



NOTICE OF MEETING

Thames Valley Berkshire City Deal (Elevate Berkshire) Joint Committee

**Tuesday 24 January 2017, 10.30 am
The Marketing Suite - Green Park**

To: THAMES VALLEY BERKSHIRE CITY DEAL (ELEVATE BERKSHIRE) JOINT COMMITTEE

Councillors Bicknell (Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead), Brunel-Walker (Bracknell Forest Council), Croft (West Berkshire Council), Lovelock (Reading Borough Council), Munawar (Slough Borough Council) and Munro (Wokingham Borough Council)

cc: Substitute Members of the Panel

Councillors Heydon (Bracknell Forest Council) and Hussain (Slough Borough Council)

Co-optees:

Katharine Horler, Thames Valley Berkshire LEP
Tim Smith, Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership

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Published: 16 January 2017

**Thames Valley Berkshire City Deal (Elevate Berkshire) Joint
Committee
Tuesday 24 January 2017, 10.30 am
The Marketing Suite - Green Park**

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AGENDA

Page No

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

To receive apologies for absence and to note the attendance of any substitute members.

2. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

3. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are asked to declare any personal or disclosable pecuniary interest in respect of any matter to be considered at this meeting.

Any Member with a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in a matter should withdraw from the meeting when the matter is under consideration and should notify the Democratic Services Officer in attendance that they are withdrawing as they have such an interest. If the Disclosable Pecuniary Interest is not entered on the register of Members interests the Monitoring Officer must be notified of the interest within 28 days.

5. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

Any other items which, pursuant to Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chairman decides are urgent.

6. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE LAST MEETING

To approve the minutes of the last formal meeting held on 22 January 2016 and receive updates on any issues not covered elsewhere on the agenda arising from the inquorate meeting on 22 July 2016, the notes of which are also attached..

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7. ELEVATE PROJECT ESF UPDATE

To provide the Joint Committee with an update on the Elevate Berkshire European Social Fund Programme.

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**THAMES VALLEY BERKSHIRE CITY
DEAL (ELEVATE BERKSHIRE) JOINT
COMMITTEE
22 JANUARY 2016
11.05 - 11.40 AM**

Present:

Councillor Stuart Munro, Wokingham Borough Council
Councillor Rob Anderson, Slough Borough Council
Councillor Phillip Bicknell, Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead
Councillor Marc Brunel-Walker, Bracknell Forest Council

Co-opted Members:

Tim Smith, Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership

Also Present:

Mark Browne, West Berkshire Council
Shanzeeda Chowdhury, Slough Borough Council
Paul Gresty
Zoe Hanim, Reading Borough Council
Rhian Hayes, Wokingham Borough Council
Nigel Horton-Baker, Reading UK CIC
Emelye Janes, Reading Borough Council
Anneken Priesack, Bracknell Forest Council
Grant Thornton, Reading Borough Council

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillor Jo Lovelock, Reading Borough Council
Katharine Horler, Thames Valley Berkshire LEP

39. Apologies for Absence and Substitute Members

The Committee noted that apologies had been received from Councillor Lovelock who had asked Grant Thornton to cover any matters on behalf of Reading Borough Council. Katharine Horler had also tendered her apologies.

40. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

41. Minutes and Matters Arising from the Last Meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 10 November 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

42. **Urgent Items of Business**

There were no urgent items of business.

43. **European Structural Investment Fund (EUSIF)**

The Committee was reminded that the 'Full' EUSIF application had been submitted to the Department for Work and Pensions on 14 August 2015. Since submission, the DWP had sought and been provided with additional information. At the same time, they had been asked for additional clarity around process/match and a draft funding agreement so as to make the necessary arrangements with regard to compliance and partnership agreements. In late December, the DWP indicated that the proposed outputs and results for the EUSIF element of the wider programme had been revised.:

"Please can you send me your updated outputs and results indicators. As discussed the last version sent to me did not have the 50/50 split for Male and Female and although there was an increase from 1650, it is still lower than would be required overall – given the amount of proposed funding. (Although I am unable at this stage to share with you the final agreed Indicators for Thames Valley Berkshire – we do know that for this Investment priority we anticipate that the total number of participants should be over 3000)"

