

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

Held Friday 23 March 2018 from 9.30am at Aylesbury College, Oxford Road, Aylesbury, Bucks HP21 8PD

<b>Present:</b>	Cllr Neil Blake, Aylesbury Vale District Council (Alternate)	(NB)
	Cllr Isobel Darby, Chiltern District Council	(ID)
	Cllr Nick Naylor, South Bucks District Council	(NN)
	Cllr Martin Tett, Buckinghamshire County Council	(MT)
	Cllr Katrina Wood, Wycombe District Council	(KW)
	Rebecca Bunting, Buckinghamshire Business First (Buckinghamshire New University)	(RB)
	Michael Garvey, Buckinghamshire Business First (Chandler Garvey)	(MG)
	Eman Martin-Vignerte, Buckinghamshire Business First (Bosch)	(EMV)
	Andrew Smith, Buckinghamshire Business First (Pinewood)	(AS)
	Adam Stronach, Buckinghamshire Business First (Harwood Hutton) (Alternate)	(ASt)
<b>Apologies:</b>	Cllr Steve Bowles, Aylesbury Vale District Council	
<b>In attendance:</b>	Louise Hurren, Ringway Jacobs (Part meeting)	(LH)
	Prof James Bennett, Royal Holloway University (Part meeting)	(JB)
	Richard Turl, BEIS South Central & West	(RT)
	Richard Ambrose, Buckinghamshire County Council	(RA)
	Philippa Batting, BBF Managing Director	(PB)
	Richard Harrington, BTVLEP Chief Executive	(RH)
	Ian Barham, BTVLEP Partnerships Manager	(IB)
	Jackie Campbell, BTVLEP Skills Development Manager	(JC)
	Sarah Fraser	(SF)

## MINUTES

### ACTION

#### 1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Andrew Smith declared an interest in discussions around agenda item 6, the Story Futures Creative Cluster programme, and agenda item 7c (Local Growth Fund) in relation to Creative Media Skills (as a tenant of Pinewood Studios); he also declared he had recently taken on the Chairmanship of the DCMS/LEP Forum.

Rebecca Bunting declared an interest in discussions around agenda item 7c (Local Growth Fund) in relation to the bid submitted by Buckinghamshire New University.

#### 2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING - 2 February 2018

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

##### 2.1 Matters arising:

**Eastern Link Road South** - The Board had previously delegated authority to NN/AS to progress discussions on the ELR contract letter, which should include appropriate clawback provision. It was hoped to achieve final sign off on this prior to the end of March/Early April.

All other outstanding actions had been completed or were covered on the agenda.

**3 OXFORD TO CAMBRIDGE EXPRESSWAY** (Presentation attached)

Louise Hurren joined the meeting and provided an overview on the process being undertaken by Government in identifying the broad corridor for the Oxford to Cambridge expressway and, once this has been defined, the specific route to be taken.

It was confirmed comments on the proposed corridor route must be submitted by 12 April, following which Highways England will form a purely factual report to forward to Government, with a decision expected on the preferred route during summer 2018. A consultation exercise is being undertaken with strategic groups, including Local Authorities, LEPs, and environmental groups etc, in the area with the aim of obtaining a balanced view on the challenges and opportunities available.

It was confirmed prioritisation will be based on the work undertaken by Highways England on the growth opportunities along the corridor. This will include the growth identified in Local Plans but also the possibilities that might be unlocked through the expressway.

The Board commented that the Expressway offered great potential but that the consultation exercise appears to have been rushed, with important information only recently shared, whilst recognising the broad information had been shared in earlier report iterations circulated. There was deep concern expressed at the lack of any public engagement prior to the corridor route being agreed.

It was noted no information had been shared on the weightings to be applied to the assessment criteria. The Board commented that it hoped Highways England would apply greater weight to the concerns/suggestions of those areas to be most affected by the construction of the expressway.

Despite assurances that the Expressway will be accessible to the area, Board members had received no clear information on ingress/egress to the Expressway and no information had been shared on linkages to other areas such as Heathrow, the M4 corridor, the East Midlands, Luton etc. The Board felt the focus currently appeared to be on linking Oxford to Cambridge with little thought of how to ensure the wider geography benefitted from this new piece of infrastructure, and were worried the proposals were being assessed against the National Infrastructure Commission's thinking that growth is being held back by a lack of housing supply, which it was considered may not be the case.

The Board questioned whether a hybrid of the corridor routes proposed might be considered to overcome significant issues with the A34, A418 etc that may arise with the existing proposals, and better service the three new Enterprise Zones in Buckinghamshire. Recognising that Highways England is sharing information with England's Economic Heartland, it was suggested Government would benefit by awaiting the outcome of Local Industrial Strategy work looking closely at how to unlock growth along the arc area in the coming 30 years.

The Board questioned the rationale of placing the Buckinghamshire Thames Valley LEP in the South Western arc group, as this seemed inappropriate. It was also noted that South Bucks District Council is grouped separately to Chiltern District Council and this was unhelpful.

