
Title:	Buckinghamshire Growth Board & Growth Deal
Purpose:	To provide board members with an update in the development of a Buckinghamshire Growth Deal under the co-ordination of the Buckinghamshire Growth Board
Recommendation:	That board members note the progress of the recovery and growth deal submission and endorse the programme of activity being undertaken to develop business cases and investment propositions.
Impact on Risk Register	The development of this deal will be vital in growing relationships with both local partners and with national government, both of which are highlighted as priorities within the Risk Register.

At the last meeting of this board members received a presentation from Ian Thompson the Strategic Director of Buckinghamshire Council on the emerging devolution proposals being prepared by the Growth Board partners for submission to Government.

At the time it was expected that the Devolution White Paper was to be published in 2020, changes in ministerial positions has meant that this has been delayed and may now be much later in 2021.

As a result of continued dialogue with Government Officials, this proposition has been revised into a broader growth and recovery deal proposition “Succeeding as a Place, Succeeding as a Country – A scalable Buckinghamshire proposition to accelerate UK recovery”. Following additional feedback from the LEP, this proposition was endorsed by the Buckinghamshire Growth Board at its meeting on November 25th and is attached as **Appendix 1** to this report. This initial proposition has a strong economic flavour due to the strong and direct involvement of both the LEP and the Growth Hub. Over time, the purpose of the Growth Board will be to match these economic priorities with those of housing, transport, health and the environment.

This proposition is seen as part of the opening dialogue with government officials and work is already underway on the phase 2 of the submission which will further shape and refine investable propositions and supporting business cases. This second phase of work is covering 6 areas of immediate focus with a view to this being completed ahead of the Spring budget. The 6 areas of primary focus are:-

- **Aylesbury Garden Town** - Improving accessibility, delivering quality and environmentally innovative new housing, improving connectivity to new employment sites and health facilities.
- **High Wycombe Regeneration Programme** – Town Centre retail and housing renewal, transport innovation and connections between and to strategic employment hubs
- **Westcott Masterplan & Investment Programme** – Building upon the masterplan work already undertaken to sharpen the business case propositions, highlight the wider national benefits from investment and to focus on wider transport connections to growing communities.
- **Silverstone** – Expansion of the Enterprise Zone Site, development and community connections to new employment zones and the development of specialist R&D facilities.

- **Skills Investment & Freedoms** – The development of new training facilities and specialist academies, the development of apprenticeship and traineeship programmes under devolved adult education funding.
- **Digital Investment** – Developing the case for Gigabit Investment in key community and employment hubs in Buckinghamshire, building on the 5G testbed opportunities through investment pilots.

Whilst addressing these areas, a number of other important factors including the development of new innovation zones in the South Bucks area, capitalising on connections to East West Rail and highlighting the importance of Buckinghamshire as an innovation hub and testbed for wider national growth are also being developed. The recent announcement of pilot projects for the Shared Prosperity Fund may provide the opportunity to support some of these initiatives.

As a LEP we are closely involved in all 6 of these areas and are keen to ensure that the propositions build on the solid evidence base and preparatory work that we have undertaken as part of the Local Industrial Strategy and as part of the Economic Recovery Plan.

To support this process we are pleased to report that the Business Representation on the Growth Board has been extended to include 5 members from the business community including the LEP Vice-Chair, CEO, BBF Chair as well as sector representatives covering the Space and Creative Industry Sectors. Participating private sector business members will therefore continue to ensure that the economic narrative follows the leadership of both LEP and Growth Hub boards and that in return the Growth Board provide a clear direction of travel of those other priorities listed that will impact upon economy.

As well as working with the consultants Metro-Dynamics on the phase 2 propositions we are also looking in more detail to assess the relative impact of the different factors that are restricting current productivity growth in Buckinghamshire including digital connectivity, the availability of suitable and affordable business premises and housing, skills capacity, business support services and digital connectivity.

Board members are asked to: That board members note the progress of the recovery and growth deal submission and endorse the programme of activity being undertaken to develop business cases and investment propositions.