will be provided at the next Board meeting.

5.6 England's Economic Heartland (EEH)

- Significant progress has been made on this initiative since November, particularly on transport projects. There has been a broadening of the Strategic Alliance's agenda to include discussion on Government's Industrial Strategy and the opportunities available.
- The EEH will be holding a workshop on Tuesday 31 January for all Local Authority and LEP partners. The outputs from this workshop will be fed through to the National Infrastructure Commission.
- The EEH will be holding its first regional conference on 9 March at Silverstone.
- Match funding to be received from DfT will place the EEH as one of the three really big embryonic transport bodies.
- An APPG for the Strategic Alliance was launched in Whitehall w/c 16 January 2017.

5.7 Growth Hub Update

- BBF continues to support businesses at a healthy pace, now supported greatly by new ERDF funds. Bucks continues to lead the country in terms of business involvement/engagement.
- 50 new inward investment enquiries have been received in the current year, 8 of which have been confirmed with 9 more possible by the end of the year, resulting in 234 jobs so far. BBF has also recently employed a new recruit to handle the Tourism agenda.
- Discussions are being held with businesses about the Industrial Strategy and an Enterprise Zone event is planned for April to bring people up-to-date with progress at the 3 sites.
- The Buckinghamshire Business Awards are being planned for June.

5.8 Skills

- The focus for the Skills team is on apprenticeships and the Skills Board have set a target against which progress can be monitored.
- RH was asked to speak to Government re the possibility of consolidating the many funding streams feeding in to skills to maximise the benefit of this money on the ground.

5.9 Industrial Strategy

- It was agreed the Board would discuss the implication of the Industrial Strategy at its next meeting and consider how this should inform the BTVLEP's priorities.

5.10 Staffing Issues

- Jim Sims has ended his tenure with the BTVLEP. Jim's contribution has been phenomenal, taking Bucks successfully through bidding rounds, and building networks into Europe.
- Arrangements have been put in place to put resource from BCC's Transport Economy and Environment team (BCC being an existing partner to the LEP) at the BTVLEP's disposal, assisting greatly in aligning project delivery in an integrated manner.
- With regards to possible conflicts of interest, the BTVLEP Board, as a whole, will hold project promoters to account for delivery on projects supported by the BTVLEP.
- The BCC resource will not only offer additional capacity but also enable the BTVLEP to meet match funding requirements. It was hoped other Partners will, in future, be in a position to provide additional resource to the BTVLEP.

5.11 Bucks Advantage

- Discussions have been held with the Bucks Advantage directors about how to take the organisation forward. Information will be circulated to BA Member organisations.

6 **BUCKS PLANNING GROUP AND COUNTY STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE**

- Further to the presentations given it was noted:
 - Planners allocate land to leisure/business use but are unable to specify the precise type of occupier of this land or restrict this to local rather than national providers.

- With regards to the impending white paper on housing, the advice from central government has been to press ahead with production of Local Plans in the recognition that these may need to be reviewed in relatively short order, dependent upon the content of the white paper and whether this affects the scale of growth needed.
 - Local Authorities wish to be proactive in creation of Local Plans and to be clear on outlining what is needed and where it is needed in the county.
 - The Board questioned how to encourage the development of more energy efficient housing and asked the planning group to consider this.
 - The provision of Broadband and mobile connectivity is being considered in infrastructure planning.
- It was agreed:
 - The BTVLEP Executive will continue to work with the Bucks Planning Group/Planning departments to ensure Local Plans 'map' on to the Strategic Economic Plan.
 - Possible opportunities arising from the Housing Infrastructure fund will be investigated.

7 **BTVLEP ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK UPDATE**

- The BTVLEP has a robust governance framework in place reviewed on an annual basis.
- Business membership of the BTVLEP Board being drawn from Buckinghamshire Business First offers complete transparency. BBF directors are appointed via a recruitment process open to any business in Buckinghamshire and ensuring a diversity of skills, business size, geography, sector covered etc are considered within the Board recruitment process.
- The BTVLEP has agreed with the LEP Network to take part in peer reviews.
- It was agreed:
 - A copy of the document "7 Principles of Public Life" will be forwarded to all Board members for information.
 - Checks will be undertaken to establish if there is a requirement for the BTVLEP to have a Scrutiny Committee in place (acknowledging that the BTVLEP had scored very highly in the recent LGF3 governance checks).
- The Board agreed the revised assurance framework document subject to the inclusion of the Nolan principles.

8 **BTVLEP STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND OPERATIONAL FOCUS 2017/18**

- It was agreed to defer discussion on this subject to the next Board meeting when there will be more information available on the Industrial Strategy.

9 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

- Friday 17 March 2017, from 9.30am-12pm, National Film & Television School, Beaconsfield