In response, the DWP had been asked to clarify how they had worked this number out, and the unit cost, bearing in mind the call had indicated the aim was to work with those furthest away from the labour market with multiple barriers to employment

Furthermore, the DWP had again asked for clarification and for some additional information to be provided. The information and granularity required by the DWP and guidance information had not been set out at the beginning of the application process and it was clear that the full application that had been sent in August (supplementary evidence in October) was only now being reviewed.

Paul Gresty reported that verbal agreement had been reached with the DWP that the match was fine including the Adviza framework. Applying this retrospectively from November 2015 had also been agreed. He added that he had been assured that the Thames Valley Berkshire application would be considered by the Board either late this week or early next week. Paul was to meet the person reviewing the application and reminded the Committee that he required the additional information sought by Monday 25 January 2016. This involved a complete breakdown of cost details including the basis of the calculations.

In response to questions, he advised that:

- There remained some doubt about whether the funding would be confirmed although Paul remained optimistic..
- He had sought a timeline for agreement but had yet to receive a response from the DWP.

The importance of seeking written answers to ensure that there was an audit trail was stressed.

There was concern about the protracted process and delays which some viewed as maladministration. The Committee's greatest concern was for the young people who could be missing out if the matter was not settled quickly.

It was suggested that that there was a degree of risk aversion nationally given past problems with EU funding. Whilst there was a suggestion that if the delays continued, consideration should be given to pulling out, the Committee was advised that to do so would be damaging as there would not be the capacity to provide the support needed by young people without the funding.

All agreed that if progress was not made in the coming week, they should seek to put pressure on their own contacts and the new relationship manager to bring the matter to a conclusion.

Paul agreed to notify members of progress during the following week, and brief them on what he needed, if anything, so they could approach their contacts.

ACTION: Paul Gresty

44. **General Programme Update**

The Committee considered a report providing an update on progress made by each council individually and as a whole.

The Chairman invited representatives to provide a brief update and the following was noted:

Bracknell Forest:

- Good progress was being made, having moved to Breakthrough where the new set up was working really well.
- Three more partners had joined and the team had reconnected with the Prince's Trust, improved collaboration with Job Centre plus and was seeking to align the Elevate brand with more services.
- Events would be taking place in March to promote Elevate during careers and apprenticeship week.
- Recruitment fairs were being arranged later in the year for the Lexicon.
- The new vacancy tool had been really successful.
- Bracknell Forest was overachieving on most targets, but work experience remained a problem.

Reading

- Work experience was a problem in Reading too although there was a suspicion it was happening but not being captured.
- It was hoped to pump prime activity from the EU money.
- A lot of agencies were now working in the Hub.

- A pop-up business event was taking place at the Oracle.
- Recruitment fairs were being arranged.
- Construction opportunities were being sought and offered.
- An insurance broker tool was available from which it was possible to see everything that was available.

Slough

- A Skills Strategy had been produced which was effectively a delivery plan for Elevate and had been endorsed by local partners.
- The budget had been re-profiled.
- Two events had been held in January leading to engagement with 20 people who had been difficult to reach
- An LMI tool on growth sectors was now live on the web site and was being used by schools.
- Work experience was also a problem in Slough but otherwise all work was on target.

West Berkshire

- It was now very much business as usual.
- There was now a very low number of NEETs with 11% more leaving than joining the cohort making it harder to find them.
- Some employers were struggling to find young people to employ.
- Everything was positive but there were significant financial pressures facing the Council as a result of the Local Government Finance Settlement.

Wokingham

- Consolidating the programme had been the priority over the past two months.
- All targets except work experience were being met.
- An Employment Skills Plan was being produced..
- *Something about the car park at the carnival pool?*
- An apprentice had been interviewed on BBC Radio Berkshire thereby providing a publicity boost for Elevate.

