****

No. 031.15 25 November 2015

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

**New Chairman appointed to Buckinghamshire Thames Valley LEP**

[Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership](http://www.buckstvlep.co.uk/) (BTVLEP), are delighted to announce the appointment of Andrew M. Smith as its new Chairman, following Alex Pratt OBE, stepping down after four years at the helm of BTVLEP.

Appointed at last Fridays Board meeting, Andrew M. Smith, who is Director of Corporate Affairs at Pinewood Group plc, brings to the position of Chairman a wealth of business experience in both the private and public sector and is committed to building on the strong foundations set by Alex.

Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP, Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, said: “I am absolutely delighted to hear that Andrew has been appointed to take over as the Chair of the Buckinghamshire Thames Valley LEP. I recently saw for myself the impressive transformation of the Pinewood Studios site that Andrew has been central in advancing. The investment in the Pinewood hub will ensure that the studios will continue to lead the way in global output. It is fantastic that a leading light from this sector has been selected to take on a key role within the LEP network and is in a position to bring his unique business insight into both local and national decision making.”

As Director of Corporate Affairs, Pinewood Group plc, Andrew has been instrumental in the development of the Pinewood site and development of the international reputation of the studio and in particular in developing strong investment links with the Chinese Government.

**more…**

**New Chairman appointed to Buckinghamshire Thames Valley LEP: 2**

Richard Harrington, Chief Executive of Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership, said: “On behalf of BTVLEP, I am delighted to welcome Andrew as the new Chair for the LEP. We look forward to working with Andrew to help drive the future direction of the Buckinghamshire Thames Valley LEP.”

As a Board member of BTVLEP since 2012, Andrew has been instrumental in guiding and supporting the growth of the LEP and his knowledge of the film and creative arts sector has been invaluable in the development of this growth area for Buckinghamshire. Andrew is also a Non-Executive Director of Buckinghamshire Business First.

Buckinghamshire is the Entrepreneurial Heart of Britain where, for well over a decade, more businesses have started here than anywhere else in the UK. It is no accident that we are the Birthplace of the Paralympics at Stoke Mandeville, the creative film engine for James Bond and Star Wars at Pinewood Studios, and the joint home of the Silverstone Grand Prix Circuit.

**Ends**

**Note to editors**

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.

For further information please contact:

Richard Burton

Communications Manager

T: 01494 568933

M: 07866 492292

E: richard.burton@btvlep.co.uk