

Agenda Item 6

Title:	Delivery Plan Implementation 2022/23.
Purpose:	To inform Board Members of the current progress in the delivery the Delivery Plan priorities in Q1 2022/23.
Recommendation(s):	That Board Members note this report and comment on any issues of interest or concern.
Impact on Risk Register:	As part of the annual performance review process the LEP will be required to report against progress within our submitted Delivery Plan, this highlight report provides Board Members to opportunity to comment on and challenge any areas of specific interest.

At the April Board meeting Members considered and approved a three-year Business Plan and budget. At the May Board meeting a LEP Delivery Plan for the current year was approved, then submitted to government at the end of June, to support the LEP core funding allocation for FY 2022/23. This report is intended to provide a brief overview of the current progress against the approved LEP Business and Delivery Plans and to highlight the strategic and operational activity of the LEP team.

- **Collaboration & Governance**

Our close working relationship with Buckinghamshire Council will continue as we seek to progress an Integration Plan ahead of the next Delivery Plan target date of November 2022 and in the progression of a Level 2+ County Growth Deal by January 2023. The second Delivery Plan submission has been requested by government to help determine LEP core or transitional funding for FY 2023/24.

We will continue to be open to close collaboration with neighbouring LEPs on a number of fronts, working alongside Berkshire & Enterprise M3 LEP on the support for the Aviation Industry as Heathrow Airport seeks to progress its recovery programme, with Hertfordshire LEP in the support for the Creative Industries sector and with Oxfordshire and South East Midlands LEP on developing an internationalisation plan to support inward investment and international trade for the area.

Operating nationally, we will support the LEP Network in highlighting the impact and reach of LEPs. In respect of sectors, we will continue to work with the UK Space Agency in developing the second phase of the National Space Clusters programme to help develop national partnerships, both across different geographies, but also between sectors, and we will continue to work with Catapults and commercial partners to develop Buckinghamshire's R&D and testing capabilities further.

- **Enterprise Zone Investment**

Following completion of the planning process for the **Aylesbury Woodlands Enterprise Zone** site, the focus has moved on to securing a relevant planning permission, site marketing and disposal and infrastructure delivery to help fulfil the legal obligations of both Buckinghamshire Council and Buckinghamshire Advantage.

Activity is underway to enable Buckinghamshire Council to advance the development of the main **access roundabout** to the site to be used against the outstanding Local Growth Fund delivery commitments.

At **Silverstone Park**, the latest phase of the Enterprise Zone development is now nearing completion and is fully let, with the main access road through the Enterprise Zone site due to open in September 2022. We are currently supporting MEPC with their intention to advance to **Phase 5** of their implementation strategy. This essentially represents the final significant section of the current Enterprise Zone site to be developed in Buckinghamshire, with only **Phase 6**, a site allocated for hotel development, remaining. Separately to this, we are assisting the British Racing Drivers Club in the development of their business case for the development of the **autonomous and connected vehicle test track** and with MEPC for the business case for a **Research Centre** to advance the attractiveness of the Silverstone Technology Cluster for international investment.

With the funding from the English Institute of Sport now secured, to match the agreed Enterprise Zone investment, the final phase of development for the Silverstone Sports Engineering Hub will be commencing through the development of the **Swimming Research and Innovation Centre**.

At the **Westcott Venture Park** we will continue our dialogue with site owners Patrizia to bring forward their commercial investment in the site, this will help deliver new commercial floorspace to provide grow on space for existing businesses currently occupying the Business Innovation Centre and to help attract new space related investment to the site. We will be working alongside the Satellite Applications Catapult to help raise awareness of the new LEP Funded centres including the **In Orbit Manufacturing & Service Centre** and the **Drone Test and Development Centre**.

Further dialogue is underway with the Oxford to Cambridge Arc University Group to identify the investment opportunities required to support a specialist rocket propulsion academic programme to operate from the Westcott site.

The criteria for the **Enterprise Accelerator** programme which will operate at the Westcott Enterprise Zone site is currently being finalised and it is hoped that the first awards can be made to applicants by Autumn 2022.

- **Skills Action Plan**

Over the past quarter we have been successful in getting the Buckinghamshire LEP area recognised as a **Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)** area and have submitted an application for the Growth Hub, Buckinghamshire Business First, to be our Employer Representative Body within this programme. The LSIP programme will commence from April 2023 and will bring with it significant funding of up to £1.2m per area.