Paul Gresty provided a brief summary of corporate activity, advising that:

- The team was trying to knit all activity together under the Elevate brand.
- A bid for DfE funding had been successful.

- Work was continuing with the LEP and the Business Growth Hub.
- The aim was to make Elevate the one organization with which businesses engaged.
- In terms of long term sustainability, the shape of local delivery models and working together was under review..
- Existing structures were being re-engineered using elevate as the catalyst.

Nigel Horton-Baker added that the NEETs were largely taking care of themselves. However, those 18-25 year-olds not statutorily tracked were a problem and therefore there was a need to do some outreach work. It was estimated that there were three to four times the number of those not being tracked compared to those who were registered. Therefore, NEET data did not really paint the true picture of need. It was added that another issue that needed consideration was under-employment. There was a need to do work to tempt them to upskill. More work would be done in schools in due course.

Tim Smith added that The LEP had agreed that the contract for the existing Business Growth Hub operator, VitalSix Ltd, should be extended from 1 April 2016 for a maximum of 12 months with break clauses at 3, 6 & 9 months. An intermediate delivery plan must include reference to engagement with ConnectTVT, the Elevate Me Programme and the to-be-appointed Careers & Enterprise Co-ordinator. The LEP was highly likely to be awarded £600,000 to fund a Business Growth Hub in 2016/17 and 2017/18; when combined with the RDA Legacy Funds this took the available funding to in excess of £800,000, which if used as match for ESIF presented a real opportunity for the longevity and functionality of the Hub service. A meeting was scheduled with other GTV LEPs to explore collaboration across geographies on any residual assets of the defunct national Business Growth Service. It had also agreed that, during this quarter, an in-depth review of the Business Growth Hub function would be necessary to inform the procurement of an operator for the medium term.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their updates and encouraged them to maintain the progress despite the ongoing delay in approval of the EUSIF funding application.

CHAIRMAN

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**THAMES VALLEY BERKSHIRE CITY DEAL (ELEVATE
BERKSHIRE) JOINT COMMITTEE
22 JULY 2016
10.30 - 11.20 AM**

Present:

Councillor Stuart Munro, Wokingham Borough Council

Co-opted Members:

Katharine Horler, Thames Valley Berkshire LEP

Tim Smith, Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership

Also Present:

Paul Gresty

Shanzeeda Chowdhury, Slough Borough Council

Mark Browne, West Berkshire Council

Joanne Horton, Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead

Emelye Janes, Reading Borough Council

Anneken Priesack, Bracknell Forest Council

Kashif Nawaz, Bracknell Forest Council

Julie Light, Reading Borough Council

Claire Folan, Wokingham Borough Council

Zoe Hanim, Reading Borough Council

Robert Hardy, Slough Children's Services Trust

Lynn Lee, Wokingham Borough Council

Michael Beaven, Our Community Enterprise (for Ways into Work)

Carol Jackson, Prince's Trust

Kathy Melling, BASE

Nerise Oldfield-Thompson, BASE

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillor Jo Lovelock, Reading Borough Council

Councillor Sohail Munawar, Slough Borough Council

1. Apologies for Absence and Substitute Members

Members of the Committee noted apologies from Councillors Munawar and his substitute, Councillor Hussain of Slough Borough Council. Councillor Lovelock of Reading Borough Council had also tendered her apologies.

2. Election of Chairman

As the meeting was inquorate, a Chairman was not eligible to be elected for the municipal year. Councillor Munro acted as Chairman for the meeting.

3. **Appointment of Vice-Chairman**

As the meeting was inquorate, a Vice-Chairman was not eligible to be elected.

4. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

5. **Minutes and Matters Arising from the Last Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 22 January 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6. **Urgent Items of Business**

There were no urgent items of business.

7. **Elevate Berkshire ESF Update**

Members of the Committee received an update on the ESF.

The Elevate Berkshire programme had been the first programme nationally to get a funding agreement and go through pre-inception visits with the Department of Education, and had been the first nationally to submit a bid for the EU SIF. A partnership agreement for a twelve year period had been signed.

