

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

Held Friday 17 November 2017 from 2pm at Pinewood Studios, Pinewood Road, Iver Heath SLO 0NH

Present: Cllr Isobel Darby, Chiltern District Council
Cllr Nick Naylor, South Bucks District Council
Cllr Martin Tett, Buckinghamshire County Council (Part meeting)
Cllr Katrina Wood, Wycombe District Council
Rebecca Bunting, Buckinghamshire Business First (Buckinghamshire New University)
Michael Garvey, Buckinghamshire Business First (Chandler Garvey)
Guy Lachlan, Buckinghamshire Business First (Classic Oils Ltd)
Eman Martin-Vignerte, Buckinghamshire Business First (Bosch)
Andrew Smith, Buckinghamshire Business First (Pinewood)

Apologies: Cllr Steve Bowles, Aylesbury Vale District Council

In attendance: Karen Mitchell, Principal, Bucks College Group (Part meeting)
Martin Tugwell, Director, England's Economic Heartland (Part meeting)
Richard Turl, BIS South Central & West
Richard Ambrose, Buckinghamshire County Council
Richard Harrington, BTVLEP Chief Executive
Philippa Batting, BBF Managing Director
Ian Barham, BTVLEP Partnerships Manager
Jackie Campbell, BTVLEP Skills Development Manager
John Rippon, BTVLEP Programme Manager
Sarah Fraser

SUMMARY MINUTES

1 CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

- Cllr Nick Naylor was welcomed as South Bucks District Council's new BTVLEP representative.
- Thanks were offered to retiring board member, Guy Lachlan, for his contribution to the BTVLEP.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- There were no new declarations of interest at this meeting.

3 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING - 22 September 2017

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

3.1 Matters arising: Bazalgette Review

- A large number of recommendations have been put to DCMS as a result of the Bazalgette Review; a response is expected in the Industrial Strategy. BTVLEP has put in a request for £50m over 5 years to build on creative clusters in its response to the Industrial Strategy Green Paper.
- BTVLEP is also (with other LEPs) supporting an application for a research grant as investment into Creative Industries Technology led by Royal Holloway University.
- Creative England is keen to work with BTVLEP on bids for the creative sector and would be happy to assist with bids being prepared by the BTVLEP's partners.

4 BUCKS GROWTH STRATEGY

- The Bucks Growth Strategy had been submitted to Government and a Steering Group to oversee development of an action plan to progress the main work established.

- It was agreed the existing Bucks Advantage framework (with a review of membership) be redeployed as a sub-group to the BTVLEP Board to take this agenda forward quickly.
- The Board noted the content of the Bucks Growth Strategy report and endorsed the proposal to develop an action plan and to work with neighbouring LEPs across the Oxford to Cambridge growth corridor to establish a local Industrial Strategy.

4.1 Cross LEP collaboration

- Initial assessment work and an initial visionary document on the Industrial Strategy for the Economic Heartland area will be completed by Christmas, with more detailed assessments taking place in the first quarter of 2018.

4.2 National Infrastructure Commission

- The Board noted the National Infrastructure Commission's review and recommendations contained therein, commenting that significant work will be involved in engaging with this agenda and consideration needed as to how growth requirements will be met.
- The NIC report's focus on housing was disappointing and it was thought Buckinghamshire residents will see the development of new cities as "urban sprawl". The report contains recommendations regarding establishment of joint planning committees empowered to take decisions on the planning area; these will be statutory spatial plans. The Board considered the report to be overly simplistic, particularly in the wider infrastructure beyond road and rail needed to support economic growth.
- Figures quoted in the report do not recognise Buckinghamshire's contribution to UK PLC or the shape of the county's economy; there is significant work for 'Team Bucks' to do in this regard.
- The report by the National Infrastructure Commission is an independent report and Government's response to the recommendations made is awaited.

