



Minutes

TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE

Minutes from the meeting held on Tuesday 22 January 2019, in Mezzanine Room 1, County Hall, Aylesbury, commencing at 11.00 am and concluding at 1.00 pm.

This meeting was webcast. To review the detailed discussions that took place, please see the webcast which can be found at <http://www.buckscc.public-i.tv/>
The webcasts are retained on this website for 6 months. Recordings of any previous meetings beyond this can be requested (contact: democracy@buckscc.gov.uk)

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr S Bowles (Vice-Chairman), Mr D Carroll (Chairman), Mrs L Clarke OBE, Mr D Dhillon, Mr P Martin and Mr R Reed

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

Mr W Chapple OBE, Mr N Gibson, Mr R Harrington, Ms L Michelson, Mr M Tett and Ms K Wager

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Ms A Macpherson, Mr S Lambert.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mr S Bowles declared an interest in relation to Item 6 as he sat on the Local Enterprise Partnership Board.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 6 November 2018 were agreed as an accurate record subject to the following change:

- Ms L Clarke OBE was absent but recorded as present.



4 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were none.

5 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman had nothing to report.

6 LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP REVIEW UPDATE AND LOCAL INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

The Chairman welcomed Mr Tett, Leader of the Council; Mr Harrington, Chief Executive of Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership (BTVLEP) and Mr Gibson, Executive Director for TEE Business Unit.

Mr Harrington introduced the item with a verbal presentation and provided an overview of the current work of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). The full discussion can be viewed on the webcast of the meeting.

Mr Harrington highlighted the following points:

- There had been £100m government funding into LEP's over the last 5 years.
- The government review of LEPS was reported on in November 2017.
- In January 2018 government had produced guidelines around governance and transparency of LEPs.
- In July 2018 there was a strengthening LEPs review.
- BTVLEP responded in September 2018 around geography and in October in relation to governance recommendations.
- In December 2018 BTVLEP circulated their first draft of their Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) – (details and links to the LIS can be found in agenda pack).
- The BTVLEP would be finalising their economic vision in June 2019.

Mr Harrington provided a summary of the government's LEP review and the BTVLEP response and progress towards the recommendations. The full response could be found on their website (links within the agenda pack). The overview highlighted the following:

- The review was in two parts: 1. Geography and 2. Governance and BTVLEP responded in October 2018.
- There had been no official response from government. However, BTVLEP had moved forward on the recommendations.
- In relation to the governance recommendations, BTVLEP now published all of its decisions and papers on their website and they had held their first annual general

meeting on the 8th March 2019. They had also put in place urgent decision making processes.

- The LEP review recommended private sector dominance on LEP boards. The guidance required two thirds majority of private sector Members. To retain the 5 public sector members, they had increased the number of board members to 15 and a recruitment process had been completed with an ongoing process for other vacancies.
- LEPs were under the control of local authorities so they were required to have an independent secretariat. The BTVLEP were therefore revising a suite of secondments and service level agreements.
- There had been significant improvement around governance and movement towards incorporation.

Mr Harrington also provided a verbal overview of the Local Industrial Strategy (LIS). The following points were raised:

- BTVLEP was 1 of 3 trail blazing areas.
- The purpose of the LIS was around increasing productivity and increasing earning potential.
- A steering group had been established and stakeholder workshops were held to build the propriety areas for the LIS.
- The draft LIS had been created and it was designed to be distinctive of place, identifying what the economic assets of place were and creating industries of place. Examples of Pinewood, Silverstone, Life sciences and future mobility and transportation were given.
- The draft went to the Growth Board on the 11 January 19 and it would be on the website from 25th January for wider consultation.
- The areas where there had been most progress were; space and space propulsion and space application, and Westcott investment.
- The underpinning economic assets and economic drivers were: skills scale up, working as a test bed location, innovation and research and development.

Mr Tett highlighted the following points in an overview of the BTVLEP:

- BTVLEP was one of the highest performing LEPs, and was recognised nationally.
- The fact that it coincided with the County's geography was helpful.
- The Board were dynamic in terms of its representation of business and Bucks Business First was a key player around the table.
- There had been two new appointments from the business sector.
- Mr Tett supported keeping the BTVLEP together and did not feel there was a need to merge with any other LEPs as it was successful in its own right. A point was raised about the geography and a single unitary area. Members heard that civil servants had asked ministers for advice. There was a perception that you can't have one LEP within a single unitary boundary, but this wasn't written down. Members heard how it was believed that the LEP should follow constituency of our business in Bucks, focussing on what business want and what works for Bucks.

