

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

Held Friday 7 July 2017 from 9.30am at Pinewood Studios, Pinewood Road, Iver Heath SLO 0NH

Present: Cllr Ralph Bagge, South Bucks District Council
Cllr Neil Blake, Aylesbury Vale District Council (Alternate)
Cllr Isobel Darby, Chiltern District Council
Cllr Martin Tett, Buckinghamshire County Council
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)
Philippa Batting, Buckinghamshire Business First (Alternate)
Andrew Smith, Buckinghamshire Business First (Pinewood)

Apologies: Cllr Steve Bowles, Aylesbury Vale District Council
Eman Martin-Vignerte, Buckinghamshire Business First (Bosch)

In attendance: Simon Earles, Consents Director, Heathrow Airport (Part meeting)
Ian Manktelow, Wycombe District Council (Part meeting)
Cllr David Johncock, Wycombe District Council (Part meeting)
Rachel Wileman, Buckinghamshire County Council (Part meeting)
Richard Ambrose, Buckinghamshire County Council
Richard Turl, BIS South Central & West
Richard Harrington, BTVLEP Chief Executive
Ian Barham, BTVLEP Partnerships Manager
Jackie Campbell, BTVLEP Skills Development Manager
Sarah Fraser

SUMMARY MINUTES

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- No new declarations of interest were made at this meeting.

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING - 26 May 2017

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

2.1 Matters arising:

- **LGF monies** - £2.8m LGF remains unallocated - deployment of this to be discussed later in the year.
- **Skills capital funding** - 4 submissions following an open call for projects using £1.5m funding are under assessment; the results of this will be brought to the Board in September.
- **Woodlands:**
 - The scheme is now unlikely to go to Planning Committee on 26 July due to transport authority issues with the Hampden Fields project (to which the Woodlands scheme is tied).
 - The Board noted the project, once completed, will release significant benefits to the county.
 - Bucks Advantage (BA) will require a further loan of around £100k-£150k, secured against BA's assets, to meet ongoing revenue costs to maintain the scheme until the next planning committee. Project promoters will be approached in July re the possibility of providing the additional funds required. In the event these are not available a full proposal outlining costs and possible risks will be brought to the BTVLEP Board in September.

3 HEATHROW UPDATE

- Simon Earles provided a reminder of the third runway proposal and the rationale for this. The Airports Commission has suggested the proposal will accrue significant economic benefits to the UK, and to Bucks in terms of increased GVA. The challenge has been to ensure economic benefits come with an acceptable environmental package.
- Government is considering national policy statements on aviation and is in the process of reviewing the 65,000+ responses to the aviation consultation. It is hoped to have a policy designated by the end of 2017 setting the framework for the Heathrow proposal.
- The key issues Heathrow is facing include:
 - The strong feeling around the Ivers and the cumulative impact of schemes going on.
 - Greenbelt issues and how to minimise the impact of flight paths.
 - How to ensure equitable sharing of economic benefits arising through expansion.
- Future plans for the airport are being shared through the Heathrow Strategic Planning Group (HSPG) which is developing a sub-regional vision to ensure long term planning for the area runs alongside the Heathrow development, bringing shared benefits.
- The Board noted its wish to see mitigation measures for the impact on Bucks enacted in advance of development, and a surface access strategy based in reality.
- The Board suggested the Terms of Reference for the HSPG would benefit from review, in particular it was suggested an independent Chairman should be appointed.
- It was noted the expansion will have a significant impact on housing and future development and this does not seem to have been considered in the proposal.
- The BTVLEP was thanked for the strong proactive role it has played to date in helping to shape the sub-regional strategy and was encouraged to continue to take this role.

4 PLANNING POLICY

- The Board offered its thanks to Michael Garvey for the work undertaken on the market review of Bucks' office and industrial floor space.