The first funding claim for £430,000 had been submitted by Reading, and it was hoped that this money would be transferred in the following weeks. The claim for April – June 2016 was due on 4 August 2016, and it was expected that this would be around £300,000.

Partners were reminded that although work had gone on to identify and mitigate against any possible risks, the responsibilities and risks were still shared across the participating Local Authorities. Members of the Committee were asked to encourage officers to comply with the requirements of the partnership agreement and of the terms of the funding.

Work was ongoing towards a method of tracking the output of the Elevate programme, as data was required on this. It was noted that for Claim 3, the output manager may be challenging underperformance in Local Authorities if necessary.

During the ensuing discussion, the following points were raised:

- The hard work of Paul Gresty and team was recognised, and members of the Committee thanked them. It was stressed that the Elevate work should not lose sight of the opportunities for young people.
- It was requested that an update report/summary could be provided on a frequency to be determined.
- It was requested that a monthly update report be submitted to the LEP Forum.

8. **Elevate Berkshire - Employment is Everyone's Business Project Update**

Kathy Melling and Nerise Oldfield-Thompson from the British Association of Supported Employment (BASE) attended the meeting to give an update on the Employment is Everyone's Business Project.

The Employment is Everyone's Business Project had been originally funded by a grant from the Department for Education, and in Berkshire the project had partnered with Elevate.

In establishing baseline data, the Project had witnessed an insight into Local Authority practice nationally and had recognised that some Local Authorities were unsure of their provision for supported employment, whilst some were not collecting the data. Questionnaires had been distributed to young people with SEND across Berkshire, and these had revealed the high aspirations of young people including 87% of the surveyed group who wanted to get a job after leaving education. The surveying process had also exposed the gaps in provision in Berkshire, and had identified best practice.

BASE expressed a concern that the focus of Elevate was on young people who were NEET rather than having an equal focus on young people with SEND. It was noted that a lack of focus on young people with SEND could cause a long term cost to the Local Authorities if a young person was reliant on social care through their adult life.

It was reported that there had been a lack of ambition for the achievements of young people with SEND, and that any positive stories of achievements should be promoted as role models for other young people.

BASE recommended that:

- the action plan for each Local Authority should be kept updated and implemented.
- employment profiling be embedded into the Educational Health and Care plans for young people, with a view to standardise Educational Health and Care plans across Berkshire
- supported employment across the Berkshire Local Authorities should be delivered by qualified and trained staff.
- Each Local Authority should commit to ringfencing resources for young people with SEND, including provision for apprenticeships, internships and work experience
- Elevate should continue to work with BASE to further develop provision.

Members of the Committee thanked BASE for their update and for their partnership. As the meeting was inquorate, the recommendations could not be resolved but were deferred to a future discussion.

Arising from discussion, the following points were noted:

- Ways Into Work had been commissioned to work alongside existing supporting employment providers in the Local Authorities to provide a holistic approach.
- Examples were required of young people transitioning from NEET to EET to supply to the DWP in order to prove that the funding supplied was not proportional to the outputs.
- Capital funding was available for children of statutory school age, but not for Further Education provision. It was suggested that a Local Authority might approach the EFA if funding for Further Education was required.
- It was suggested that particular case studies may be costed in order to recognise the financial implications of different supported employment processes. BASE requested that case studies from the special schools be included in this work, as it was recognised that not all young people with SEND would want to enter into Further Education before employment.

- Committee members raised a question regarding college use of FSA funding, and how colleges could be encouraged to use this funding for supported employment. It was suggested that this may be the next stage for Elevate's involvement.
- Manchester Futures had conducted a piece of work to recognise the economic return on investment in supported employment.
- Michael Beaven, Our Community Enterprise (for Ways into Work) suggested that the Children's Services Life Chances Fund may be a useful resource for future funding.

9. **AOB**

Katharine Horler, Adviza, informed Committee members that Adviza had submitted a successful bid to Impetus PEF for a grant of £515,000. This funding had been allocated to a data dashboard project, intensive support services and aftercare and mentoring of young people in employment. It was hoped that this work would contribute to the Elevate agenda.