The Board thanked LH for the update provided but voiced significant concerns and frustrations with the consultation process and the lack of appropriate engagement to date.

It was confirmed an initial response to the consultation will be drafted (and shared before submission) to pick up concerns re criteria weighting, specific corridor route issues, the need to look at north/south connectivity to maximise the benefit of access, for example, to Heathrow, and the poor communication to date with LEPs.

RH/IB

Board members were asked to forward any further thoughts for inclusion in this response by the end of March and to share where Local Authority responses will touch on common issues, recognising that there will be local nuances.

LAs

RT/LH undertook to provide answers where possible on some of the areas above.

RT/LH

#### 4 CAMBRIDGE, MILTON KEYNES, OXFORD GROWTH CORRIDOR

##### 4.1 Local Industrial Strategies

Further to the report provided it was confirmed a task and finish group has been established through Buckinghamshire Advantage to move development of the Buckinghamshire Local Industrial Strategy forward over the course of the summer, this work then being amalgamated with neighbouring areas to form a cross-corridor strategy by December. The timetable for this process will allow for appropriate Local Authorities' approval processes to be completed prior to submission to Government in March 2019.

The vision document created for the corridor has been shared and work will continue to develop this. The branding for the corridor is still very much around Oxford and Cambridge as global brands, but it has been suggested that a broadening of this is required.

England's Economic Heartland has pressed for many months for LEPs to be driving decisions on economic strategy.

It was confirmed a major conference is being organised for 21 June 2018 to explore the economic opportunities associated with the corridor and, additionally, that engagement with local stakeholders (public and private sector) will take place once there is a document in place.

Government has said that Local Industrial Strategies should not be weighty tomes but a brief script displaying a clear understanding of the local economy, the potential for growth, and how this growth can be unlocked; something echoed by Iain Stewart MP, Government's Champion for the Growth Corridor. **It was agreed to invite Iain Stewart MP to a future meeting.**

RH

It was acknowledged that the National Infrastructure Commission report and announcements on the Local Industrial Strategy coming together had produced some confusion.

##### 4.2 Science and Innovation Audits

The Science and Innovation Audits are a route through which data can be collected to support the possibility of sector deals discussed when Government launched the Local Industrial Strategy. No cost is associated with these audits, the output of which will be a report on the challenges and opportunities faced and the possibility of unlocking future funding.

##### 4.3 Central Area Growth Board - BTVLEP Representation

Further to the report provided, it was noted Aylesbury Vale, Wycombe, Chiltern and South Bucks District Councils had all independently accepted the invitation to be part of the Central Area Growth Board and felt this offered the benefit of ensuring the county's voice is heard in a wider strategic setting, particularly in matters, for example, like the Expressway and placing north/south connectivity as a key consideration. District Council representatives felt the

Central Area Growth Board had appropriately considered governance issues and that individual views are taken and respected at Board level.

The BTVLEP executive outlined concerns with the Central Area Growth Board model which it felt did not offer balanced public/private sector representation (unlike the Oxfordshire Growth Board model) nor a clear definition on roles and responsibilities, inadequately representing the views of the business community.

Private sector BTVLEP Board members echoed the above concerns and suggested it would seem to make greater sense for the Growth Boards to follow LEP geography (the BTVLEP having been extremely successful in the past) across the corridor, enabling better representation of Buckinghamshire's needs, particularly in the phase to come which will look at how to prioritise funding, always recognising that growth is not constrained to individual LEP boundaries and the BTVLEP is working with neighbouring LEPs on a number of initiatives.

**The Board agreed to delay joining the Central Growth Board pending the outcome of the LEP review which may offer greater clarity on where Bucks' best interests may lie. RH to respond to the invitation received accordingly.**

RH

## 5 **STORY FUTURES CREATIVE CLUSTER PROGRAMME** (Presentation attached)

(AS left the meeting due to the above noted conflict of interest, NB took over the Chair)

Professor James Bennett joined the meeting and provided an update on the work to secure funding to support digital innovation within the creative industries sector. This project is being led by Royal Holloway University and supported collectively by BTVLEP, Berkshire Thames Valley LEP, and Enterprise M3 LEP, with the final decision on funding expected in June 2018.

It was noted the sector provides 17% of the UK's GDP, a similar size to manufacturing and large pharma who have both previously benefitted from funding to support research and development.

The project will bring together world leading technology with world leading storytelling, offering companies the opportunity to experiment and develop new technologies earlier than would otherwise be possible by de-risking financial obligations in an incubator type setting. This will allow, particularly, SMEs to focus on the real world challenges the project will set, with the aim of developing technologies with scale-able potential.

The bid is in the process of being revised in light of feedback received to date re being more ambitious and providing greater detail on how the project will operate.

**The Board agreed BTVLEP will provide representation to the joint LEP steering group advising on the project to ensure the work adds value to local economies (RH to look at appropriate representation); and will provide a further letter supporting the project.**

IB

## 6 **CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT**

### 6.1 Local Growth Fund Programme - Skills Capital Projects

(Andrew Smith remained absent for this item further to the above declaration of interest.)

