

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT (BE) PROGRAMME GROUP  
HELD ON 15 MAY 2019**

**PRESENT:**

Jacinta George (JG)	Business Environment Lead, LEP Board
Nikki Burns (NB)	Thames Valley Lead, FSB
Paul Britton (PB)	CEO, Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce
Malcolm Hyde (MH)	Regional Director, CBI, SE & Thames Valley
Ben Raby (BR)	DIT, South East Representative
Steve Aslett (SA)	British Business Bank, Regional South East
Sue Brackley (SB)	Berkshire Economic Development Officers Group (Local Authorities) (BEDOG)
Susan Matos (SM)	Head of Knowledge Transfer Centre, UoR
Kate Webb (KW)	Chair, FE College Principals Group
Ian Brotherston (IB)	Interim Head Regional Engagement, Strategy, Innovate UK
Chris Dodson (CD)	Chair, ScaleUp Berkshire Advisory Group

**STAFF:**

Tim Smith (TS)	Thames Valley Berkshire LEP
Frances Campbell (FC)	Thames Valley Berkshire LEP

**APOLOGIES:**

Raj Singh (RS)	IoD Berkshire
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**1. Welcome and apologies**

- 1.1 JG welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted the apologies. No interests were declared.

FC reiterated the new governance arrangements for the BE Programme Group which had been ratified by the LEP Forum and included in the new Assurance Framework (AF 4.0). FC agreed to circulate a job spec for the vacant seat of TVB Tech Community Representative.

TS briefed the Group on AF 4.0 and the requirements for all those working with the LEP to adhere to a Code of Conduct and the Seven Principles of Public Life, a summary of which is at Appendix 1. A note on the role of LEP programme groups is summarised at Appendix 2. The full Assurance Framework and appendices can be accessed via the LEP's website

<http://www.thamesvalleyberkshire.co.uk/governanceandtransparency>



BE Programme  
Group Governance an

**2. Berkshire Local Industrial Strategy (BLIS)**

- 2.1 TS provided an update on the BLIS Framework Document and the anticipated role of the Group in helping to implement the final strategy by taking ownership and prioritising activities.



BLIS Framework  
Document RATIFIED 2

Group members were urged to provide individual feedback on and endorsement of the BLIS to [BLIS@thamesvalleyberkshire.co.uk](mailto:BLIS@thamesvalleyberkshire.co.uk) by 21<sup>st</sup> June.

Following a challenge session with the Director of the Cities & Local Growth Unit (BEIS/MHCLG), the LEP has been moved forward in the national queue to start 'co-design' with government. The BLIS Task & Finish Group will be meeting after 21 June to:

- review BLIS consultation feedback
- agree routes to delivery, through one-page briefing notes for conversations with Other Government Departments, setting out how the LEP want its priorities advanced and how central government departments/agencies can help.
- start the work on a Spatial Economic Narrative.

Input from the BE Programme Group will be needed to help inform the briefing notes and in prioritising activities.

Members of the Group made the following points:

- Contribution of the Berkshire Community Foundation's business philanthropy club to 'routes to progression'
- Threats to TVB social and public service infrastructure
- WRLtH should be an explicit priority in the BLIS
- Importance of Inward Investment/FDI should be explicit

### **3. Programme Update**

#### **3.1 Delivery Group Summary Report**

FC summarised the key deliverables of the current BE projects - Funding Escalator and Business Growth Hub - and members of the Group made the following points:

- Need to assist SMEs to prepare for investment. FC reported that this was being addressed by the live PA3 Call (at final application stage) which included Access to Finance support as well as support for scale-ups.
- Need to better understand the reason for the difference between numbers of enquiries and actuals for loans and equity for the Funding Escalator.
- Keep KPIs under review to align with the BLIS e.g. GVA, productivity, type of job created.



BE Delivery Group  
Summary Report.pdf

- Need to ensure that business support was not just focused on scale-ups.

3.2 FC also reported that a full impact evaluation of the Business Growth Hub (from its inception in 2014) was planned by the LEP at the end of the current contract, as part of an overarching Monitoring & Evaluation Plan. This would include the design of a control group and involve the Economic Research Council (ERC).

3.3 FC also reported that awareness of the Growth Hub remained a challenge. The former Growth Hub Steering Group had responded to a BEIS request exploring ways to make it easier for businesses to find and access support including a national branding and marketing campaign: [Discovery Project TVB Growth Steering Group Response](#). BEIS had responded that, “The BEIS GH team is not creating any assets/conducting any tactical comms campaigns as we are not resourced to do this.”

### 3.4 Business Basics Fund

The LEP has submitted a bid to Innovate UK on SME productivity. If successful, the LEP will lead a 12month trial to test the effects of 1:1 business coaching for SMEs on the adoption of modern management practices, as a key contributor to productivity. The project will focus on SMEs from low-mid productivity sectors within service-based industries and recruit 300 SMEs from TVB, Oxfordshire and EM3 LEP areas. 50% of those recruited will receive expert 1-1 business coaching, the other 50% will not receive support. In addition to building an evidence based of ‘what works’, the trial will inform the implementation of the BLIS (and potentially the KPIs alluded to above).

