

**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE THAMES VALLEY  
LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP (BTVLEP) BOARD MEETING**

Held Friday 20 November 2015 from 9.30am at The University of Buckingham, Hunter Street, Buckingham MK18 1EG

**Present:** Cllr Ralph Bagge, South Bucks District Council  
Cllr Neil Blake, Aylesbury Vale District Council (Alternate)  
Cllr Isobel Darby, Chiltern District Council  
Cllr Warren Whyte, Buckinghamshire County Council (Alternate)  
Cllr Katrina Wood, Wycombe District Council  
Rebecca Bunting, Buckinghamshire Business First (Buckinghamshire New University)  
Michael Garvey, Buckinghamshire Business First (Chandler Garvey)  
Guy Lachlan, Buckinghamshire Business First (Jones & Cocks Ltd)  
Eman Martin-Vignerte, Buckinghamshire Business First (Bosch)  
Alex Pratt, Buckinghamshire Business First (Serious Brands)  
Andrew Smith, Buckinghamshire Business First (Pinewood)

**Apologies:** Cllr Steve Bowles, Aylesbury Vale District Council  
Cllr Martin Tett, Buckinghamshire County Council  
Conor McKechnie, Buckinghamshire Business First (G E Healthcare)

**In attendance:** Robert Waters, UK Space Agency (Part meeting)  
Keith Robson, University of Surrey (Part meeting)  
Marian Sudbury, UKTI (Part meeting)  
Richard Colley, UKTI (Part meeting)  
Gareth Ralphs, UKTI (Part meeting)  
Martin Tugwell, England's Economic Heartland Strategic Alliance (Part meeting)  
Hal Painter, BIS South Central & West  
Richard Harrington, BTVLEP Chief Executive  
Jim Sims, BTVLEP Development Manager  
Ian Barham, BTVLEP Partnerships Manager  
Ruth Farwell, BTVLEP Skills Strategy Manager  
Philippa Batting, Buckinghamshire Business First  
Sarah Fraser

## **SUMMARY MINUTES**

### **1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

- There were no new declarations of interest at this meeting.

### **2 WELCOME FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF BUCKINGHAM**

- Sir Anthony Sheldon welcomed Board members to the university and outlined some of the plans the university has for the future, including the introduction of a new medical school.

### **3 UK SPACE AGENCY**

- Space is a high growth sector and the UK Space Agency is keen to work with LEPs to make the connection with local businesses to exploit the possibilities inherent in this growth.
- BTVLEP will be investing in specialised incubation facilities for key sectors in Bucks, one of which is Space.
- The ESIF Committee is considering funding towards centre management for these facilities.

- UKSA confirmed their interest in investing in the establishment of a National Space Propulsion Test Facility, part of which could be based at Westcott Venture Park. To progress £400k plus installation costs is needed for a vacuum pump (£200k provided by UKSA with £200k match funding required).
- It was agreed to explore BTVLEP investment of up to £200k, subject to the business case being brought to the Board for full approval in January 2016, clarifying whether funding will be a loan or a grant.

#### 4 **5G DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY PROJECT**

(Andrew Smith declared an interest in these discussions)

- An update was provided on progress with the 5G Digital Connectivity project and the creation of the 5G Innovation Centre.
- The bulk of the investment made in the 5G project has been used to create the test bed located at the University of Surrey, the only facility of its kind in the world, offering people the opportunity to test products and services that will run across this new generation software.
- The next phase of the project will be to establish regional “Step Out” centres, including a centre within Bucks, and to involve local SMEs.
- The Board supported the recommendation that the executive work very closely with the University of Surrey deploying funding to create a Step Out location in Bucks following a clear and transparent process for identifying the most appropriate location for this Step Out centre.
- A decision on the location of the Step Out facility (and whether there is a possibility to stretch funding to more than one Step Out facility) will form an agenda item at the January 2016 BTVLEP Board meeting.

#### 5 **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING – 11 September 2015**

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as an accurate record.

