

**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP (BLEP)
BOARD MEETING**

Held Thursday 9 September 2021 from 8.30am, via Teams

Present: Andrew M Smith, Pinewood Studios (Chair)
Philippa Batting, Buckinghamshire Business First
Adrian Brown, Berkeley Strategic Land Limited
Lucy Edge, Satellite Applications Catapult (Part meeting)
Hiren Gandhi, Blaser Mills
Richard Harrington, BLEP Chief Executive
Clare Pelham, Epilepsy Society
Martina Porter, All Spring Media
Prof James Tooley, University of Buckingham
Cllr Steven Broadbent, Buckinghamshire Council
Cllr Martin Tett, Buckinghamshire Council
Cllr Gareth Williams, Buckinghamshire Council

Apologies: Eman Martin-Vignerte, Bosch

In attendance: Emily Cashen, MHCLG as Deputy Area Lead for Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire
Kevin Hocht, BEIS/MHCLG Cities and Local Growth Unit
Lisa Michelson, Buckinghamshire Council
Ian Barham, BLEP, Partnership Director
Sarah Fraser

SUMMARY MINUTES

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- Whilst there were no new declarations of interest at this meeting, it was noted development of the Buckinghamshire County Deal involves a number of those on the BLEP Board. Following advice from the Section 151 Officer, and noting no application for funding was being made to the LEP, discussion on this item continued with all Board members present.

2 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING – 21 May 2021

- The Minutes of the above meeting were agreed as an accurate record.

3 LEP REVIEW

- The Board noted the delay in concluding the LEP Review, and that the outcome will be tied to the publication of the Levelling Up White Paper (expected in October 2021).
- The LEP Network is liaising with Government on the benefits associated with continuation of evolved LEPs, delivering added value within defined core functions where the LEPs are best placed to make the biggest contribution to the national economy.
- Clarity is awaited from the LEP Review on future funding streams and any proposed structural change required to LEPs.
- Government is aware the majority of LEPs are limited companies and that Directors have responsibilities under the Companies Act. Board members emphasised the desire that any change, if required, takes place in an orderly and timely fashion.

- Recognising the difficulties for LEPs in recruiting new Board members/Chairs as a result of the ongoing uncertainty brought about by the delayed LEP Review, Government has issued an amendment to the National Assurance Framework allowing the continuation of existing LEP Chairs beyond the limits of their current term.

The Board:

- **Supported the work being undertaken with the LEP Network by the executive team, promoting the benefits of the continuation of 'evolved' LEPs.**
- **Supported making the ask of Government that Andrew Smith's Chairmanship be extended pending completion of the LEP Review.**

4 BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY DEAL

(Clare Pelham declared an interest in these discussions in respect of the Epilepsy Society working on a significant planned expansion to the Society's research facilities.)

- Further to the paper provided, the Board noted the significant progress made since the last Board meeting in the development of Government policy around the concept of County Deals; development led in large part by Buckinghamshire.
- The Board noted the detail of the Buckinghamshire County Deal being progressed through the Buckinghamshire Growth Board; the LEP leading on the innovation propositions being developed, and the associated ask for devolution of freedoms and flexibilities.

The Board:

- **Supported the direction of travel of the proposals presented.**

5 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- Nothing of note.

6 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- Friday 8 October 2021, 9.30am-12pm, venue tbc but will be face to face (likely Westcott)