4.3 England's Economic Heartland

- Further to the presentation given on progress with the England's Economic Heartland programme, and noting that infrastructure investment is prioritised for housing sites, the Board agreed a one-off match funded contribution of £30k to support establishment and delivery of a sub-regional Strategic Transport Board, with the declared hope that central government recognises the importance of this work and makes appropriate funding available in the future.

5 **REVIEW OF LEPS AND ANNUAL CONVERSATION PREPARATION**

- Recognising the significant work underway preparing strategies/reviews etc, a plea was made to Government to move quickly to delivery, with the hope additional funding will be made available in the budget to help LEPs to deliver planned work.
- The Board noted the recommendations highlighted in the Ney review, agreed changes made to the BTVLEP Assurance and Accountability Framework, and supported preparations for the Annual Conversation on 30 November (pending sight of the final document prior to sending).

6 **CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT**

6.1 Eastern Link Road Programme Release

- The Woodlands planning application incorporating the Eastern Link Road was approved on 26 October. The business case will be updated and, on approval, funding will be released.
- The Board delegated authority to Andrew Smith, Cllr Nick Naylor and the BTVLEP Executive team to review the business plan, and, subject to approval, provide a letter of contract to Bucks County Council.

6.2 Investment in Digital Services and Broadband Revenue Programme

- As discussed previously, the Board noted the requirement for a dedicated resource to support the county's digital services and broadband programmes. The Board recognised the importance of this work, business seeing connectivity as a significant limiting or enabling factor for growth; particularly true in Bucks where reliance on the digital economy is very high.

- The Board agreed £108k revenue funding towards a 3 year facility on the basis this is matched by partner contributions.
- The Board requested clear, concise detail on the proposed roll out programme by geography, by date, in layman's terms, recognising that this information is sometimes difficult to extract from providers and may be subject to change. It was agreed this will be a key KPI for the new resource to be recruited to support this agenda via the funding to be provided by the BTVLEP and partners.
- Local Authority partners were urged to arrange match funding as soon as possible.

6.3 Growth Hub update

- In addition to the report provided PB confirmed:
 - Approximately 140 businesses are registered for the Brexit Summit on 8 December.
 - The BBF AGM will be held on 23 November and the results of the recruitment process for new BBF Board directors will be shared at that point.
 - Delays in receipt of funding for EU programmes are causing frustration. Growth Hub representatives are to meet with DCLG to discuss the situation. There is a particular desire to get the Fund of Funders programme out to market as quickly as possible.

6.4 Aylesbury Garden Town Representation

- The Board endorsed Cllr Nick Naylor's appointment as the BTVLEP representative on the Aylesbury Garden Town Programme Board.

7 **SKILLS STRATEGY UPDATE**

- The Board noted the paper provided and were supportive of the expression of interest submitted (in conjunction with Berkshire and Oxfordshire LEPs) for an Institute of Technology to be based at the University Campus Aylesbury Vale. A decision on whether the bid will progress to the next round is expected pre-Christmas.
- The Board noted the work being made against the agreed skills strategy and raised a number of questions about the Apprenticeship programme and the ease with which not only employers but also students are able to engage with this.
- It was agreed it would be useful to track a few examples from the student side to understand what their experience has been and what the end result has been.
- The Board suggested more needed to be done to ensure students taking on apprenticeships understand what is required of them in a workplace setting. JC to feed this back to the Skills Board.
- It was noted the apprenticeship programme is not solely aimed at those students entering the workplace for the first time. Additionally, it was hoped the Apprentice Ambassador Network being established will assist employers to get the maximum benefit from the Apprenticeship Levy.

7.1 Buckinghamshire College Group

- Karen Mitchell provided an update on progress that has taken place in merging Buckinghamshire Further Education establishments; the Skills Funding Agency citing the process in Buckinghamshire as one of the smoothest mergers across the country and holding this up as best practice.
- The Group will spend the coming year developing future strategy reflecting the needs of employers and trying to "future proof" the curriculum, ensuring students are work ready. This review will also highlight any gaps and identify the resource needed to address these.

8 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Friday 2 February 2018, 9.30am, venue tbc.