

Report to Cabinet

Title:	Buckinghamshire Growth Strategy 2017-2050
Date:	23 October 2017
Date can be implemented:	31 October 2017
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Local members affected:	All
Portfolio areas affected:	All

For press enquiries concerning this report, please contact the media office on 01296 382444

Summary

This report is to provide cabinet members the opportunity to consider the content and future use of the Buckinghamshire Growth Strategy 2017-2050.

The strategy sets out an economically led vision for growth that will:-

- Ensure that economic prosperity drives future growth in Buckinghamshire
- Increase the value of the local economy from £15bn per annum to £35bn per annum by 2050, a £4.5bn increase over a business as usual scenario
- Enable the constituent parts of the Buckinghamshire economy work together, strengthening the economic ecosystem and capitalise new regional growth opportunities
- Address housing, infrastructure and skills constraints on growth
- Deliver up to 105,000 new homes over the lifetime of the strategy

RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is asked to

- **Note the key headlines and opportunities highlighted within the Buckinghamshire Growth Strategy 2017-2050**

- **Note the progress undertaken to date in sharing the strategy in initiating dialogue with government and the National Infrastructure Commission**
- **Consider where the strategy can be most effectively utilised in supporting future funding bids and strategic service delivery by Bucks County Council**
- **Note and endorse the proposals for developing an action plan for the delivery of the strategy based around four main themes:-**
 - **Infrastructure & Connectivity**
 - **Housing**
 - **Business Growth & Skills**
 - **Governance & Communications**

A. Narrative setting out the reasons for the decision

The growth strategy was prepared by Buckinghamshire Thames Valley LEP with the support of all of the Buckinghamshire Local Authorities, with the exception Aylesbury Vale District Council who have preferred to direct current dialogue with government and the National Infrastructure Commission.

The draft strategy was endorsed by Buckinghamshire Thames Valley LEP board at its meeting on 22 September and copies of the final document were sent directly to Sajid Javid the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, at the end of September by both BTVLEP and Bucks CC.

The strategy outlines a series of asks and offers required to deliver the ambitious economically led growth within the county, these asks and offers are based into two main timeframes 2017-2030 and 2030-2050.

Following the strategy submission, follow up meetings have been held with the Secretary of State and DCLG representatives to highlight the main issues within the strategy required to deliver the additional £4.5bn of economically led growth directly attributed to the delivery of the strategy, initial feedback to the strategy has been very positive.

The following extract is taken from the reports Executive Summary:-

Buckinghamshire Growth Strategy 2017-2050

Buckinghamshire is a prosperous county at the heart of the Oxford to Cambridge Corridor, neighbouring London and the UK's international gateway at Heathrow. We have a dynamic and resilient employment base driven by a strong SME business community. Over the past 30 years many of the traditional county economies – printing, furniture production and to a lesser degree agriculture have been replaced by new enterprises including digital services, film and TV production, life-sciences and high-performance engineering. Productivity in the county remains strong, but by supporting the conditions for modern economic growth and in cultivating our leading business sectors and wider economic ecosystem, we have the potential to challenge the best in the world.

The county has traditionally welcomed new communities driven by the technology of the day, the “Metro-land” vision capitalising on the new rail infrastructure in the first half of the 20th century and Britain’s first new town Milton Keynes chosen for its location alongside the country’s first Motorway the M1. Over the past decade further significant growth has been achieved but without the transformative infrastructure that drove earlier growth.

The renewed focus on the Oxford to Cambridge Corridor and the significant east west transport infrastructure, including the further development of East West Rail and the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway, offers a new opportunity to consider the potential of the county to deliver economically led growth over the period up to 2050.

This strategy is looking to capitalise on Buckinghamshire’s geographic advantages and easy reach of Britain’s expanding gateway at Heathrow to create a melting pot for innovation and research to complement the global city of London and those seats of learning at Oxford and Cambridge that top the world rankings.

This growth will be driven by technical innovation, embracing the latest digital technologies to provide the conditions for smart new integrated and connected communities to thrive, complementing and reinvigorating our major towns to create dynamic locations where individuals and businesses will aspire to invest.

Through greater planning freedoms and new delivery mechanisms we will be encouraging the use of disruptive housing techniques and look to advance the already strong housing growth to deliver new types of affordable living spaces for the young and old and encourage custom build at scale. These freedoms will help ensure that the ability to grow at a speed needed to support market demand can be delivered.

Our strategy will seek to strengthen our existing world leading economic assets at Pinewood and Silverstone and build upon the potential of our Enterprise Zones to create growth in sectors such as the Space Propulsion industry where development in Buckinghamshire already allows Britain to lead the global race.