4.1 Memorandum of Understanding

- With one abstention, the Board approved the proposed Memorandum of Understanding supporting closer working between the BTVLEP and Bucks' Planning Authorities.
- Work on Local Plans continues and it is hoped these can be agreed quickly with DCLG, recognising future changes (Heathrow, East/West Rail, etc) will impact the county. Planning Authorities are working to ensure the availability of employment land of the right type in the right areas to meet demand being expressed, building in flexibility to adapt to market forces as required.
- The Board noted the guidance issued on the new Housing Infrastructure Fund and agreed BTVLEP should be applying for funding through this scheme.
- The Board were concerned the new formula being announced for new housing will put Bucks' greenbelt under increasing pressure. Councils need to press on with identifying appropriate land for development; delays may result in decisions being imposed.
- Changes in categorisation for funding the major roads network will mean Highways England will assume responsibility for maintenance of motorway feeder roads (previously a Local Authority responsibility).
- Recognising the cost entailed in having "oven-ready" schemes in place, the Board agreed the importance of being able to move quickly should funding opportunities become available.
- It was suggested Government should develop some form of incentive scheme to encourage developers to progress building more quickly on land with permissions. Far more builders need to be encouraged in to the market and work undertaken to address the skills shortages it is feared will arise from Brexit.
- It was agreed to invite the Chairman and Chief Executive of the relaunched Homes England to Bucks to see the scale of the opportunity in the county. It was also agreed to raise this subject at the forthcoming LEP Network meeting with the Housing Minister.

4.2 London Plan

- The Board noted the consultation on the new London Plan and agreed BTVLEP should respond, in its own right and as part of a co-ordinated response with the Greater Thames Valley LEPs, highlighting the strain that local planning authorities are facing.

4.3 Bucks Strategic Infrastructure Plan

- Further to the presentation given the Board commented this is an important piece of work allowing BTVLEP to focus on those areas where there is the greatest chance of bidding success and to prepare for funding opportunities that may arise in the future (likely to be Local Growth Funding in 2019).
- The “rebalancing argument” must be challenged with a robust evidence base for investing in success.
- The Board cautioned this piece of work should not duplicate effort, referring particularly to the work being undertaken with the National Infrastructure Commission, and Local Authority colleagues should be involved at an early stage.
- This is an iterative process and further detail will be brought to the September Board meeting. Spatial principles being defined are to facilitate discussion with the NIC/other strategic partners. Board members expressed concern that the spatial principles being discussed in no way delay Local Plan adoption.

5 **NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE COMMISSION (NIC) - Oxford to Cambridge Corridor Proposal**

- The BTVLEP responded to the NIC consultation on this subject through England’s Economic Heartland (EEH) strategic alliance. The EEH is working actively with the NIC with a view to reporting being produced by the end of the summer in order to feed in to the Budget.
- Work is ongoing with Local Authority partners in the relevant areas to establish the most appropriate governance arrangements along the route of the study. The Board highlighted the importance of the NIC looking closely at the links to Heathrow etc and not focussing solely on the Oxford to Cambridge route.
- It was agreed LEPs should lead development of the overarching industrial strategy across the study area.
- Recognising there will be a number of possible governance models, it was agreed to input to the ‘middle section’ governance debate based on the existing Buckinghamshire building block, maintaining a four LEP geography approach and acknowledging the existing Buckinghamshire planning platform that gives a ‘best fit’ Buckinghamshire Strategic Housing Market Area and Functional Economic Market Area.

6 **DIGITAL STRATEGY**

- Further to the paper previously circulated and to discussion at the recent digital think tank, it was agreed to defer discussion on this topic to the September Board meeting, including consideration of mobile coverage and the impact of noise mitigation measures.
- The end of the current roll out programme will see only 1800 businesses in Bucks left without access to high speed broadband (up to 30mbs). Information to be provided on the number of businesses not covered by District.
- Consideration is to be given to which businesses in Bucks are key GVA contributors and to the needs of targeted industrial sectors eg film/media or space, ensuring there is sufficient capacity and speed at desired locations.
- Achieving coverage to the final 5% will be difficult and innovative ways to address this must be sought. Bucks has a very strong story in terms of take up and return on any investment made in the county.

7 **CHIEF EXECUTIVE’S REPORT**

7.1 Annual Report

- Board members to forward any comments on the annual report by 14 July.

7.2 Project Status

- It was confirmed a number of items on the project status report that are currently red will move to green in the near future.

- RH was asked to look at the Ivers cycle route project in the context of the LEP's overall transport strategy to see if there is any way this project can be sensibly reinstated and feedback at the next meeting. (Andrew Smith re-declared an interest in this project.)

8 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- It was agreed BTVLEP Board members attending the Party Conferences in September/ October will push Bucks' agenda as far as possible.

9 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

- Friday 22 September 2017, 9.30am, Bosch, Broadwater Park, North Orbital Road, Denham UB9 5HJ