



CONFIDENTIAL

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LEP (BLEP) CAPITAL PROGRAMME SUB GROUP BRIEFING

Held Friday 4 September 2020 from 3.30pm via Teams

Present: Adrian Brown (Chairing) (AB)
Cllr Steven Broadbent (SB)

Apologies Hiren Gandhi
Michael Garvey
Richard Harrington
Clare Pelham

In attendance: Ian Barham (IB)
John Rippon (JR)
Sarah Fraser (SF)

MINUTES

ACTION

1 This meeting of the Capital Programme Sub Group was held as an update briefing, there not being a quorum to hold a formal meeting.

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST FULL SUB GROUP MEETING – 3 April 2020

JR provided an update on progress with matters arising from the meeting on 3 April, not covered on the agenda:

- **Marlow to Maidenhead Rail Improvements £1.7m** – Following discussion at the last meeting it was confirmed this project is no longer in the BLEP capital programme. Great Western Railway are progressing the project and this may come back to BLEP for support through future funding rounds or Network Rail may also approach Government directly.
- **Digital Innovation/Medical Hubs** – There had been a number of delays in delivering these projects early in the year and these were exacerbated due to COVID-19. Oxford Innovation (managing agent) continues to develop online support with a view to mobilising the hubs in the coming months. KPIs had been developed for both hubs but these will need to be reviewed in light of the impact of COVID-19. In terms of delivery expenditure, both projects are progressing well. There will, however, be a lag in delivery of outputs, recognising the demand for this type of space is likely to increase as businesses take the decision to step back from traditional office based workplaces moving to a mixed model of home/shared space working.

3 LOCAL GROWTH FUND (LGF) PROGRAMME UPDATE AND RISKS

Further to the report circulated, JR provided an overview of the LGF projects, focussing on those projects at highest risk, as below:

3.1 Eastern Link Road South/Woodlands Development (Buckinghamshire Council)

The key issue with this project remains the receipt of planning permission, delayed most recently due to undertaking further environmental and transport modelling work. Planning approvals must be in place prior to the end of March 2021 to enable drawdown of £10m LGF monies.

Those present felt it would be very beneficial to receive a detailed update from Buckinghamshire Council to the full BLEP Board on 18 September on how to swiftly progress this project.

3.2 A355 Link Road Beaconsfield (Buckinghamshire Council)

It was reported Andrew Smith will be writing as BLEP Chair to Inland Homes asking them to work proactively with the LEP and Buckinghamshire Council to progress this project accelerating delivery of the link road, current indications suggesting this will not be completed until 2023/24. **JR undertook to forward a copy of this letter to the Capital Programme Sub Group members.**

3.3 Bucks Creates @ Pinewood

JR outlined issues in the relationship between Buckinghamshire New University (BNU) with whom BLEP has a contract, and Creative Media Skill (CMS), contracted by BNU to deliver elements of this project.

JR

LGF Grant Payment

It was confirmed the final third of the LGF grant payment was received by BLEP in August (£1.9m).

LGF Data Returns

- 3.4 Those present noted the quarterly return dates in the report circulated and suggested it would be most sensible to hold future Sub Group meetings a week prior to these submission dates to enable review of submissions. **SF to amend the November 2020 meeting date accordingly.**

3.5

LGF Programme Impact Assessment

It was confirmed Hatch Associates will be completing an independent evaluation of the LGF programme to assess the impact on 'place' of the capital investment made in this programme.

3.6

SF

4 **GETTING BUILDING FUND UPDATE**

It was reported the final offer letter on the Getting Building Fund is still awaited from Government.

Offer letters from BLEP to those project sponsors approved by the BLEP Board at its meeting on 17 July 2020 have been prepared and will be sent once the final offer letter from Government is received. On a programme with such a tight delivery timeframe, it was thought disappointing that Government have delayed confirming offers.

5 **ADDITIONAL FUNDING**

It was reported a further £80k revenue funding has been confirmed to assist the LEP in the management of its capital programme.

At the moment this is a one-off commitment from Government.

6 **BUCKINGHAMSHIRE RECOVERY INVESTMENT FUND**

It was reported the first claims to the Recovery Investment Fund have been received, with around 40% having been processed and received funds. These tend to be the smaller claims agreed with bigger claims taking longer to undertake work and reclaim expenditure, but no concerns have been highlighted with any of the applications approved by the Capital Programme Sub Group.

The first evaluation on the investment made by BLEP will take place in 6 months with further reviews at the 12 and 24 month stage, which will also allow BLEP to monitor those businesses repaying CBILS and/or Bounceback loans.

IB

It was suggested it would be useful to monitor not only the jobs created/safeguarded (comparing these with the original application made) but also undertake some work reviewing those bids that were not successful to see if the lack of LEP funding has damaged their prospects in any way.

IB

7 **DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS**

The full Capital Programme Sub Group will next meet on:

- Friday 13 November 2020, from 3.30-5pm, via Teams