Mr N Gibson highlighted the following:

- The County Council was supportive of the government's review and changes.
- All the improvements were good practice and provided for good accountability and transparency and passed all the national tests.
- There would be integration of Bucks Business First and the LEP officers as we move into a unitary authority ensuring capacity to come together and work smarter to deliver the LIS.
- Bucks was place based, locally owned, locally driven on the ground and where it makes sense to collaborate with neighbours to drive larger areas forward (e.g. the Oxford to Cambridge ARC) they would do so. Mr N Gibson said that it would be suboptimal to be driven by government to merge into larger geographies.

Member's questions and discussions raised the following points:

- Members asked about the board make up and representation. They heard that there had been a call and invite for suitable candidates for board directors. Gender representation was in line with recommendations at present due to the female leaders of local councils. BTVLEP had highest female representation on the board nationally. There would be an issue going forward into the unitary authority. The LEP were aware of this risk and were working to ensure the requirements were balanced.
- A question was asked about the LEP overlap issues in relation to funding. Members heard that the funding used to be allocated per population of Aylesbury Vale and was divided in half between SEMLEP and BTVLEP. This had been less of an issue recently as it was more of a competitive process for funding now. The unitary transition would mean that the issue would disappear.
- Members heard that the government wanted LEPs to be financially stable in 5 years. Bucks LEP had taken on this challenge and as a lean organisation focussed on delivery, allocation of Enterprise zones and had made them work hard.
- A Member asked how much of the £200,000 government funding available BTVLEP received. They were told that Bucks received £100,000. Government recognised the issue with the overlap of LEPs, but acknowledged it was not a matter within the BTVLEP's control.
- BTVLEP was pushing government for a decision on the overlap.
- Members asked about the role of LEP going forward. They heard that LEPs needed to mobilise strategy and thinking and obtain funding from the various pots of money. The rules around funding kept shifting. They had a role in pre-determining pots of funding and orientating the needs of the county to those various funding streams. The LEP was looking to secure £100's of millions, therefore they needed to have the strategic thinking right in order to position themselves for the funding.
- A Member asked about transparency to the public. It was explained that BTVLEP had designed the infrastructure to be lean to avoid bureaucracy. There was a federated route to work closely with partners, with effective communication channels. The website

had been refreshed and all decision making, successes and challenges were all published.

- The Leader added that it was more important for the public to see delivery on the ground. The LEP was the vehicle and mechanism to getting the strategy right.
- Members asked about the impact of the lack of responses from the government review. The BTVLEP's focus remained to create a strategy in the LIS to put a clear proposition to government and an evidence base to secure a bespoke growth deal on the back of the strategy.
- Members asked about the how the LEP will work within the unitary authority. It was said that the LEP were forming a secondment agreement to all staff which would be novated to the unitary local authority. There would be a period of change, and they would need to look at what economic development resource would look like in a new unitary council aligned around the vision and intent.

The Chairman thanked the Leader and Officer for their informative overview of the LEP review and the Local Industrial Strategy.

7 GROWTH INQUIRY; IS THE COUNCIL READY? 12 MONTH RECOMMENDATION UPDATE

The Chairman welcomed Mr Tett, Leader; Mr Chapple, Cabinet Member for Planning and Environment; and Ms Michelson, Head of Strategic Infrastructure Planning.

The full discussion can be found on the webcast and the detail of the recommendation focus can be found in the progress report within the agenda.

Mr Tett introduced the item with an overview which included the following points:

- The Local Planning Authorities in Buckinghamshire had been proceeding with establishing growth plans through the Local Plan process. Two of the districts (AVDC and WDC) had completed their Examination in Public hearings and could be adopting a Local Plan this year. South Bucks District Council and Chiltern District Council were expected to consult on a Local Plan in 2019. These local plans would establish the growth plans to 2033.
- The County Council was supporting the development of the local plans.
- Planning was taking place within the existing world and context and in parallel, work was looking at the longer term strategic economic infrastructure, e.g. England's Economic Heartland, East West Rail etc.
- Government had published its preferred corridor for the expressway – Milton Keynes to Oxford.
- The longer term strategy was being led by England's Economic Heartland.
- The Government had responded to the National Infrastructure Commission report '*Partnering for Prosperity: a new deal for the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Arc*, November 2017' as part of the autumn budget announcements in 2018 which set a few key positions. It reinforced the ambitions for significant growth across the Ox-MK-Camb

Corridor for 1 million new homes (to 2050) and designated the Corridor as a key economic priority area nationally.

