

Buckinghamshire LEP Mid-Year Review 2020-2021

Location: MS Teams	Attendees:
Date: 29.09.20	Cities and Local Growth Unit (CLGU): Pete Northover (PN), Head, OCAEA team Kevin Hoctor (KH), Buckinghamshire Area Lead, OCAEA team (Chair) Beth Hacche (BH), Buckinghamshire Deputy Area Lead, OCAEA team (Note) Buckinghamshire LEP: Richard Harrington (RH), Chief Executive Ian Barham (IB), Partnership Manager John Rippon (JR), Programme Manager Claire Hunter (CH), Head of Finance, Buckinghamshire Council
Time: 14:00-15:30	

Action from 2019-20 Annual Performance Review

Action #	Action Point	Date completed	Resolution
1	RH to provide LEP updated position on their Board representation by 1 March 2020 prior to national moderation.	Completed February 2020.	Clarity about if RH private sector role provided (TUPEd to LEP).
2	DfT to provide support for Maidenhead-Marlow Rail Scheme as required.	Completed April 2020	Scheme not going ahead as partners could not deliver by March 21. LGF reallocated to other schemes capable of delivery by March 21. Rail Scheme though remains important and will be invited to submit to Lep programme post 21.
3	RH/IB to keep CLGU/DfT informed of progress and timescales for completion of Aylesbury South East Link Road scheme.	Ongoing	LEP regularly speaking to DfT. Have some timing flexibility with project as is retained scheme.

Improvement Plan (where applicable)

N/A

Governance

Board membership

Since APR, two private sector members have resigned (in August), meaning board has nine private and five public sector members (though these two remain listed as directors on Companies House and LEP board will not meet again until November). The LEP commenced recruitment immediately reporting progress to the September Board meeting and expects to have new private sector members in the autumn, returning it to a balance of eleven private and five public sector members. The LEP highlighted C19 delays to the new unitary authority elections meant the board still had five rather than the three public sector members it had anticipated but this would change after the 2021 elections. The LEP also highlighted that two other members are reaching the end of their terms and it is advertising to replace these posts in a way that will maintain its board diversity balance.

Chair arrangements

Attendees discussed Andrew Smith's chairmanship tenure due to exceptional circumstances. IB said the LEP had asked for and secured an extension when it was incorporated in April 2019 (Andrew having originally become Chair in 2016), enabling an additional three-year term until 2022. The LEP outlined that

this was due to exceptional circumstances around unitarisation and new elections which were delayed until 2021 due to C19. The LEP also wanted to avoid Chair and Vice-Chair leaving at the same time. Andrew expected to leave at end of 2021. PN asked for the LEP to confirm these arrangements in writing.

Diversity

IB said LEP takes diversity seriously in its board composition and programmes, making the latter accessible e.g. skills programmes with young people. IB asked how the LEP can demonstrate above and beyond commitment to diversity at APR. KH and PN confirmed the LEP evidencing how it implemented diversity in its programmes would be helpful. RH asked for examples of exceptional LEP performance in this area, which KH agreed to discuss with the LEP.

Annual report/delivery plan

IB said the delivery plan is complete and up on the LEP website and agreed to circulate the link. IB said the LEP is working on the annual report, which will be published in October.

Section 151

CH said an MOU between Buckinghamshire Council and the LEP was drafted and an SLA with the newly incorporated LEP was being developed. CH said LEP and Council finance teams meet weekly, CH attends LEP sub-committees, governance issues discussed in advance of board meetings and CH or the Section 151 officer attend LEP Board Meetings. CH said there was a good open relationship, and they had no LEP risk management concerns. CH indicated she will be getting more involved in LEP work, supporting the Section 151 Officer. RH asked whether the Section 151 officer would need to attend APR or whether the S151 could delegate an appropriate officer. PN said this was likely that S151 attendance in person would be required given it was a requirement previously and CLGU would confirm expectations in advance of APR.

