
Title: Assurance and Governance Update

Purpose: To inform members of the feedback from the BTVLEP Annual Conversation and ensure BTVLEP compliance with the revised National Assurance Framework.

Board members are asked to:

- 1 Note the Government feedback from the Annual Conversation.**
- 2 Commit to and meet the LEP National Assurance Review best practice guidelines by 28th February 2018.**
- 3 Endorse BTVLEP Board nominations onto sub-board, working groups and outside bodies.**

1 Annual Conversation

Andrew Smith led a small group of board members and Executive Team representatives and our section 151 Officer Richard Ambrose to participate in the Annual Conversation with Government on November 30th 2017. The discussion was chaired by Hannah Rignell the Deputy Director of the Cities and Local Growth Unit and covered a number of items surrounding programme delivery, strategic direction and assurance and accountability. The Note of the meeting is attached as **Appendix 1**.

The discussion was highly positive and in summing up Hannah stated BTVLEP was evidently ambitious, performing well and was well placed to manage the significant strategic engagement and delivery of a pilot Local Industrial Strategy and meeting HMG's ambition for the Cam-MK-Oxon corridor. In terms of LGF and spend to profile, it was noted that, in the event that the Eastern Link Road project proceeds as anticipated now that the resolution to grant planning permission has been secured, the LEP overall LGF programme will be very positive at this stage in the programme. The Executive gave the undertaken to focus on acceleration of this particular infrastructure project while maintaining appropriate safeguards.

2 Confirmation of Core Funding

Jake Berry MP and Andrew Griffiths MP wrote jointly to the BTVLEP Chairman on January 23rd (see **Appendix 2**) to thank BTVLEP for the successful business and civic leadership undertaken to date and to reconfirm the central role that LEPs have been asked to perform in respect of the development of Local Industrial Strategies to which the Prime Minister is attuned having requested bi-annual meetings with LEP chairmen. The letter importantly confirmed core and capacity BTVLEP funding of £500,000 pa for two years subject to the usual requirement of match funding and the additional requirement, as this is the first time that government has allocated over two years, to comply with the LEP National Assurance Framework and to have implemented the recommendations of the Mary Ney Review. The letter further confirmed Growth Hub Core Funding for the next two years at existing levels (£287,000 pa).

3 LEP Governance & Transparency Update

The DCLG (now MHCLG) Non-Executive Director Review (Mary Ney) into Local Enterprise Partnership Governance and Transparency was published on the 26th October 2017. Following publication Director General Simon Ridley wrote to all LEP Chairs to confirm that Government had accepted the Ney Review recommendations in full and would set out the approach regarding the implementation process. Over the past few months, government officials have been engaging with LEPs to discuss the Ney Review recommendations, this engagement included a conference call with LEP Chairs on January 12th in which Andrew Smith and Richard Harrington participated.

The conversation started with context setting highlighting renewed emphasis on housing, business development through the lens of Industrial Strategy and inviting comment on the issue of LEP overlap as a topic to be addressed in the delayed LEP Review, that is now anticipated in April. Issues addressed in detail included clarification of the requirement to publish papers within five days, redaction of confidential information, the requirement to hold meetings in public (not stipulated but may come in later via the LEP Review), whistle blowing and complaint arrangements, code of conduct and register of interest.

To help support LEPs to implement the Ney Review recommendations MHCLG has developed a Best Practice Guidance to set out the minimum standards required for certain governance and transparency requirements. The final document was circulated to LEPs on January 24th and is attached as **Appendix 3** to this report. This document includes updated guidance in the following areas:-

- Guidance on the publication of meeting and agenda items.
- Guidance and an example of confidential reporting procedures for third parties and the public.
- An example Whistleblowing Policy.
- An example Code of Conduct.
- A bespoke proforma Register of interests for all LEPs to adopt.

Our current assurance framework already covers all of these areas and the revised register of interests, based on the suggested proforma has been shared with all board members and senior staff involved in decision making processes for completion by the end of January 2018. In addition, we will ensure that a copy of all non-confidential board papers are published on the BTVLEP website a minimum of 5 days ahead of BTVLEP Board Meetings and will look into best practice recommendations such as hosting an annual general meeting for BTVLEP in 2018.

The BTVLEP Section 151 Officer is required to formally respond to Government by February 28th to confirm that BTVLEP is fully compliant with the new regulations. In addition to refreshing the National LEP Assurance Framework additional guidance on the Review recommendations will likely be provided in 2018 following the conclusion of the ministerial review into LEPs.

4 Board Member Representation

Following the departure of Guy Lachlan from both the BTVLEP and the BBF Board a vacancy for a private sector representative on the BTVLEP board has arisen. In line with our governance arrangements the nomination for this position needs to be made by the BBF board.

At its meeting on 23 November 2017 the BBF Board agreed to nominate Alex Pratt as the fifth business representative on the Buckinghamshire Thames Valley LEP Board, replacing Guy. The other existing nominations to the BTVLEP Board remain:-

- Andrew Smith, BTVLEP Chairman
- Rebecca Bunting
- Eman Martin-Vignerte
- Michael Garvey

The BBF Board will further consider succession to the BTVLEP Board once recently recruited BBF directors have bedded into the organisation. The remaining BBF directors, not directly nominated as BTVLEP Board members, would provide a “pool” of alternates rather than individuals being nominated to deputise for specific BTVLEP Board members. This allows the private sector to provide appropriate representation at every Board meeting.

The BBF Board noted at the meeting on 23 November 2017 that a new private sector Chairman will be needed for the ESIF Committee, the Enterprise Zone Board, and the Buckinghamshire Business Group (post January 2018) this was to be given further consideration at the BBF Board at its meeting on 24 January 2018. Taking on board these recommendations it is proposed that the following board members undertake the following roles on behalf of BTVLEP for 2018. It is proposed that all new nominations are agreed for a two year period with immediate effect.

Role	Recommendation
BTVLEP Chairman	Andrew Smith
BTVLEP Vice-Chairman	Steve Bowles
Skills Board Chairman	Rebecca Bunting
Enterprise Zone Management Board Chairman	Alex Pratt
Aylesbury Garden Town Programme Board Representative	Nick Naylor
LGF Programme Board	Andrew Smith, Nick Naylor, Eman Martin-Vignerte, Katrina Wood
Digital Infrastructure Group	Michael Garvey
Bucks Business Group	Eman Martin-Vignerte
England’s Economic Heartland Strategic Alliance Sub-National Transport Board	Katrina Wood
ESIF Committee Chairman	TBC – BBF Representation
Bucks Planning Group Representative	Michael Garvey
Buckinghamshire Local Transport Board	Martin Tett & Michael Garvey
Oxford to Cambridge Corridor Leaders Representative	Andrew Smith
Governance and Regulation Committee	Rebecca Bunting, Isobel Darby & Andrew Smith
Buckinghamshire Advantage Management Board	Isobel Darby, Katrina Wood, Nick Naylor, Martin Tett, Alex Pratt

Members are asked to :-

- 1 Note the positive feedback from the Annual Conversation with Government.**
- 2 Commit to meeting the requirements from LEP National Assurance Review best practice guidelines.**
- 3 Endorse the proposed recommendations for BTVLEP Board nominations onto sub-board, working groups and outside bodies.**