

## BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP (BLEP) BOARD MEETING

Held Friday 18 September 2020 from 2pm, via Teams

**Present:** Andrew M Smith, Pinewood Studios (Chair) (Part meeting)  
Philippa Batting, Buckinghamshire Business First  
Adrian Brown, Berkeley Strategic Land Limited  
Lucy Edge, Satellite Applications Catapult  
Hiren Gandhi, Blaser Mills (Part meeting)  
Michael Garvey, Chandler Garvey  
Richard Harrington, BLEP Chief Executive  
Eman Martin-Vignerte, Bosch (Part meeting)  
Cllr Steve Bowles, Buckinghamshire Council  
Cllr Steven Broadbent, Buckinghamshire Council (Part meeting)  
Cllr Isobel Darby, Buckinghamshire Council  
Cllr Nick Naylor, Buckinghamshire Council  
Cllr Martin Tett, Buckinghamshire Council

**Apologies:** Clare Pelham, Epilepsy Society

**In attendance:** Sara Dutfield, Turley (Part meeting)  
Richard Laming, Turley (Part meeting)  
Kevin Hooctor, BEIS South Central & West  
Ian Thompson, Buckinghamshire Council  
Richard Ambrose, Buckinghamshire Council (Part meeting)  
Ian Barham, BLEP Partnerships Manager  
Anthony Sowden, Aylesbury Vale Enterprise Zone Director  
Sarah Fraser

### SUMMARY MINUTES

#### 1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- Andrew Smith declared an interest in item 5 on the agenda, "Screen Industries Global Growth Hub Proposal". It was confirmed Michael Garvey would Chair this item.
- The Section 151 Officer confirmed Buckinghamshire Council LEP Board members attended the LEP Board in their capacity as LEP directors rather than Buckinghamshire Council Councillors and, as such, were not conflicted in devolution discussions.

#### 2 BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LEP BOARD RESIGNATIONS

- Emma Potts and Alistair Lomax had recently tendered their resignation from the BLEP Board.

#### 3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS – 30 JULY AND 7 SEPTEMBER 2020

- The minutes of the above meetings were agreed as accurate records of proceedings.

##### 3.1 Matters arising:

- **'Aviation Skills to Film'** – This initiative will launch officially on 12 October at Pinewood Studios. Thanks were offered to the LEP for its support for the initiative.
- **Digital Strategy** – Discussion on this will take place at the December Board.
- **Lessons learned** – The executive team is collating a note around 'lessons learned' following work on the latest funding round and will share this with the Board once complete.
- **BLEP Chair** – Tenure of the current Chair is still to be confirmed but likely to end December 2021.

#### 4 BUCKINGHAMSHIRE ECONOMIC RECOVERY PLAN

- The Economic Recovery Plan has been shared in draft with partners via the LEP website and at meetings over the last month. The Plan has been endorsed by Buckinghamshire's MPs.
- The Board noted the presentation given, commenting that as Government support withdraws there will be many redundancies and that there is a looming cash crisis in many businesses as they struggle to meet payroll costs and make loan repayments. These issues will, no doubt, be exacerbated as winter sets in, and freedoms are further restricted in the face of increasing infection rates.
- BLEP will continue to lobby Government for additional flexibilities in making loan repayments, noting the key importance of access to revenue, as well as capital, funding. BLEP will continue to work with the Buckinghamshire Business First (BBF) Growth Hub to ensure businesses continue to have access to a single source of trusted information around changing environments and support available.
- Complete clarity is needed around Buckinghamshire's asks of Government through the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) and in any Devolution Deal. Support for the existing business community will be an important element of Buckinghamshire's recovery going forward, as will the "re-imagining of place".

##### The Board:

- **Suggested the inclusion of additional financial metrics around, for example, the size of the Buckinghamshire economy pre-COVID, what the impact has been, where activity can/cannot return, and where the focus of economic activity should be going forward.**
- **Suggested the inclusion of a final chapter around CSR/Devolution asks detailing how these might 'repair' the Buckinghamshire economy enabling the county to bounce back.**
- **Suggested making clearer links between the Recovery Plan and the evidence base.**
- **Supported submission to Government by end September of the Economic Recovery Plan, with above inclusions, acknowledging no deadline has been imposed for this submission but recognising this is a precursor to the asks to be made in CSR/Devolution proposals.**

#### 5 BUCKINGHAMSHIRE DEVOLUTION AND CSR SUBMISSIONS

- The Board commented on the great strength offered to Buckinghamshire through its institutions working so closely together on these agenda; noting CSR discussions will take place ahead of publication of the Devolution White Paper; initial thoughts on CSR requested by 24 September.

