

ED/01/19

Minutes of a meeting of the **Economic Development Working Group** of Buckingham Town Council held on **Wednesday 12th February 2020** in the Vinson Building, Buckingham University, Buckingham at 7pm.

Present:

Cllr. M. Cole	Town Mayor
Cllr. J. Harvey	Vice Chair
Cllr. H. Mordue	
Cllr. R. Newell	
Cllr. M. Smith	Chair
N. Morrison	Buckingham Society
L. Hutton	#lovebuckingham
D. Jones	University of Buckingham
M. Simons	Traders Association
P. Hodson	Town Clerk
C. Molyneux	Deputy Town Clerk
L. Stubbs	Communications Clerk
I. Barham	Local Enterprise Partnership
B. Dowden	Town Council, Apprentice
N. Stockill	Committee Clerk

753/19 Apologies for Absence

Members received apologies from Cllr. Stuchbury, the Tourist Information Coordinator and County Councillor Whyte.

M. Simmons congratulated the Town Clerk on his presentation at the High Street Bucks conference. Members asked for any feedback to be circulated to the group.

754/19 Declarations of Interest

To receive declarations of any personal or prejudicial interest under consideration on this agenda in accordance with the Localism Act 2011 Sections 26-34 & Schedule 4.

755/19 Minutes of last meeting

Members approved the minutes of the Economic Development Working Group meeting held on Wednesday 30th October 2019 and received at the Full Council meeting on Monday 18th November 2019.

756/19 Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP)

Members received an update on the role and work of the Local Enterprise Partnerships from Ian Barham, Partnership Manager for the Buckinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership, highlighting the following key points:

- Buckinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership (Bucks LEP) is one of 38 Local Enterprise Partnerships operating across England. Bucks LEP is a business led private and public sector partnership that aims to promote local economic growth and prosperity.
- Bucks LEP is primarily concerned with enabling sustainable and productive economic growth through creating more jobs, up-skilling our workforce and by providing the vital supporting infrastructure and housing.

- Buckinghamshire is home to iconic business brands and locations: Pinewood Studios, the National Film and Television School, Silverstone, the National Space Propulsion Facility (at Westcott Venture Park) and Stoke Mandeville Hospital, the birthplace of the Paralympic Movement.
- By sector, professional, scientific and technical businesses account for over a fifth (20.4%) of all businesses in Buckinghamshire, ahead of construction (10.7%) and ICT (10.0%). Buckinghamshire has the 2nd highest proportion of firms in these sectors of any LEP behind London, the 3rd highest proportion of property companies and the 4th highest proportion of creative sector companies. In addition, Buckinghamshire is at the centre of England's Economic Heartland, an area that stretches from Oxfordshire to Cambridgeshire.
- Buckinghamshire is a draw for talent, with evidence showing we have the best educated workforce in the land. However, many young people are not returning to the area after completing their university education.
- Buckinghamshire LEP has published one of the first Local Industrial Strategies in the country. It focuses on how to strengthen and exploit the county's most important economic assets – including Silverstone, Pinewood Studios, and Westcott Space Cluster - assets that are distinctive to Buckinghamshire and are significant nationally and internationally.
- Digital connectivity is a crucial factor in supporting business growth and Bucks LEP has invested in 5G technology to ensure the Bucks business have the opportunity of a technological advantage.
- Economic drivers of activity:
 - the skills and inspiration revolution
 - digital everywhere – 5g connectivity
 - living labs –establishing a living lab framework to enable rapid testing and introduction of new products and technology
 - commercialising innovation and increasing business competitiveness
- Buckingham's big issues
 - Connectivity
The group could join forces with local organisations and neighbouring Town & Parish Councils to pitch for investment in digital and transport connectivity. Completion of the East West rail and Expressway will improve links between towns and key economic and employment areas. The Bucks LEP invested in the completion of the Buckingham to Winslow cycle path which, in the future, could be used for electric bikes and scooters. There needs to be better transport links to neighbouring towns, especially in light of the government's commitment to build a new train station in the North of Bucks – potentially at Calvert.
 - Utilising key local assets
Can there be more done to invest, encourage and support the talent with Buckingham university students? There is potential to work with Stowe and build on the connectivity between the town and the iconic landscapes of Stowe.
 - Cultural Hub
Buckingham is home to the Summer festival, EntFest and the Literary Festival. It could build on these successes and develop its reputation as a vibrant, cultural festival town.