The Board received an update on the independent assessment of the skills capital projects business cases received.

**The Board supported the independent assessor’s recommendation not to support the bid from Creative Media Skills at this stage to develop a film training hub in conjunction with De Montfort due to concerns over CMS’s current financial profitability. The Board also agreed to continue working with CMS on the bid so that this may be brought back at a future date.**

IB

(AS rejoined the meeting. RB left the meeting further to the above declaration of interest; KW also left the meeting due to potential conflicts. NB declared an interest, AVDC being the landlord for UCAV.)

**Further to the report provided and the update from the independent assessor, the Board agreed to delay considering supporting the creation of a Creative Industries Innovation Hub at the Buckinghamshire New University’s High Wycombe campus pending review of the success of the previously supported Health & Life Sciences Hub (also at the High Wycombe campus) and the Digital Skills Hub (at UCAV) - a report on this to be brought to a future Board meeting.**

IB

It was noted the BTVLEP/Growth Hub will be looking at the impact of Permitted Development Rights for Buckinghamshire and how the introduction of innovation/incubation hubs can assist in offsetting the effects of this.

(RB/KW rejoined the meeting)

#### 6.2 Finance, Governance and Assurance

Board members noted the letter from Stephen Jones, Director for Cities and Local Growth Unit on the BTVLEP’s Annual Conversation with Government; and that Stephen is keen to attend a future BTVLEP Board meeting - RH to progress.

RH

The BTVLEP has been ranked as “Good” following the Annual Conversation and information has been requested on how the LEP can move to and Exceptional/Outstanding rating.

The BTVLEP has been asked again to look at the possibility of incorporation and it was confirmed the executive team will bring forward recommendations to the next Board meeting.

RH

Further to details in the Chief Executive’s report, it was confirmed Alex Pratt stood down as Chairman of Buckinghamshire Business First at the BBF Board’s last meeting, this role now being taken on by MG. The BBF Board has proposed MG also take on the role of Chairman of the Aylesbury Vale Enterprise Zone Board. MG confirmed any possible conflicts of interest would be fully declared and restated at EZ Board discussions, and that he did not envisage any issues in fully performing this role.

**The BTVLEP Board noted the recommendation and with the assurances given on possible conflicts fully endorsed the appointment.**

#### 6.3 LEP Review

It was noted the LEP Review is still to be finalised; it was hoped this will be completed prior to Government’s summer recess.

#### 6.4 Local Growth Fund Programme - Other

The Board noted the significant progress being made on LGF projects. Assuming the Eastern Link Road South project progresses as planned the BTVLEP will have met all its financial obligations in the current year.

6.5 Growth Hub

It was reported the focus for the coming year will be on growth aligned with productivity.

6.6 Enterprise Zone

The Board noted the good progress being made with the Enterprise Zones.

- At Silverstone, MEPC as put forward a business case to its board for more development at the site, which will help increase business rates.
- Westcott's 5G Innovation Centre is due to be operational by the end of March 2018 and it was hoped to hold the July 2018 BTVLEP Board meeting at this facility. It was noted RH has been asked to chair the Westcott Space Sector Group which has been useful in gaining intelligence on the needs of businesses at the site; this learning will be fed into national Space conversations.
- With regards to Woodlands, action is still awaited from DB Symmetry in developing the site. Section 106 agreements are in the process of being analysed and road infrastructure plans are being moved forward.

The Board noted that URBED have been commissioned to undertake a master-planning review of the Halton, Wendover Woodlands and Green Park sites, and investigation is underway to try and incorporate Garden Town principles into the development of the sites. AVDC has been working very closely with the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) on possible uses for the site and are keen to avoid any duplication with the consultants undertaking the master-planning review. **It was agreed RH will contact Tracey Aldworth at AVDC to ensure that work is aligned and not duplicated. Additionally, AVDC were asked to liaise with Buckinghamshire County Council on the work being conducted with the DIO.**

RH/NB

6.7 Skills Update

(NB left the meeting)

Further to the update contained with the Chief Executive's report, the Board offered its thanks for the excellent apprenticeship event at the Bucks College on 22 March. The Board also noted the huge success of the Enterprise Adviser programme in Bucks, the BTVLEP being only the second LEP area to achieve 100% coverage in schools.

AS suggested pursuing funding through the Healthy Innovate Fund due to be launched in May aimed at supporting those wishing to take on a role as a carer. RT to provide JC with additional information.

RT

6.8 European Programme Update

It was reported BTVLEP has a number of live calls out currently totalling £4.8m. A significant number of applications have come in for Leader funds and Clay Vales is nearing capacity. A review is underway looking at how to distribute funding to retain the maximum possible in Buckinghamshire.

7 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**Thursday** 24 May 2018, 10.30am, Pinewood Studios.

The meeting closed at 12pm.

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**Andrew Smith, Chairman**