CHAIRMAN

TO:	ELEVATE BERKSHIRE JOINT COMMITTEE		
DATE:	24th January 2017	AGENDA ITEM:	3
TITLE:	Elevate Berkshire European Social Fund (ESF) Update		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	CLLR MUNRO (WBC)		
WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE		
LEAD OFFICER:	Paul Gresty	TEL:	07912 068 916
JOB TITLE:	Programme Manager – Elevate Berkshire	E-MAIL:	paul.gresty@reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides Elevate Berkshire Joint Committee with a progress update on the pan-Berkshire Elevate programme (Year 1 Nov 15 to Oct 16). The minutes of the previous meeting in July 2016 can be accessed here - <http://democratic.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=658&Year=0>
- 1.2 The report also updates members on recent conversations with the Managing Authority (the Department for Work and Pensions) around current underperformance; and puts forward a number of recommendations to members to mitigate the risk of claw-back during year 2 and 3.
- 1.3 The minutes of the meeting held in July 2016 can be accessed here – <http://democratic.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=658&Year=0>

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That Joint Committee note the immediate risk posed to ESF funding and endorse the proposal to re-focus resource to direct delivery. Re-focusing resource will mitigate the risk of not delivering programme targets.
- 2.2 That Joint Committee consider the proposal to extend the life of the programme – beyond October 2018; re-profiling outputs and results accordingly.
- 2.3 The Joint Committee note the impending Article 125 audit and ensure their local project is mitigating risks around non-compliance with ESF regulations.

ITEM 3 - ESF UPDATE (Elevate Berkshire)

1.0 Overview of Year 1

1.1 During the first year - the programme has continued to deliver the necessary systems change around the way the skills and employment agenda is delivered operationally. An independent review was undertaken of year 1 and disseminated in November 2016. The findings of the review are set out in Appendix A.

1.2 Across the local projects and collective programme – ‘real’ Supported Employment is the model of support that has added most value and delivered the best results for the hardest to reach young people. Activity funded and managed centrally, such as activity by the Princes Trust and Ways into Work, has also highlighted the value in providers working ‘pan-Berkshire’.

1.3 A ‘snap-shot’ of key successes:-

- **System change and centralised Elevate system** (Elevate has been the catalyst for conversations around the operational delivery of skills and employment activity. It has been instrumental in a culture change)
- **Co-location of key partners** (partners are now working together for mutual benefit and the partnership is growing as providers begin to realise the value of being associated with something that has the capacity to draw down money)
- **BASE project** (pan-Berkshire project focusing on employment for young people with disabilities)
- **Elevate Brand** (Elevate brand is growing locally and we have been visited by Senior Civil Service Leads and the Head of ESF)
- **Referral / caseworker model** (Elevate has implemented a new person-centred pathway; whereby services delivered by the partners are wrapped around the individual via the holistic Elevate service)
- **Central project management system and ESF workshops** (the central team have been working with partners to operationalise compliance considerations)
- **Partnership Working** (Elevate continues to build a culture of collaboration amongst partners who are seeing the added value of working together)
- **Project sustainability and aspiration to deliver an ageless Elevate Berkshire model (using Elevate as the vehicle)**

2.0 Finance

2.1 The programme has now received two payments of ESF money and the 3rd claim is in process. The deadline for the 4th claim is February 4th 2017 – and partners are working up their 4th claim for the central Elevate team.

- Claim 1 and 2 = £370,510.39 (actual).
- Claim 3 = £435,745.87 (profile).
- Claim 4 = £ 460,305.97 (profile).

3.0 Performance

3.1 The programme has a set of collective outputs (3380) and collective result (43% result on overarching outcome target). Each partner has been assigned output and result targets – that collectively meet the collective programme targets.

3.4 The collective targets were indicatively profiled over 3 years. Current Performance against these targets is set out in Appendix B (local and collective performance). These numbers will be discussed in more detail in the meeting; and set against local and collective targets.