We will look to further develop the Skills Action Plan with deep dive research programmes into the Digital Skills, Green Construction Skills and Engineering sectors by the end of August and ensure that training providers continue to work collaboratively in the delivery of the Skills Action Plan and in the introduction of the first **T Level** programmes in Buckinghamshire in the new academic year.

We will look to develop the programme of targeted skills outreach activities within those parts of the county most hard hit by the Covid pandemic, this will include programming the initial visits by the mobile Plant Hire skills training resource into target wards in Aylesbury, High Wycombe and Chesham

before October 2022 as well as developing a programme of employer visits for residents from these areas over the remainder of 2022.

Our Under 19's Skills Team have in the past month hosted the first Skills Show for young people with Special Educational Needs at Stoke Mandeville Stadium, a headteachers and schools career leaders conference at the Waterside Theatre in Aylesbury, and will be supporting Pinewood Studios in the planning and promotion of the "Set For More Futures" event over the weekend of November 18th-19th, an event that is set to be the UK's largest careers event for the film and screen industry.

- **Growth Hub Support Services**

The Growth Hub, delivered for the LEP by Buckinghamshire Business First, has developed and flexed to meet an everchanging business environment and shifts in government policy focus over the last few years while at the same time maintaining a core offer, as below, that, at the request of BEIS, adheres to three core principles:

- Improve the awareness and coordination of local and national business support
- Provide clear signposting and diagnosis to help businesses find the right support easily
- Improve the impact and value for money of business support

Regular business insight reports are provided for BEIS. Two issues have dominated the feedback over the past quarter, the first being the inflationary pressures being faced by business particularly at a time when they are facing the challenge of starting to repay Covid loans. The second relates to the increasing challenge of being able to recruit and retain a high-quality workforce.

By having the Growth Hub, the Skills Hub and the visitor Destination Management Organisation all aligned in the same organisation has provided a number of levers with which to provide this support.

One such lever has been the **Visit Buckinghamshire Boost Programme** which was funded through the Community Renewal Fund. This programme has been operating over the past 6 months and has helped provide an intensive programme of business support including digital skills training, accessibility training to accelerate the recovery of tourism, hospitality and leisure businesses and the wider visitor economy in Buckinghamshire.

The **Business Growth Advice Service**, funded by ERDF investment until June 2023, provides a 1:2:1 diagnostic service, time with a business adviser, plus access to exclusive Masterclasses on Strategic Planning, Finance, Digital Marketing, plus peer-to-peer group sessions. From June 2022 a specialist advisor supporting the Creative Industries sector has been added to the team.

The Growth Hub have also been effectively supporting the co-ordinated support package for refugees, and a dedicated resource on providing support for refugees has been developed for the BBF website [support for refugees](#) and advice has been provided for businesses that had trading relationships with Ukraine and Russia.

- **Research & Insight**

As part of the Buckinghamshire **Levelling Up** programme, our research team will be further investigating the reasons for the stubbornly high claimant count rates in parts of High Wycombe, Aylesbury and Chesham. Leading a multi-organisational programme, alongside Buckinghamshire Council and the Department of Work and Pensions this programme will include detailed ward level economic assessments and will inform action plans helping support job brokerage activities.

A detailed assessment into the **Impact of Covid 19** on the Buckinghamshire Economy is currently underway, assessing the impact on GVA and productivity within the county, the review is also assessing the changes in the use of business premises, town centre commercial activity, transport and the use of digital services. The review is also considering the changes in the employment mix within the county including the levels of self-employment, business start up and survival rates and assessing the likely long-term impacts of this change.

The **Net Zero Audit** looking to assess the opportunities for growth and support requirements for the Net Zero business sectors in Buckinghamshire will be completed by August and will inform an investment action plan that includes a Buckinghamshire equivalent of the “Earth-Shot Prize” supported by some of Buckinghamshire’s largest businesses.

We will continue to develop the Buckinghamshire Economic Observatory, undertake the quarterly Business Barometer Survey and support the voluntary sector network in the launch of the **Buckinghamshire Data Exchange** in September.

