

Getting Building Fund - boosting economic growth in Bucks

Getting Building Fund (GBF) investment is creating hundreds of new jobs and opportunities for training and providing facilities for education and space for new businesses to develop their ideas.

This funding is driving economic recovery and supports the continued delivery of Buckinghamshire's Local Industrial Strategy and growth within our four key sectors, Upstream Space, Creative and Digital, Advanced Engineering and Manufacturing and Medical Technology and Health.

The original allocation of **£7.7m** of the Government's Getting Building Fund leveraged over **£14.5m** of private match funding, which resulted in a total capital investment of **£22.5m**.

Getting Building Fund Impact – outcomes from investment:

- **463** new jobs created
- **31** jobs safeguarded
- **4,318** sqm new commercial space
- **18,373** sqm research & development space
- **836** sqm learning space
- **2,780** learners assisted
- **121** businesses supported
- **1,178** broadband connections

Project summaries:

- **The Westcott Disruptive Innovation Space Centre - £2m** allocation of Getting Building Funds

Through the grant agreement, Buckinghamshire LEP worked with Satellite Applications Catapult and other partners to fully develop these new facilities – increasing business activity, employment, and skills opportunities through the Satellite Applications Catapult's current and future workstreams and programmes. This includes the Westcott Incubator & Accelerator fund to support new business and SMEs with the development of innovative new products and services for the growing space sector.

*Outcome: the new Disruptive Innovation for Space Centre, Building 4000, opened during the Westcott Space Expo in July 2022, providing **2,387sqm** of innovation space and facilities. The Satellite Applications Catapult acquisition of an additive manufacturing system (MetalFAB1) for the benefit of the UK Space Sector, was also acquired through the Getting Building Fund, and is installed at the Satellite Applications Catapult's Disruptive Innovation for*

Space Centre at Westcott Venture Park where it is now available for companies and research organisations to use.

- **The Rural Broadband Programme and Gigabit Voucher Top Up Scheme - £1.01m** allocation of Getting Building Funds

A total of £1.01m GBF grant funding supported two programmes: the Gigabit Voucher Top Up which is delivered through the National DCMS programme; and the Buckinghamshire Council, Bucks Rural Business Broadband contract with Openreach, funded through the DEFRA European grant programme.

Outcome: over 1,200 new Gigabit broadband services were delivered to rural communities and businesses through the DCMS Gigabit Top Up and Phase 3 Bucks Rural Business Broadband programme. The Gigabit Voucher top up scheme has delivered over 606 rural business and residential premises with Gigabit capable broadband connectivity.

- **European Astrotech Ltd - Centre of Excellence for Rocket Engine and Flow Tests Facility – £740k** allocation of Getting Building Funds

European Astrotech are a UK based company that specialise in spacecraft propulsion propellant chemistry and launch site services, also offering training in handling, storage and transportation of liquid propellants. European Astrotech has supported international launch missions for Galileo, EUCLID and Triton space programmes. European Astrotech identified a requirement to develop the Centre of Excellence for Rocket Engine and Flow Tests Facility at Westcott Venture Park in Buckinghamshire.

Outcome: the new laboratory, cleanroom and training facilities were completed in 2022, securing the future of this highly successful and specialist business based at Westcott. European Astrotech have conducted testing on the fuels used for several launch campaigns including the SpaceX Transport4, launched on 1st April 2022. Over 500 engineers and technicians from industry and universities across the UK have been trained at the new facilities at Westcott since the facilities were completed in 2022. This project has generated the interest of the UK Space Agency and the development of the Plastron proposal to create a new regional space cluster linking Westcott to the South and South West space hubs.

- **Satellite Applications Catapult – Innovation Ecosystem at Westcott – £2.6m** allocation of Getting Building Funds

Getting Building Funds supported the expansion of the UK space sector offer at Westcott, by accelerating the delivery of three additional capabilities to support longer term ambitions at the Westcott Enterprise Zone:

- In Orbit Servicing & Manufacturing (IOSM) – robotic facility
- Agri/ Healthy Living Lab

- Drone Test and Development Centre

*Outcome: activity in these industry leading world class facilities, based in Building 4000, has increased over recent months, with the Satellite Applications Catapult recruiting additional resources to provide technical support and manage access to the facilities, including the In Orbit Service & Manufacturing (IOSM), Metal Additive Manufacturing, Agri & Health Living Labs, and the new Drone Test Development Centre. The drone test facility has attracted significant interest from the industry, engaging over **32** companies since completion in July 2022 and securing fixed term tenancy with major companies including Skyports and Anduril at Westcott. The Innovation Ecosystem project has created over **100** new jobs at the site.*

- **Flannery Plant Hire Ltd - Bucks Operator Skills Hub - £750k** allocation of Getting Building Funds

Getting Building Funding created new mobile training facilities for industry accredited training and skills programmes, in the use and safety of plant and vehicles for the construction industry. The initial Buckinghamshire LEP investment has enabled Flannery to secure a further £6m through the Department for Education to support their construction skills bootcamp programme. The focus is on ensuring local people can easily access training facilities and construction skills programmes that provide career pathways, apprenticeships and employment opportunities to meet the growing demands within the construction sector.