### 3.5 Innovation Spaces Summary

FC gave an overview of the research undertaken on the role of innovation space in contributing to local economic growth. The research will inform a potential ERDF Call to be issued in June 2019: PA1 (£1,400,000) - *Promoting research and innovation, with an emphasis on investment in the development and upgrading of innovation space, to serve as a platform or host for innovation and innovative relationships.*



TVB Innovation Spaces - summary 30

### 3.6 StoryFutures Project

FC gave an overview of a project the LEP is supporting to bring cutting edge ideas / technologies in VR/AR from SMEs in the region to tasks set by Challenge Partners. The Group is asked to cascade the information to their networks.



StoryFutures SME & Partner Briefing Pack

## 4.0 **Forward Planning**

### 4.1 Business Growth Hub and ScaleUp Berkshire Future Funding

The Group supported the proposal to continue the funding of the ScaleUp Berkshire Programme using (provisional) BEIS funds in 2020/21. It also supported the proposal to future fund the Business Growth Hub using



Business Growth Hub Future Funding.pdf

unallocated PA3 ERDF funds, which would allow the Hub to continue to operate from the end of the current contract. This will be considered by the Board in June.

#### 4.2 International Trade – National Call

BR provided an update on the new International Trade service to commence from April 2020. He agreed to investigate a gap in the provision of export finance to SMEs with less than £5m turnover and share information on sector specialisms that might align with the BLIS.



DIT Update Thames Valley Berkshire.pdf

#### 5.0 **Structure and priorities for future meetings**

##### 5.1 The Group agreed the following:

- Terms of Reference to be reviewed to make Group's role more explicit
- Monitor any impact on the oversight of the Growth Hub resulting from the new governance structure, specifically the removal of a dedicated Steering Group
- Task & Finish Groups should be considered for deep-dives into different projects so that detail is not overlooked
- Length and frequency of meetings to be reviewed, to align with the emerging requirements of the BLIS
- Cross-fertilisation with other LEP programmes will be essential to ensure a joined-up approach e.g. apprenticeships.

## **APPENDIX 1 – SUMMARY OF THE LEP CODE OF CONDUCT AND PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE**

Code: “act in a manner consistent with the LEP’s equality and diversity statement and treat your fellow directors or sector representatives, members of staff and others you come into contact with when working in their role with respect and courtesy at all times”

“Directors or sector representatives should review their individual register of interest before each relevant meeting and decision-making committee meeting...”

Seven Principles of Public Life:

- Selflessness - act solely in the public interest
- Integrity - avoid any obligation to people or organisations that might try to influence; do not act to gain financial or other material benefits
- Objectivity - act impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence
- Accountability - accountable to the public and must submit to scrutiny
- Openness - act in an open and transparent manner
- Honesty - be truthful
- Leadership - exhibit these principles in behaviour and challenge poor behaviour

## APPENDIX 2 – SUMMARY OF LEP ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK 4.0

The LEP makes use of programme and scrutiny groups consisting of NEDs and sector representatives as well as other co-opted, selected or nominated individuals; all giving up their time voluntarily. An overview of these groups, including membership and headline terms of reference, is appended.

Programme groups receive at least quarterly reports for all projects with Financial Approval status.

The programme group for **Business Environment** is the Business Environment Programme Group, which is chaired by a NED.

...the public commitment made on the LEP website, i.e. to publish Forum, Board and Programme Group papers within the following timelines:

- i. Agendas and papers - 5 clear working days before the meeting takes place
- ii. Draft minutes - within 10 clear working days of the meeting taking place
- iii. Final minutes - within 10 clear working days of being approved.

The corporate structure of the LEP and the roles and responsibilities set out above enable a clear process for decision-making - by the correct person or group. In approving this Framework, the Board commits to making decisions on merit, having taken account of all relevant evidence available at the time of the decision.

The remaining decisions are made by the Board (unless they are management decisions, in which case they are devolved to the CEO) and will be informed by staff, the Nominations & Governance Committee and/or a programme group, through the following process:

- i. staff (provide impartial, evidence-based advice to inform decision throughout the process) →
- ii. committee/programme group (recommends decision) →
- iii. Board (makes decision) →
- iv. Forum (if reserved matter, ratifies decision).

Growth Hub Funding: The decision-making process is:

- i. staff (provide impartial, evidence-based advice to inform decision throughout the process)
- ii. programme group (recommends decision based on BEIS Growth Hub Principles of Funding)
- iii. Board (makes decision)
- iv. Forum (scrutinises/calls-in decision).

The [Accountable Body] S.151 Officer is entitled to attend any meeting of the LEP Forum, Board or programme group, to ensure the proper administration of financial affairs in the LEP.