3.5 Members will note that the project is currently 'underperforming' against the indicative profile of collective outputs and results. A great deal of work is being undertaken locally – to ensure projects are bringing in eligible young people and delivering a 43% result.

4.0 Risk Management

4.1 The central Elevate team recently met with DWP to discuss underperformance. Feedback was that DWP are concerned with where we are, as set against our indicative profile.

4.2 Members will remember that there is a great deal of background to 'outputs and results' – and how the current targets were mandated on the project by DWP. The central team spoke at length with DWP and put forward a number of additional points around current performance. We also put forward a revised set of outputs and results – which were refused. Appendix C sets out the background and additional points.

4.3 DWP updated that the programme has to deliver the outputs and results – and that money could be 'clawed-back' if we do not meet the collective targets. The under-performance methodology is set out here - https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/557380/esf_underperformance_policy.pdf

4.4 The collective programme will also be subject to an Article 125 audit by DWP contract managers. This has been discussed in detail with primary delivery partners – and the central team will continue supporting them to ensure compliance in terms of delivery; and operationalisation of ESF requirements.

5.0 Mitigating Risk (Recommendations)

5.1 To mitigate the risk of 'claw-back' and non-compliance – members are asked to consider the following proposals:-

5.2 Locally – Local projects look at 'what worked' in year 1 and re-focus resource in year 2 and 3 to 'direct' delivery. Re-focusing money to direct delivery will ensure targets are met. It is proposed that money linked to 'system change' is re-directed to pay providers to deliver outcomes.

5.3 Against the advice of the Programme Manager, Local Authority partners split the programme (and funding); as opposed to keeping a central pot of money to deliver a centralised 'pan-Berkshire' programme. However, some money was retained to fund providers to work across Berkshire for mutual benefit.

5.4 Centrally – it is proposed that the £92,000 notionally allocated to Labour market Intelligence (LMI) be re-directed to 'direct' delivery. This proposal was proposed to partners – who collectively agreed to re-profile this money to mitigate the risk of claw-back on those partners who are part of the Partnership Agreement. Partners agreed this proposal on the basis it does not deliver outcomes and the LMI can be sourced from other areas.

5.5 There is also an amount of ESF money held centrally – which it is proposed is matched against the original Cabinet Office money still held by Slough. Elevate Slough is not part of the ESF Partnership Agreement and this proposal will mean that the collective programme will be able to count activity in Slough – which we can't currently do. The

value of this activity £60k (30k eligible match from Slough) and will be commissioned in partnership between Elevate Slough and the central Elevate team.

- 5.6 Also held centrally is around 70k, in total, of ESF money and match (the match being original cabinet office money re-focused from the Behavioural Insights Team). It is proposed that this 70k be added to the money discussed in 5.4 and a provider(s) be commissioned by the central Elevate team, on a payment by results basis which we are now allowed to do, to deliver activity in Slough, and to a lesser degree Reading.
- 5.7 The greater number of eligible participants are in Slough and Reading – and as above, we are currently unable to count any Slough YP; limiting the ‘pool’ of young people to count as a project participant. Focusing money on Slough – will help the collective programme deliver its targets and mitigate the risk of claw-back.
- 5.8 We have spoken with DWP regarding the evidence for participants. Some of the background to this is set out in Appendix C. DWP are looking a ‘random’ sample of evidence for participants we have worked with – but do not have all of the ESF evidence for. DWP have proposed being more flexible around participant evidence – which would increase the collective target to 896 against a target of 1126.
- 5.9 DWP has also confirmed that the programme can realise its targets over a longer period of time. Members may wish to consider this proposal. More information will be provided to members in the meeting to allow them to make an informed decision.

