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No. 014.19 11 April 2019

**N E W S R E L E A S E**

**£4m in new funding to support growth of Bucks creative sector**

Speaking at the Creative LEP Local Industries Partnership in Birmingham, Andrew M Smith, Chair of [Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership (BTVLEP)](https://www.buckstvlep.co.uk/) announced £4 million in funding to support three new initiatives. The three projects\* will strengthen and build Buckinghamshire’s creative sector, a key growth driver of the local economy.

The projects that will receive funding are:

* **‘StoryFutures Academy: The National Centre for Immersive Storytelling’** (£288,073) at the [National Film and Television School](http://www.nfts.co.uk/immersive) (run in partnership with Royal Holloway, University of London), is the UK’s first hub for developing cutting-edge creative training and research programmes in immersive storytelling to ensure the UK creative workforce is the most skilled in the world in the use of immersive technologies like Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality and Mixed Reality;
* **‘School of Computing and Centre for AI’** (£2,000,000) at the [University of Buckingham](https://www.buckingham.ac.uk/); establishing new centres for training and applied research within the School of Computing, and;
* **‘Bucks Creates @ Pinewood’** (1,645,000) through [Bucks New University](https://bucks.ac.uk/home) and Creative Media Skills; which will bring a full suite of 21 new masters and bachelors degree programmes to the area, as well as a new professional higher education work-learning centre.

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**£4m in new funding to support growth of Bucks creative sector: 2**

Andrew M. Smith, Chair, Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership, said: “Buckinghamshire’s creative sector is world-renowned and we want to do everything we can to support and continue its growth. Funding these three major projects will help to unlock long term impact for the local economy and support the delivery of the Government’s Industrial Strategy.”

Andrew added: “We are delighted to start work with our partners on these exciting new projects.”

Digital and Creative Industries Minister, Margot James, said: "Buckinghamshire is a hotbed for the creative industries and it's fantastic to see even more investment being made in the area to grow and nurture new talent. Through our modern Industrial Strategy we are making sure that the UK is a world leader for the creative sector and an industry that will continue to go from strength to strength."

As part of the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Growth Corridor, Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership was selected as one of the trailblazing areas to deliver the [National Industrial Strategy](http://buckstvlep.co.uk/about-btv/local-industrial-strategy). To help deliver this strategy, BTVLEP sought proposals for business and skills capital projects that support the development of innovation and research in Buckinghamshire, aligned to the five foundations and four grand challenges of the [National Industrial Strategy](https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/the-uks-industrial-strategy?utm_campaign=indstra-wp&utm_source=stakeholder&utm_medium=referral&utm_content=london-southeast). The submissions were independently assessed and selected based on strategic fit, economic impact, type of funding required and value for money, deliverability and sustainability.

BTVLEP is a business-led Local Enterprise Partnership which promotes economic growth and prosperity across Buckinghamshire. Buckinghamshire is a significant wealth generator for the UK economy, and the commitment of over £73m in Local Growth Funds is unleashing ambition and creativity in the county. This funding is enabling the delivery of new road and rail infrastructure, better skills and business opportunities and enhanced digital connectivity to support sustainable economic growth in the county which sits at the heart of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc.

**Ends**

**Note to editors**

**\*Approved Local Growth Fund projects:**

**The National Centre for Immersive Storytelling (NFTS)**

NFTS, and delivery partners, were recently chosen to run a new industry centre of excellence in immersive approach. NFTS submitted a business case looking for LEP funding to improve the facilities and equipment at what will become Britain's first ever national hub for training, experimentation and production in immersive technologies like Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality and Mixed Reality.

**School of Computing and Centre for AI**

The University of Buckingham submitted a business case for the building of a new School of Computing and Centre for Artificial Intelligence. It aims to create new centres for training and applied research within the School of Computing, providing opportunities for collaboration in programme delivery and support of Buckinghamshire’s high growth companies.

**Buckinghamshire Creates @Pinewood**

Bucks New University submitted a business case to bring a full suite of 21 new masters and bachelors degree programmes - using industry-standard technologies - to the heart of the film industry in Pinewood within 3 years with a new professional higher education work-learning centre.

The [**Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership**](http://buckstvlep.co.uk/) (BTVLEP) is a business-led ‘partnership of equals’ between local government and the private sector, building the conditions for sustainable economic growth in the County.

[**Buckinghamshire Business First**](http://www.bbf.uk.com/) (BBF), is the Growth Hub for Buckinghamshire and is backed by Buckinghamshire based entrepreneurs, thousands of SMEs and Local Authorities.  BBF provides the link between public policy and the business community in Buckinghamshire and works with partners to create a dynamic business environment in the Entrepreneurial Heart of Britain.

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