



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP (BLEP) BOARD MEETING

Held Friday 17 July 2020 from 9am, via Teams

- Present:** Andrew M Smith, Pinewood Studios (Chair)
Adrian Brown, Berkeley Strategic Land Limited
Hiren Gandhi, Blaser Mills
Michael Garvey, Chandler Garvey
Alistair Lomax, Arc Universities Group
Eman Martin-Vignerte, Bosch
Clare Pelham, Epilepsy Society
Cllr Steve Bowles, Buckinghamshire Council
Cllr Steven Broadbent, Buckinghamshire Council
Cllr Isobel Darby, Buckinghamshire Council
Cllr Martin Tett, Buckinghamshire Council
- Apologies:** Philippa Batting, Buckinghamshire Business First
Lucy Edge, Satellite Applications Catapult
Richard Harrington, BLEP Chief Executive
Emma Potts, University of Buckingham
Cllr Nick Naylor, Buckinghamshire Council
- In attendance:** Daniel Lindsay, Hatch Associates
Chris Rawson, Hatch Associates
Kevin Hoctor, BEIS
Richard Ambrose, Buckinghamshire Council (Section 151 Officer)
Ian Barham, BLEP Partnerships Manager
John Rippon, BLEP Programme Manager
Sarah Fraser

SUMMARY MINUTES

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- Emma Potts, Lucy Edge and Gavin Brooks, all having an interest in applications to the Local Growth Fund (LGF)/Getting Building Fund (GBF), took no part in discussions around project selection for support through these funds.

2 PROJECTS APPRAISAL

- Further to the papers previously circulated, the Board received an overview of the assessment process carried out by independent assessors, Hatch Associates, acknowledged the due diligence carried out including greater engagement with project sponsors bidding for LGF monies due to longer timeframes, and considered the resulting project recommendation.
- Much larger projects originally submitted to the Getting Building Fund have scaled back their requirements to meet the limitations of the funding allocated, the ambition remaining to pursue funding for the remaining elements of these larger projects (and Arc-wide projects) through the Comprehensive Spending Review or other funding rounds.

- It was reported Government based Getting Building Fund allocations on population size overlaid with additional considerations around vulnerability to COVID-19 impact, area resilience, people's ability to work from home and the presence of sectors particularly impacted by the pandemic. It was noted Government recognises the work involved in producing submissions in extremely tight timeframes but was grateful to see the detail for projects that could quickly deliver jobs and economic growth. It was considered the work undertaken will be useful in future bidding rounds and that access to a strong pipeline of well-developed projects will enable the LEP to be highly responsive to future funding opportunities. That said, the Board expressed frustration at the work required to produce submissions within extremely tight timescales for what appeared to be allocations based to large extent on population size.
- Martin Tett commented that he was disappointed with the decision not to include the A355 project in the initial submission to MHCLG. It was agreed future submissions, once finalised, will be shared with Board members prior to submission.
- It was further agreed the executive will capture lessons learned from the latest bidding round, both from the LEP's perspective and from Government's, with a view to improving this process for future bidding rounds. This report to be shared with Government.
- The Board noted that the due diligence carried out in the timescales allowed suggested all projects recommended are deliverable within the timescales prescribed by Government, offer good returns in terms of economic growth and are a good strategic fit with the LEP's aims.
- It was noted those shortlisted projects not recommended for this submission, in addition to others discussed at previous meetings, were still considered to be viable projects, just not within the current timescales. It was confirmed these projects would be included in the pipeline of projects being developed; the executive seeking to strengthen this pipeline through working more closely with agencies promoting schemes, with the Arc Universities group etc, to support the recovery plans for Buckinghamshire and across the wider Arc geography.
- A response from the Secretary of State re the Getting Building Fund submission is expected before Parliament's summer recess and it was confirmed an update will be provided at the BLEP Board meeting on 30 July 2020.

The Board

- **Approved combining the assessment of the remaining Local Growth Fund allocation (£1.7m) with the new Getting Building Fund (£7.7m) assessment.**
- **Noted the feedback received from the independent scheme assessment and approved the recommended schemes, with caveats discussed during the meeting around some additional financial assurances from one of the applicants.**
- **Authorised the BLEP Board Chair and Section 151 Officer to sign the submission to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government for the Getting Building Fund approval on behalf of the BLEP Board.**

3 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

- Thursday 30 July 2020, 9.30am, Board meeting, via Zoom
- Friday 18 September 2020, 2.00pm, Board meeting, Bosch Innovation Hub
- Friday 4 December 2020, 9.30am, Board meeting, Pinewood Studios