

Agenda Item 5 OPEN

Title:	County Deal & Spending Review 2021.
Purpose:	To update Board members on the work being undertaken at present to prepare for the Spending Review and to secure a County Deal for Buckinghamshire. To present the independent assessment of the Westcott DISC and Apprenticeship Centre Business Case in line with the National Governance Framework.
Recommendation(s):	That members note the content of this report and endorse the Business Case for the Westcott DISC & Apprenticeship Centre in preparation for any funding announcement emerging from the Spending Review process.
Impact on Risk Register:	The Spending Review will set a multi-year funding framework for Government including both capital and revenue costs that will impact on this LEP. We want to ensure that we are following the LEP National Assurance Framework guidelines for independently assessing potential capital projects. Advance approval of business cases will support swift delivery upon approval of funding.

1 Spending Review 2021

The Spending Review 2021 will take place on October 27th alongside the Autumn Budget announcement. After the government implemented a one-year spending review in 2020, due to the coronavirus pandemic, the Treasury and departments are now returning to a full three-year review. This full review will set the direction of government for the remainder of the parliament and will reveal much about the future of public services after Covid.

Major decisions will be made around the resilience of public services to respond to shocks like pandemics, translating the government's levelling-up agenda into long-term reforms, and building the post-Brexit business environment that will allow the UK to flourish on the global stage. It is likely that the initial announcements of County Deals will be made as part of the budget process.

In his letter to departments announcing the review the Chancellor set out the following priorities for the review. A copy of this letter is attached as **Appendix 1** to this report: -

- Ensuring strong and innovative public services – making people's lives better across the country by investing in the NHS, education, the criminal justice system and housing;
- Levelling up across the UK to increase and spread opportunity; unleash the potential of places by improving outcomes UK-wide where they lag and working closely with local leaders; and strengthen the private sector where it is weak;

- Leading the transition to Net Zero across the country and more globally;
- Advancing Global Britain and seizing the opportunities of EU Exit;
- Delivering our Plan for Growth – delivering on our ambitious plans for an infrastructure and innovation revolution and cementing the UK as a scientific superpower, working in close partnership with the private sector.

The LEP Network have made a formal representation to the review on behalf of the Network that sets out the future value that evolved LEPs through our unique partnership and convening power will bring. This strongly supports the government's priority policy areas in as cost efficient a way as possible with a focus on translating national Levelling Up ambitions at the local level, enabling local businesses to transition to Net Zero at pace, building the future talent pool of local skills that business needs, helping local firms exploit international trade opportunities as part of a Global facing Britain, investing in the local innovation and R&D that will help bring all this about, and building the infrastructure that will connect areas and visibly level up every region across the country.

The LEP Network are seeking a long-lasting settlement that secures our core funding and which provides the capital and revenue that our evolved roles will require.

2 Buckinghamshire County Deal

The Government reshuffle announced on September 15th resulted in the cancellation of the planned meeting with government officials in Buckinghamshire scheduled for the following day. Several departments, most notably the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) (formerly MHCLG), welcomed new ministerial teams and officials were required to drop existing commitments to prepare welcome briefings. A revised date for this meeting is now scheduled for 1st December after the Autumn Budget and Spending Review.

As part of the continued engagement process a number of ministerial conversations have been lined up for Conference week and the briefing note prepared has already been shared with Board members.

We are also taking the opportunity presented by this delay to further strengthen our propositions and to develop and assess the project business cases. We have now shared the updated Westcott Disruptive Innovative Space Centre and Apprenticeship Hub with Hatch Associates to undertake an independent review and work with the Satellite Application Catapult to further refine the business case.

Representatives from Hatch and the Satellite Application Catapult have been invited to the meeting to present their feedback on the business case and to answer any questions that the board may have regarding this project. The completion of this independent assessment will further strengthen the funding submission and will support swift delivery upon approval of funding. A copy of the Full Business Case is attached as **Appendix 2** to this report.

Time permitting we aim to bring the remaining County Deal innovation business cases forward for Board consideration and comment. We are finalising the templates of the remaining current innovation propositions that we have raised with officials as early candidates for investment activity that we would prioritise under a multi year settlement and will share these shortly.

Board members are asked to:

Note the content of this report and endorse the Business Case for the Westcott DISC & Apprenticeship Centre in preparation for any funding announcement emerging from the Spending Review process.