

TERMS OF REFERENCE

LEP TRANSITION WORKING GROUP

1. Membership

- a. Steve Bambrick, Corporate Director – Planning, Growth & Sustainability, BC (Chair);
- b. Richard Ambrose, Service Director – Economic Growth & Regeneration, BC;
- c. Richard Harrington, Chief Executive Officer, BLEP;
- d. Ian Barham, Partnership Director, BLEP;
- e. Christian Smith, Legal Services – Team Leader, BC;
- f. Claire Hunter, Head of Finance, BC;
- g. Claire Phillips, Head of Strategy & Partnerships – Economic Growth & Regeneration, BC;
- h. Angela Gray, Business Partner – Human Resources, BC;
- i. BLEP advisors (as and when required).

Other officers (including key partners) will be invited for specific items, as appropriate.

2. Purpose

In light of the Government’s decision to transfer the economic growth and business representation functions of LEP’s to local authorities, the LEP Board and the Council have approved proposed arrangements for the delivery of the LEP functions. The purpose of this operational working group is to develop and implement a detailed timeline and project plan to transfer, functions, staff and resources from the LEP to the Council as early as possible (and by 01 April 2024 at the latest).

3. Objectives and Responsibilities

In order to fully complete the transition in accordance with the unanimous approvals from the LEP Board and the Council then the working group will develop and implement a detailed timeline and project plan for the transition, including the mechanisms for achieving the new arrangements.

As part of this detailed project plan the working group will complete ‘due diligence’ work relevant to the transition covering the following three work programmes:

1. Finance & Assets – transfer of assets, contracts, loans and liabilities as well as the ring-fencing of passported funds.
2. Employment – staff consultation and TUPE arrangements (including pension considerations).
3. Operational – review of existing economic governance arrangements that ensures appropriate business representation, the establishment of the investment board and the investment fund and the development of a service level agreement (SLA) with BBF linked to agreed funding arrangements (e.g. growth hub, skills hub and business support services).

Legal advice will be provided across all three work programmes, as required, with direct legal involvement within the finance & assets work programme linked to areas such as existing service contracts, loans and asset transfers etc.

The working group will carefully consider any further government guidance that is produced and ensure that this is fully considered as part of the transition.

Exclusions

It should be noted that the working group will not cover the process for winding down the LEP, which will be the responsibility of the LEP directors. It will also not consider future structures (once staff and resources have transferred into the Council) or any changes to how functions are currently being delivered (e.g. growth hub) – these will be matters for the Council to consider.

The working group will report to CMT and the LEP task & finish group on a monthly basis (or more often if required). This will provide an update as well as any issues for escalation / requiring a steer.

4. Meeting Arrangements

The Working Group will meet approximately fortnightly, with additional meetings to be timetabled in as necessary.

5. Standing Agenda Items

- i. Apologies;
- ii. Minutes of the Previous Meeting;
- iii. Matters Arising and Action Log;
- iv. Work Programme Updates and Timelines – Progress / Issues / Risks;
- v. Matters to report to CMT / LEP task & finish group;
- vi. Communications;
- vii. Any other business.

6. Background Papers

- Government's letter of 4th August 2023 confirming its decision to end LEP core funding from 2024/25 and transfer current LEP functions to local authorities.
- Joint statement from Buckinghamshire LEP and Buckinghamshire Council in response to the Government's letter of 4th August.
- LEP Board paper on LEP Integration on 13th October 2023.
- Buckinghamshire Council's Cabinet paper on 'Future Buckinghamshire Economic Development Organisation' on 24th October 2023.
- Government's Technical Guidance on integration into local democratic institutions (August 2023).