Scrutiny

KH asked about scrutiny. IB said a LEP commissioned LGF programme evaluation will report in November. IB flagged he attends local authority scrutiny committees and the LEP had established an Audit and Finance Sub-Committee and Capital Sub-Group. RH highlighted the LEP's risk register, accountable body relationship, and public scrutiny obligations since incorporation e.g. AGMs.

National Local Growth Assurance Exemptions

The LEP confirmed it was comfortable with the assurance requirements. KH highlighted compliance checks will be undertaken over next four to six weeks. IB asked if LEP board members resignations and recruitment plans should be highlighted on their website. PN agreed this would be sensible.

Delivery

LGF

JR highlighted that at Q1 20/21 end the LEP was at approximately 90% of overall LGF spend. He said C19 impacts on delivery were marginal as they were at the tail end of the programme and some changes had made work quicker e.g. low traffic volumes. On other specific LGF schemes, JR highlighted refreshed modelling is required for the Aylesbury Eastern Link Road but the LEP is working with Buckinghamshire Council to ensure financial defrayal before March 2021. For the South East Aylesbury Link Road (DfT retained scheme), the Council is looking to get consent in December/early new year, with commencement in the following 6-18 months. For the Bucks Creates@Pinewood project, JR highlighted applications had exceeded expectations and the LEP is working to resolve some difficulties in the relationship between the delivery partners. KH asked to be kept informed on how this plays out. On the A355, JR said the Council remained in discussion with the developers about their contribution to this scheme, but the elements the LEP had funded were delivering some outputs.

GBF

JR confirmed GBF projects were moving well already, including DISC phase one, the University of Buckinghamshire project and the National Film and Television School expansion, with claims anticipated very soon.

EZs

JR said that the Silverstone site has 80% occupancy for first two development phases and Westcott was also making progress. RH said ARLA/Woodlands phase one is complete and occupied but that the main site still requires planning consent. To mitigate against delay a deal with the landowner around employment land is being sought to fast-track negotiations once this is given.

Strategic Impact

RH asked if APR would use binary marking for strategy. PN said that this was not confirmed but that CLGU would keep the LEP informed. RH discussed the LEP's Recovery Strategy, which he said builds upon the LIS, but focuses on overall GVA generation and retention, as well as high-growth sectors. He said this was feeding into the Growth Board's work on spatial elements of growth.

PN asked how much debate there had been by the LEP board around leaving the Arc's governance arrangements. RH said the board cross-examined the Local Authority about its concerns regarding the Arc but had pragmatically decided that if the Council felt a bilateral conversation with Government around devolution would be more effective, then they would support that. IB flagged board members didn't see this as an easy decision and were clear they wanted to maintain other existing strategic partnerships, such as regular LEP chair and university meetings.

LEP Feedback

The LEP thanked KH for his support and highlighted the importance of the relationship. IB invited PN to attend some of the weekly LEP catch-ups with KH and BH, which KH will discuss with PN.

AOB

KH and PN thanked Buckinghamshire LEP for all their work on delivery and strategy. RH noted changes in the LEP Network's focus and ways of working, including that Bucks LEP has been asked to join the South East group of this network. JR flagged the significant HIF programme and its interrelationship with LGF projects around Aylesbury. CH recognised this point and noted how it was helpful to hear more about LEP projects. KH offered to meet her about CLGU's work if she wished.

Action Points

Action #	Action Point	Owner	Date to be completed	Date completed	Resolution
1	IB to provide written confirmation of the decision points and rationale around Andrew Smith's chairmanship extension.	IB			
2	KH to discuss with LEP what other LEPs previously marked as exceptional on governance have done on delivery.	KH			
3	KH to confirm who needs to attend APR and keep LEP updated on APR processes (including if strategy markings will be binary).	KH			
4	IB to circulate delivery plan link.	IB			
5	IB to keep KH updated on partner relationships at Bucks Creates@Pinewood.	IB			

6	KH to discuss potential for PN to attend some weekly catch ups.	KH			
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