- **Capital Programme Delivery**

A number of new facilities supported by Local Growth Funding and Getting Building Fund investment are now delivering significant impacts for the Buckinghamshire economy. At Silverstone, **Lunaz** have recently taken possession of their new 140,000 sq. ft production centre for their UEV commercial vehicle upcycling factory. This major expansion is expected to support an additional 300 high value jobs for the area and enable the company to quadruple their industrial vehicle remanufacturing and electrification footprint.

The **Silverstone Sports Engineering Hub** have been able to develop their partnership with the Silverstone University Technical Centre by making the globally unique pedalling efficiency test rig available to students to undertake assessments. As a launch event for the new partnership in June, bike, wheel and tyre manufacturers were seeking collaborations with the Silverstone teams to develop their new equipment.

A host of new testing and R&D facilities are now nearing completion at **Westcott**. Long-abandoned heritage testing facilities have been brought back into full operation by established Westcott Company, European Astrotech, and new international investors URA Thrusters. The magnificent **In-Orbit Service and Manufacturing Centre** and Living Lab facilities in Building 4000 are now complete, incorporating world leading robotic technologies to simulate the docking and maintenance requirements for satellite and space station operations. The first major tenants of the **Drone Test and Development Centre** have already been secured ahead of the centre opening with world leading Sky Ports, who lead the way in the use of drone technologies for air taxi and urban and rural cargo movements making the site their new UK headquarters. A number of other investors are due to follow in the coming months. The new facilities at Westcott will all be showcased in the Expo Event scheduled to take place on July 28th.

- **New Funding**

The LEP continues to seek new investment into Buckinghamshire either directly or through strategic support for partner investments that will be of benefit to the Buckinghamshire economy.

Over the past three months we have supported the development of two major funding bids. We have worked in collaboration with the Buckinghamshire College Group and Buckinghamshire Business First

to support an application to the Department of Education for the Strategic Development Fund. An application for around £700k investment has been submitted incorporating training programmes for the Health and Social Sector, Electric Vehicle and Infrastructure Maintenance and Construction Sectors. If successful, the funding will be available from Autumn 2022 and will need to be delivered by April 2023.

Together with Buckinghamshire Business First we have also submitted an Expression of Interest for the DCMS Creative Industries Sector Fund. Our bid will centre around the business support needs for the film and screen sector and will build upon the capital investment that the LEP has previously made into the National Film and TV School and to the current Screen Hub facility proposal to be located at Pinewood Studios.

- **Strategic Development**

Having produced the new **Digital Innovation Plan** for Buckinghamshire we are now looking to convene some of the leading innovators in this field to identify opportunities for further joint collaboration. We are keen to raise the profile of the Centre for AI and Computing at the University of Buckingham and the Future Technologies Centre at Westcott as hubs for regional innovation and collaboration.

Business Case Development: Having highlighted the issues relating to a shortfall in Engineering training opportunities in Buckinghamshire within the Skills Action Plan we are pleased to report that Bucks New University are submitting an Office for Students bid to establish **School of Engineering and the Built Environment**. If successful, courses will begin from from September 2023 with subjects Civil Engineering, Electrical and Electronics Engineering, Engineering Design and Mechanical Engineering.

We have brokered a programme of collaboration across the Space and Formula 1 Sectors, bringing the two areas together has highlighted a range of shared competencies and challenges that are facing. Funding from the UK Space Agency will help develop a series of joint workshops in the autumn.

We are also supporting the **Bucks Health & Social Care Academy** to develop a new Community Interest Company for the delivery of its training programme for health and social care professionals. The new company will enable the Integrated Care System to support place based interprofessional and multi-agency education and training within Bucks.

- **Communications & Events**

Our Annual Report for the 2021/22 year is currently in production, as per last year the report will be available as an interactive web-based document and will be available from September.

With the increasingly diverse platform of social media platforms available, Bucks LEP are developing our media collateral to allow for wider use across different platforms. New filming has been commissioned to highlight the business opportunities arising from our capital investments and our image library is being refreshed to support greater activity on the new @buckslep Instagram account.

We have been pleased to support the launch of the new Bucks Swan Ambassadors programme and act as sponsors for the Innovative Business Award at the Buckinghamshire Business Awards.

Board members are asked to: Note this report and comment on any issues of particular interest or concern.