##### 5.1 Buckinghamshire Devolution

- The Buckinghamshire Devolution proposal being developed through the Growth Board has received stakeholder support, including from Buckinghamshire's MPs. The Board noted the developing relationship between the Growth Board and the LEP; the LEP providing the economic input to the wider Growth Board "place" discussions.
- In the coming weeks, work will progress to establish clear metrics around the ideas expressed within the proposal, ensuring these are aligned with the Recovery Plan, CSR asks, etc and progress made on the proposal will be shared with partners, with a view to submitting to Government mid-October.
- Discussions have been held with MHCLG around how devolution will be delivered for Buckinghamshire whilst maintaining work with partners across a wider geography.

##### The Board:

- **Supported the direction of travel in the Devolution proposal, suggesting greater detail/narrative is needed in a number of areas to support the significant asks being made of Government.**
- **Noted that the business community does not recognise county boundaries and will seek to work wherever opportunities present themselves; collaboration with neighbouring will therefore continue to be important and the proposal must in no way impede trading.**

(Richard Ambrose left the meeting)

## 5.2 CSR Submission

- Whilst Government wishes to hear about aspirational use of wide-ranging funds, it was agreed also to include detail within Buckinghamshire's CSR submission on very specific asks where Government may be able to offer tactical support; submissions to be with Government by 24 September.
- The Board discussed the importance of appropriate business representation at the Growth Board table to help drive the Buckinghamshire economy forward. Maintaining links with Buckinghamshire's universities, and the wider University Group will also be important.

### **The Board agreed:**

- **BLEP/BBF will work with Buckinghamshire Council to provide detail/business case information around specific projects that would deliver significant additional benefit to the county/UK, finalising the submission prior to the 24 September deadline.**
- **It would be useful to capture in one place a clear picture of all asks being made of Government through CSR that will impact on Buckinghamshire including asks, for example, from the universities, or for flexibilities, eg, Enterprise Zone rates extension.**
- **A proposal to the Growth Board will be developed around appropriate business representation.**

## 6 **SCREEN INDUSTRIES GLOBAL GROWTH HUB PROPOSAL [REDACTED]**

(Michael Garvey assumed the Chair and, following presentation, Sara Dutfield, Richard Laming, Andrew Smith and Cllr Steven Broadbent left the meeting prior to debate on the proposal).

## 7 **CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT**

(Andrew Smith rejoined the meeting; Hiren Gandhi and Eman Martin-Vignerte left the meeting)

Further to the Chief Executive's report, previously circulated:

### 7.1 Capital Programme

- The Board noted the continued delay in securing planning approval for the Woodlands development due to additional traffic modelling, etc, required. Buckinghamshire Council representatives undertook to progress this additional work as swiftly as possible (and before the financial year end), recognising the importance of the project and expressing disappointment at the continued delay.
- The Board noted the updates and ongoing issues with the A355 Beaconsfield Link Road, and the Bucks Creates @ Pinewood projects.
- Projects to be supported through the Getting Building Fund are proceeding at risk as confirmation of funding is still to be received formally from MHCLG. It was hoped confirmation will arrive in the coming week to allow for delivery of projects in the timescales outlined by Government.
- The BLEP supported Buckinghamshire Recovery Investment Fund has now paid against 57% of claims. Monitoring and evaluation will ascertain the impact of this funding on those businesses supported.

### 7.2 Audit & Finance Sub Group

- The Board noted the update from the Sub Group meeting on 25 August and the subsequent changes to the LEP's Risk Register.
- **It was suggested the Risk Register would benefit from the inclusion of a key and a line totalling the overall risk profile of the company.**

### 7.3 Remuneration and Nomination Sub Group

- The Board noted the update from the Sub Group meeting on 10 September and the progress made on the BLEP Employee Handbook.
- **It was agreed to progress a recruitment campaign immediately for up to 4 additional BLEP Board Directors; the matter for Chair recruitment following a separate process.**

#### 7.4 Skills Advisory Panel

- The update on the work of the Skills Advisory Panel was noted and that the Buckinghamshire Skills Hub team has, once again, been ranked top performing skills team in the country.

#### 7.5 Growth Hub update

- The Board noted the significant additional work that has been, and continues to be, undertaken by the BBF Growth Hub in supporting businesses during the pandemic.

#### 7.6 England's Economic Heartland (EEH) Transport Strategy Consultation

- **The Board approved establishment of a task and finish group to review the EEH Draft Transport Strategy, preparing a response to the consultation prior to the 6 October 2020 deadline.**

### 8 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

#### 8.1 BDUK Outside In Programme

- Board members requested more information on this new programme, commenting that the executive team needs to be fully sighted on the detail of the programme.

### 9 **DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS**

- Friday 4 December 2020, 9.30am, Board meeting, Pinewood Studios or via Teams