- New Innovation Test Bed
Bucks LEP is working alongside the UK Space Agency to develop the national Space Propulsion test centre in Buckinghamshire and developing integrated healthcare solutions to reduce the burden on our national health service with Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust, Bucks New University and leading technology and life science companies. If Buckinghamshire wants to be successful at developing, retaining and attract innovative, high-value, globally-orientated firms to the county, it needs to ensure the area is particularly attractive to the kind of ambitious, talented young people that want to work for these kind of firms
- Employment space and incubation
The Buckingham Neighbourhood Development Plan outlines the vision for Buckingham in 2031 and its demand for 10ha of employment land.
- New community integration
New housing developments give the opportunity to create further facilities which will be integrated into the locale and build on community integration.

Cllr. Harvey said Buckingham has a very active cultural arts scene which should be supported and Section 106 funding should be used to develop a cultural Arts Centre in the town. Cllr. Harvey also proposed a statue of Florence Nightingale to highlight her role in introducing community nursing.

Mr. Barham advised the group that SE Energy Hub can support and advise businesses on the development and integration of renewable technologies.

Cllr. Cole said many of the employment opportunities for Buckingham were not sustainable unless there were improved roads and public transport connections with Silverstone and Westcott Venture Park. Cllr. Cole and L. Hutton questioned why there was no mention of Milton Keynes and its, unquestionable, influence and opportunities for Buckingham. Mr. Barham said that Milton Keynes was being considered with the Oxford-Cambridge Arc developments and was supported by the LEP within Milton Keynes. Many of the assets highlighted were unique and have immense potential for towns such as Buckingham. Mr. Barham agreed that non-car transport technology was important for the future sustainability of locations such as Buckingham.

Mr. Morrison questioned whether there should be more focus on developing Buckingham as a sustainable and vibrant town that people want to move to. Mr. Barham accepted that schools, entertainment and a sense of place were important. Given Buckinghamshire is likely to need to develop a further 50,000 new homes to cope with the forecast growth in the population between 2013 and 2033; aspires to attract and grow more mid-range/large business; and to encourage more people to live, work and play in the county, BTVLEP is keen to ensure the communities that are created here are thriving, sustainable and vibrant, promoting people's health, happiness, and wellbeing.

Members thanks Mr. Barham for attending the evening's meeting.

Mr. Barham left the meeting.

757/19 Action List

Noted

758/19 Inter Town Steps Challenge (499/19 refers)

Cllr. Harvey reported on his recent meetings with Suzi Andrews, Public Health Practitioner at Buckinghamshire County Council; and highlighted the following from his written report:

- Objective - To set up an initiative (supported by a suitable website/app) that would enable people from neighbouring towns to compete (with friendly civic rivalry) in a 'steps challenge'. The aim would be to encourage people to walk / exercise more than they have done previously - and for more people to do this.

Cllr. Harvey concluded that the administration of the proposed challenge was too ambitious to roll out in 2020. Cllr. Harvey **AGREED** to bring back another report to a future meeting of EDWG. **ACTION CLLR. HARVEY**

759/19 Buckingham Heritage App

Members received an update from the Communications Clerk:

The application has been titled **Buxplore** and the draft application can currently be accessed online in pilot form, with a formal Launch on 26th April 2020 in conjunction with the Spring Fair.

Mr Jones spoke in favour of consulting with the University to seek the student's experience and what kind of routes would be useful/popular with them.

Small scale changes to the App can be done within the Town Council and large scales changes can be done (within the 5 year contract) with the App developer. The World War 1 trail would be something that could added in the future as an additional trail. The App Needed to be about community heritage within Buckingham and educating and encouraging people to engage with heritage. The food trail is food heritage of the town and not so much the commercial sector. The governance of the project App is with the Town Council under Town Centre & Events Committee and evaluated by EDWG.

760/19 Tourist Information Centre and Strategy Update

The Deputy Town Clerk reported on the following updates:

- The Tourist Information Coordinator was investigating a new product line of bees wax wraps and branded reusable cups.
- Proposals were in hand to open the Tourist Information Centre on Sundays beginning after Easter and continuing to the end of August
- Meeting planned to finalise website improvements
- The updated Tourism Strategy would be circulated at the next Networking Event on the 10th March 2020.
- Members **AGREED** for the Town Clerk to circulate outcomes from the recent TIC Workshops **ACTION TOWN CLERK**

761/19 Destination Buckingham (min 336.4/19 refers)

The Town Clerk said the Office were expecting receipt of outstanding funds by the end of the financial year.

#LoveBuckingham - L. Hutton reported on the success of the LoveBuckingham Christmas gift guide and scheduled posts promoting items of interest to businesses and residents.

762/19 Chairman's Announcements

None.

ED/01/19

763/19 Date of next meeting

Thursday 30th April 2020

Meeting closed at: 21.10pm

Signed.....

Date.....

DRAFT