



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Cities and Local Growth Unit
1st Floor, Fry Building,
2 Marsham Street,
London,
SW1P 4DF
11 April 2018

By email: richard.harrington@btvlep.co.uk

Dear Richard,

Local Growth Fund 2018-19 payment

I am writing to confirm the arrangements for Local Growth Fund (LGF) grant payments to be made in 2018-19 by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government ('MHCLG') to Buckinghamshire County Council ('the Council') as the Accountable Body for Buckinghamshire Thames Valley LEP.

A LGF capital grant payment of £11,878,931 will be made to the Council on or around 20 April 2018. This letter confirms that, following the successful conclusion of the annual conversation process, the LEP will receive its previously indicative 2018-19 allocation in full. A copy of the section 31 grant determination is attached to this letter.

April 2018 Payments	Future indicative	
2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
£11,878,931	£3,050,399	£5,749,716

The Annual Conversation

Thank you for your participation in this year's annual conversation process. This is important for assuring all concerned that the LEP's governance, delivery and strategy are meeting the required standards and that the Growth Deals are securing value for money. As a two way conversation we gathered useful feedback through each of the meetings I hope you found it to be helpful and constructive process. We will continue to reflect on how improvements can be made to the process for future years, working with the LEP Network. The performance review undertaken by government also sought to highlight any areas where there may be need for further development or where there is good practice to be shared.

At your annual conversation and in the feedback we noted that, with the planning agreement secured for the Aylesbury Woodlands development, LEP Local Growth Fund spend against profile, subject to the finalisation of section 106 arrangements, would place the LEPs expenditure in a much healthier position. I would like to acknowledge the ongoing progress including recent wider planning decisions that should facilitate this.

At the same time I must remind you that future awards will remain subject to the outcome of future annual conversations and compliance with the LEP National Assurance Framework.

Funding Requirements

Use of all funding will need to fulfil the following requirements:

1. It will be used to support the Growth Deal agreed between the Government and the LEP and will be used to secure the outcomes set out in the Growth Deal. Within that we expect you and your Accountable Body to use the freedom and flexibilities that you have to manage your capital budgets between programmes.
2. It will be deployed solely in accordance with decisions made through the local assurance framework agreed between the LEP and the Accountable Body. This must be compliant with the standards outlined in the LEP National Assurance Framework.
3. That you will track progress against agreed core metrics and outcomes, in line with the national monitoring and evaluation framework.
4. That the LEP and Accountable Body follow the branding guidance and communicate the on-going outcomes and outputs of your Growth Deal.

Councils and Combined Authorities are reminded that, as accountable bodies for their LEPs, they are responsible for ensuring that expenditure is spent in accordance with all applicable legal requirements. This includes, for example, state aid and public procurement law. Councils and Combined Authorities are reminded that any development decisions for specific proposals must go through the normal planning process and be guided by local plans, taking into account all material considerations. Councils and Combined Authorities will be subject to their normal internal and external audit controls.

The LEP and Accountable Body are also reminded of their responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty as set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 and should have regard to these requirements when apportioning LGF funding.

As set out in your original Growth Deal, we expect that the LEP and the Accountable Body will communicate the on-going outcomes and outputs of their Growth Deals,

using appropriate branding and ensuring that local people understand how Government money is being spent. The LEP should also continue to discuss publicity opportunities for Growth Deal projects with your Government Area Lead and through the LEP Communications Leads Group.

Skills Capital

As with all Growth Deals it is our expectation that you will fund the projects agreed with the Government at the time of the deal, in line with your proposal. Whilst we recognise there may be legitimate reasons not to proceed with some projects, it is particularly important, if this is the case, that awards originally for skills capital continue to be spent on new or extended skills projects.

All LEPs should follow the recommendations of their Post 16 area reviews when making future skills capital investment decisions, including supporting any capital requirements identified as part of the area review implementation. Where necessary, we would expect priority to be given to supporting the area reviews outcomes using the full scope of Local Growth funding to support the implementation of the area reviews.

Growth Hubs Funding 2018-19

In addition to the LGF grant detailed above, your LEP will also receive an allocation of £287,000 for 2018-2019 Growth Hub funding. This money will be managed via local authority accountable bodies and grants are issued under Section 11 of the Industrial Development Act, payable quarterly in advance. Funding will be subject to the terms and conditions detailed in the 2018-2019 Growth Hub grant offer letters issued by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). Following acceptance by the Accountable Body of their grant offer letter the first quarterly payment can be claimed from 16 April 2018.

LEP Assurance Framework

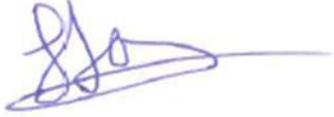
Thank you for your work in implementing the recommendations of the Ney Review set out in the best practice guidance. As you are aware there is an expectation within Government that LEPs adopt a continuous improvement approach to transparency and accountability, and I ask that you commit to working with us to continue to strengthen our approach. In some cases, this will involve us approaching you with an indication of where further improvements are required. The LEP Network will also continue to support you with the sharing of best practice and learning amongst LEPs on assurance and transparency.

LEP Core Funding

In line with last year you will be paid £578,000 LEP core funding for 2018-19 which includes £78,000 for the LEP Network. This is revenue funding and will be paid alongside 2018-19 Growth Deal funding on 20 April 2018.

I am copying this letter to the Section 151/73 officer for your Accountable Body and to your Cities and Local Growth Unit Area Lead.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'S. Jones', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

STEPHEN JONES

Director, Cities and Local Growth Unit