*Outcome: mobile training facilities were delivered and fully operational by autumn 2022, benefitting over **600** trainees in the first two years. One training unit is based at the Flannery dedicated training hub in Iver, the other facility providing a dedicated mobile training and outreach resource in Buckinghamshire to boost construction skills and meet the high demand for local and regional jobs. The Skills Hub project outcomes are all driven by an ambition to create local sustainable employment opportunities in support of regional infrastructure projects such as HS2 and the East West Rail Network route. In addition, Bucks LEP investment helped to secure Flannery's successful £6m DfE Skills Bootcamp bid, supporting Buckinghamshire Local Skills Improvement Plan.*

- **URA Thrusters Ltd – TESTA – Novel Test Facility at Westcott – £250k** allocation of Getting Building Funds

URA Thrusters is a spin-off company from AVS UK with the only goal to commercialise the use of water for space transportation and propulsion. AVS is an international SME and EN9100 supplier of the majority of worldwide space primes - Airbus, TAS, OHB, RAFAEL, Virgin Orbit, SSTL, CubeSat primes, etc.

URA Thrusters is developing a commercial range of water propulsion systems (ICE) for Reaction and Attitude Control Systems (RACS) of a brand-new reconfigurable 3,000 kg GEO spacecraft from Airbus. ICE thrusters are the most suitable option to replace standard hydrazine toxic RACS with “green” alternatives for large platforms, and at the same time provide 20-30% cost reduction and operational benefits to space platform and mission providers.

Outcome: URA Thrusters brand new test facility at Westcott, is enabling the testing and development of their pioneering water-based in orbit propulsion systems. Buckinghamshire LEP worked in partnership with URA Thrusters, UK Space Agency and site owners Patrizia to develop the new Space Hub at Westcott, which will provide additional space for product development and production, within the Enterprise Zone.

- **LUNAZ Applied Technologies – £365k** allocation of Getting Building Funds

Lunaz are an innovative company based at Silverstone, specialising in development of EV power trains and battery systems for commercial vehicle fleets, supporting the commitment to net-zero through transport decarbonisation. Bucks LEP welcomed the opportunity to support a clean-tech firm, creating new high skilled jobs and positive contribution to the Buckinghamshire economy.

Outcome: £365k Getting Building Funding was invested in Lunaz’s new building at the Silverstone Technology Cluster. The innovation space, battery storage and test facility was completed in late 2021, and trials commenced on prototype EV Waste Vehicles in 2022. Buckinghamshire LEP support has enabled Lunaz to secure a contract and additional funding, through the DEFRA funded programme with Buckinghamshire Council, to deliver the UK’s first fleet of retro fitted EV Waste Vehicles as part of a pilot scheme in Buckinghamshire.

- **England’s Economic Heartland - East West Rail Fibre Provision Upgrade – £643k** allocation of Getting Building Funds

The project aims to improve regional digital connectivity, upgrading the East West Rail fibre communications link between Bicester and Bletchley, and is due to be completed by July 2024. The fibre link will provide capacity to extend rural 5G mobile and Gigabit broadband coverage, to an estimated 21,000 premises in surrounding areas along East West Rail route, through commercial arrangements with Network Rail. The fibre link also provides enabling infrastructure that supports the 5G Innovation Regions programme, a partnership with Oxfordshire County Council and Buckinghamshire Council to develop specific 5G applications.

Outcome: the project aims to improve regional digital connectivity, along the East West Rail route, providing capacity to extend 5G and Gigabit broadband

coverage to over **21,000** premises. The scheme is due to be completed in July 2024 in line with the East West Rail programme.

- **D2H Advanced Technologies – Advanced Braking Facility (ABF) – £113k** allocation of Getting Building Funds

D2H Advanced Technologies, a high-tech engineering company founded in 2015, is preparing to transform the reach and scope of its work beyond digital consulting, into the areas of product delivery and testbed service provision. The backbone of this shift is the creation of a new centre for electric vehicle brake testing that will add UK and EU-leading capability in Buckinghamshire. This will drive direct growth in sales and jobs, generate new IP and ensure that D2H and the UK takes the global lead in Electric Vehicle brake systems development.

Creation of a D2H software tool will enable a huge increase in virtual testing and simulation to supplant the expensive track-based protocols, and for the region to tap into this global marketplace and opportunity. This project will result in further growth for D2H, providing additional employment for up to three new FTE jobs and five safeguarded in high advanced engineering and applied technology.

Outcome: The scheme will support the development of the D2H web based Advanced Brake software application and provide UK automotive companies with a novel and innovative digital development process, allowing improved EV brake system design and optimisation much earlier in the development cycle, at lower cost, and helping to improve brake systems efficiency.