- In addition, the Department for Transport had been pushing forward with determining a route for a new Expressway within the corridor (announcement expected in 2019). The growth timeline for these strategic infrastructure projects went further than the timetables for the Local Plans; they consider growth projections to 2050 – or even further out in the case of the new corridor expressway. The decisions on these and detail of implementation and impact was not yet established.
- The Expressway was integral to the recommendations of the National Infrastructure Commission.
- The Expressway Corridor along with East West Rail would see significant housing growth which meant that potential development sites needed to be identified.
- The challenge was to cope with the world as it was known now and respond to emerging government policy and how to shape that policy. Members were reminded of how growth needed to be well planned and well supported e.g. the series of link roads around Aylesbury as it grows as a town. Aylesbury itself was under significant pressure. The Aylesbury Garden Town initiative was looking at how the Town Centre could be rejuvenated.
- Members heard how the Bucks Strategic Infrastructure Plan had been in development for two years. It contained high level of information and would be the foundation document to help the new council set the future infrastructure needs of the county
- The recent Modernising Local Government (MLG) decision in November of 2018 would see the establishment of a new organisation. This would change the partnership working arrangements across the Local Planning Authorities and the County Council and the way that growth was planned for. Preparing services for future delivery needed to be integrated to the service transformation which would take place as part of the MLG process.

Members moved on to the areas of recommendation and asked questions on the progress made. The following points were raised:

- Resources and the Capital Investment Strategy: Members heard that it was hoped that the Housing Infrastructure Fund bid that would be submitted in March would provide the resources required. The process was explained to Members for funding for the growth agenda. The Growth agenda and housing would be identified, the infrastructure required would be identified and then the sources of funding would come from HIF, Community Infrastructure Levy Section 106 and the local Authority etc.

Ms L Michelson summarised the progress of the recommendations which fell within two main areas:

1. Corporate governance and systems – Robust planning for growth and planning for service delivery. Which included:

- How the growth agenda had been integrated into the service resource and planning
- Integrated information gathering
- The Corporate Working Group and bringing services together to look at the impacts of growth.

2. The Bucks Strategic Infrastructure Plan:

- This would provide the evidence base going forward. She highlighted that it needed to be promoted and developed further for a clear picture and to be able to fully understand growth and the infrastructure required to deliver that growth.
- It would help the Council and partners to understand gaps in the growth infrastructure.
- During the discussion with Members it was highlighted that the Council would need to consider the wider context of BSIP and importance of being involved in strategic discussions on national infrastructure projects e.g. Expressway, Heathrow Expansion,. The BSIP would form the critical baseline information.

The Chairman reminded Members and the public that the full detail of the progress towards individual recommendations could be found in the progress report in the agenda.

Members discussed with Mr Tett and Ms Michelson the changing context and landscape around growth and the evolving nature of the work that surrounded this. Members agreed that given the evolving nature, they were satisfied that the recommendations that were made in the original inquiry were being progressed and would be signed off as below:

- **Completed Recommendations:** The Committee agreed that recommendations 1, 4, 6, and 7 were completed.
- **There were some evolving areas that Members agreed they would continue to receive updates on throughout the year** – these were areas that were ongoing and in development due to the evolving nature of growth.. The remaining recommendations fall into the following areas which the Committee would continue to receive updates on:
 - the establishment and development of the Buckinghamshire Strategic Infrastructure Plan;
 - ensuring that appropriate corporate governance was in place to prepare teams and directorates to plan for changes in service demands associated with future growth scenarios, and;
 - the evolving partnership working in light of modernising local government and the future strategic growth engagement that Buckinghamshire would play a part in with regional partners and Government over the coming year.

Members agreed that given the changing context since the review was carried out, they would sign off the inquiry recommendations as they were and monitor the areas highlighted above going forward.

The Chairman thanked Ms Michelson, Mr Tett and Mr Chapple for their informative update and confirmed that the Committee would work with the Officers and Cabinet Members to identify the most effective approach to the Committee having oversight and adding value to this area of work going forward.

8 COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Members noted that a work programme workshop would take place on the 5 March 2019 to develop the programme for 2019/20.

9 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on the 5 March 2019 at 10:00am, at County Hall, Mezzanine Room 1.

CHAIRMAN