#### 6 **LOCAL GROWTH FUND UPDATE**

- The Board confirmed the original agreements set for each of the projects within the Local Growth Fund (noting the underspend on the project at Amersham & Wycombe College providing more skills funding to utilise) and delegated authority to the Chief Executive/Section 151 Officer to:
  - Sign the offer letter for FULL APPROVAL of £1.46m maximum grant for the Stocklake Link project once the finances have been reviewed by the S151 Officer, with a clear requirement that the scheme sponsor produces a Quantified Risk Assessment;
  - Sign an offer letter for FULL APPROVAL of £2.32m maximum grant for the Amersham and Wycombe College project providing more detailed information is forthcoming in respect of the Block B refurbishment; clarification about what the potential match funding outturn would be if the 3G hockey pitch does not receive planning consent and what the college proposes to do to close any potential match funding ‘gap’ should this situation arise; identification of a named project manager for the LEP to liaise with; establishment of monthly project management meetings; and that the scheme sponsor produces a Quantified Risk Assessment;
  - Sign an offer letter for CONDITIONAL APPROVAL of a maximum of £1.75m grant for the A413 scheme, subject to an independent cost review; the production of a Quantified Risk Assessment; and the allocation of 3% Optimism Bias at Full Approval;
  - Sign an offer letter for CONDITIONAL APPROVAL of £1.53m grant for the Taplow scheme, subject to submission of material for full approval (summary of consultation responses, firm project budget, procurement response, Quantified Risk Assessment etc.); an Independent Cost review post procurement (if deemed necessary to satisfy VfM requirements because of procurement approach); completion of a footpath condition survey; and the allocation of 3% Optimism Bias at Full Approval;
  - Sign an offer letter for CONDITIONAL APPROVAL of £525,000 grant for the Iver scheme, subject to: confirmation of scope of scheme; confirmation of programme; completion of consultation; submission of material for full approval (consultation responses, firm project budget, procurement response, Quantified Risk Assessment etc).

- The executive team were asked to produce a report for the next Board meeting highlighting any risks by exception.

## 7 **SKILLS REPORT**

- The BTVLEP is making good progress on its schools and employer engagement work. External endorsement of this work was received during a visit from the Careers and Enterprise Company, who see the BTVLEP work as being an example of best practice.
- The skills team have been working very closely with the AVDC Economic Development Scrutiny Team, which has been extremely helpful in making best use of resources available and ensuring there is no duplication of work between the BTVLEP and AVDC.
- The future skills work plan, both in the short and medium terms, is being reviewed. A paper will be brought to the January BTVLEP Board meeting looking at how to make the skills team/work sustainable going forward without the need for further grants.
- Area Based Reviews will commence in January 2016 (the BTVLEP being in the second wave of these). Recommendations have been made to the SFA re colleges to include in the review and it has been agreed that all colleges in Bucks will be included. The results of the Area Based Reviews will be incorporated into the work being undertaken to ensure young people are prepared for the work place.
- A suggested area of future focus was the looming shortage of all skills in the Creative Industries sector.

## 8 **ENGLAND'S ECONOMIC HEARTLAND STRATEGIC ALLIANCE**

- The Board unanimously supported BTVLEP's membership of the Strategic Transport Forum (including representation from 7 Local Transport Authorities and 4 LEPs) and nominated Cllr Steve Bowles as its representative, with Wycombe District Council providing an alternate should this be required.

## 9 **SPENDING REVIEW, EMERGING GOVERNMENT LEGISLATION AND NATIONAL DEVOLUTION**

- An update from Whitehall on the emerging national picture was provided.
- Several devolution deals have already been agreed, with more expected in the coming months, including with counties in the south of England that have already submitted proposals.
- Devolution deals agreed have all included an element of funding for infrastructure. Previously, fiscal neutrality has been a prerequisite of devolution deals; there now appears to be some flexibility on this.
- Central government are keen to agree devolution deals across the country, the indications being that a Combined Authority is the minimum governance required for a deal. Government are also looking at deals in terms of functional economic areas and it will be up to Buckinghamshire to make the case for the area that it represents. The first step towards this, though, is to be clear on the governance arrangements that will be in place.

## 10 **CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT**

- The BTVLEP team will be working on a recommended future shape for the BTVLEP over the next few months. The results of this work will be brought back to the January meeting.

## 11 **UKTI AND INWARD INVESTMENT IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

- Representatives from UKTI gave a presentation on the broad scope of the work of the UKTI, how the organisation supports investment and what can be achieved with partners.
- Bucks has a real USP in the form of the LEP's engagement with its business community. The BTVLEP were urged to continue this engagement, to find out what businesses want and need, and establish what opportunities are most likely to "land" in the county.

## 12 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

### 12.1 East West Rail

- Further to the report previously circulated, the concerns around the possible delays in the East West Rail project were highlighted as being of significant issue for Bucks, particularly with much of the county's growth due to take place in the north of the county.

### 12.2 Horizon 2020

- It was confirmed the Horizon 2020 is an EU, full cost recovery project which will collate and interrogate data on our current road network and look at how we can improve our road infrastructure. BCC are partners on this project and Bucks Advantage (underwritten by the BTVLEP) is providing the private sector match funding.

### 12.3 Appointment of BTVLEP Chairman

- Business nominations to the Board were confirmed as being Rebecca Bunting, Eman Martin-Vignerte, Andrew Smith, Guy Lachlan and Michael Garvey.
- Alex Pratt nominated Andrew Smith to take over the role of BTVLEP Chairman. This was seconded by Cllr Ralph Bagge and Cllr Isobel Darby, and carried unanimously.
- The Board thanked Alex for the tremendous contribution he had made to the BTVLEP in the last four years, since its establishment in 2011.

## 13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Friday 29 January 2016, from 9.30am, Pinewood Studios, Pinewood Road, Iver Heath SLO ONH.