By harnessing these existing assets, encouraging closer collaboration between our academic and business communities to welcome innovation and testing for new digital transport and living opportunities in a non-city “shire” environment, Buckinghamshire has the potential to set a benchmark for ambitious employment led growth in the 21st century.

In short this strategy will:

- **Ensure that economic prosperity drives future growth in Buckinghamshire.**
- **Increase the value of the local economy from £15bn per annum to £35bn per annum by 2050, a £4.5bn increase over a business as usual scenario.**
- **Enable the constituent parts of the Buckinghamshire economy work together, strengthening the economic ecosystem and capitalise new regional growth opportunities.**
- **Address housing, infrastructure and skills constraints on growth.**
- **Deliver up to 105,000 new homes over the lifetime of the strategy.**

Next Steps

Whilst initial reaction to the strategy from Government has been positive, further detail is now being sought in relation to clarifying the asks and offers proposals. An ongoing dialogue is being held with both the NIC and Government Officials to progress this discussion and support how proposals can be presented to treasury.

The immediate priorities will link to support for the Housing Infrastructure Fund submissions and to influence investment recommendations within the National Infrastructure Commission report which is expected to be published in November 2017.

Looking ahead into 2018, the strategy will provide the basis to support the development of a Regional Industrial Strategy being collated by the four Local Enterprise Partnerships in the Oxford to Cambridge Growth area, this in turn will seek to influence investment within this area as part of the Shared Productivity Fund which is the likely successor to the Local Growth Fund and European Social and Investment Funds. The 4 LEPs are due to meet with government officials and NIC representatives on 23 October.

To support this work it is proposed that 4 operational work-streams are established to develop operational plans to translate the strategic objectives into deliverable work programmes.

- **Infrastructure & Connectivity - Led by Mark Kemp, Bucks County Council**
- **Housing Delivery - led by a representative from the Buckinghamshire Planning Group (TBC)**
- **Business Growth & Skills - Led by Richard Harrington, BTVLEP**
- **Programme Governance & Communications - Led by Richard Harrington BTVLEP**

Each work-stream will be supported by an operational delivery group with representatives drawn from supporting partners and key agencies operating in Buckinghamshire. Regular progress across the programme will be reported to the BTVLEP Board with the objective of establishing a Buckinghamshire Growth Board over the next 12 months to oversee the strategy development and delivery.

Given the fluid nature of this conversation, officers will provide a verbal update on the latest position in relation to governance and delivery discussions with government representatives at this meeting on the 23 October.

B. Other options available, and their pros and cons

The development of the strategy has been undertaken to provide a clear, evidence based assessment of the economic and growth potential for Buckinghamshire. It provides the basis for future dialogue with Government around infrastructure investment into the county. In the absence of this document the ability of BCC, BTVLEP and other local partners to engage in meaningful negotiations would be severely limited and the area would be disadvantaged in funding bids in relation to other regions and areas.

C. Resource implications

The strategy will support future government investment into Buckinghamshire commencing with the Housing Infrastructure Fund programme. The recent TEC growth enquiry has considered the potential impact on the Council of supporting the growth agenda and an action plan is in place to ensure that BCC is ready for growth.

D. Value for Money (VfM) Self Assessment

The Buckinghamshire Growth Strategy delivers value for money by providing a clear framework for future growth, including a framework for capital and revenue bids for a wide range of policy areas linked to delivery of public services across the county.

E. Legal implications

N/A

F. Property implications

The strategy will guide future policy in relation to property investment and acquisition to support the growth aims of the strategy.

G. Other implications/issues

The Buckinghamshire Growth Strategy provides a clear economically led framework for future growth in the county; it provides a basis for dialogue with government in supporting capital and revenue bids for a wide range of policy areas and the delivery of public services across the county.

H. Feedback from consultation, Local Area Forums and Local Member views

As part of the strategy development, presentations were made to Buckinghamshire MP's, BCC Members and local parish representatives. The strategy has already been referenced as part of the evidence to support the Housing Infrastructure Fund bids that were made by BCC and Local Authority partners in the County at the end of September.

I. Communication issues

Communication issues relating to the Buckinghamshire Growth Strategy will be co-ordinated through Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership.

J. Progress Monitoring

Feedback from Government officials and other progress in the delivery of the Buckinghamshire Growth Strategy will be reported to the Buckinghamshire Thames Valley LEP Board which will meet next on November 17th

Background Papers

A copy of the full Buckinghamshire Growth Strategy is attached as **Appendix 1** to this report.

Your questions and views

If you have any questions about the matters contained in this paper please get in touch with the Contact Officer whose telephone number is given at the head of the paper.

If you have any views on this paper that you would like the Cabinet Member to consider, or if you wish to object to the proposed decision, please inform the Member Services Team by 5.00pm on Friday 20 October 2017. This can be done by telephone (to 01296 382343), or e-mail to democracy@buckscc.gov.uk