6.0 Next Steps

- 6.1 It is proposed that Members consider the above proposals during the Joint Committee meeting



Elevate Berkshire Interim Evaluation

November 2016

Executive Summary

Two years in, Elevate Berkshire is making good progress towards its overall aim to 'address the skills gaps and unemployment and underemployment of our 16–24 year old population in order to maximise the impact of our collective investment and unleash growth in this important economic area'. While partnership working and co-location have often been complex and difficult, collaboration and alignment are beginning to replace duplication and competition. Across Berkshire, there are clear examples of beneficial projects which would not have happened had it not been for Elevate. There is also evidence of a more joined-up, outward-looking approach having a direct impact on outcomes for young people.

There remains a degree of internal and external confusion about the Elevate Berkshire 'brand identity' because of the complexity of the project and the different approaches in different areas: there are a huge number of organisations involved, some hubs coordinate hubs services while others deliver them, and systems are not consistent across the local authorities.

Elevate Berkshire has highlighted the difficulty of meeting the needs of both young people and businesses, as their needs are often divergent. To fulfil the ambition of helping every young person and offering personalised support, the sheer complexity of the issues facing some young people needs to be acknowledged. For those with multiple barriers to mainstream education and work, it might never be straightforward to get into training or employment – it requires intensive, and therefore expensive, support.

The hubs which have communicated the strongest sense of having been able to bridge the gap between young people's needs and employers' requirements are ones where supported employment, outreach work, and the flexibility to commission high-quality, innovative providers have been central to the system change implemented by Elevate.

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1. Purpose of the interim evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation is to provide an indication of the impact that Elevate Berkshire has had since its inception in April 2014, and to learn lessons that could help influence its future success. In particular, it is envisaged that the evaluation will inform delivery priorities and methodologies for the use of EU funding and in doing so, consider the potential efficacy of plans set out in the ESF bid. Conclusions and recommendations are set out in Section 5.

1.1 Methodology

This evaluation is based on twenty-three semi-structured interviews with key staff from each of the Elevate teams, including representatives from Adviza, DWP, Nacro, and Ways into Work. Twenty-one of the interviews were carried out face-to-face and two over the telephone in May and June 2016. This report also takes into account project documentation. Research questions, staff interviewed, and documents reviewed are listed in the appendices.

1.2 A note on phrases and abbreviations used

Elevate staff	Key personnel interviewed as part of this evaluation who may be employed by local authorities or providers.
The message from Elevate staff	This phrase is used to indicate recurring or common themes or striking points of agreement and connection – it is not meant to imply that all interviewees agreed with the particular point in question.
Easy to reach young people	Young people who are closest to the labour market.
Hard to reach young people	Young people who are furthest away from the labour market and/or struggle with mainstream routes into further education and employment.
City Deal/Elevate	Used interchangeably
City Deal Agreement	The Thames Valley Berkshire City Deal
BFC	Bracknell Forest Council
ESF	European Social Fund
DWP	Department of Work and Pensions
IAG	Information, Advice and Guidance
JCP	JobCentre Plus
LA	Local Authority
LEP	Local Enterprise Partnership
LMI	Labour Market Intelligence
NCS	National Careers Service
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
RBC	Reading Borough Council

RBWM	Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
SBC	Slough Borough Council
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SFA	Skills Funding Agency
WBC	Wokingham Borough Council

2. Elevate Berkshire profiles

2.1 Delivery Model

Under the City Deal Agreement, each of the six unitary authorities in Berkshire were given autonomy to plan and implement a locally relevant Elevate programme, which addressed ‘the skills gaps and unemployment and underemployment of our 16–24 year old population in order to maximise the impact of our collective investment and unleash growth in this important economic area’. Elevate Berkshire therefore encompasses a wide range of approaches, informed by different geographies, demographics, council priorities and strategies, and existing investment in premises, supported employment, and outreach work. The profiles below describe the current situation for each programme and the thinking which informed their approach.

2.2 Central Team

Elevate Berkshire is managed by the City Deal Manager, on behalf of the accountable body, Reading Borough Council. The City Deal Manager is supported by a Project Coordinator. A part-time Compliance Manager has recently been recruited with specific responsibility for ESF criteria. The Central Team also includes an Economic Research Analyst who sits within the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership and produces Labour Market Intelligence for the programme.

2.3 Bracknell

As of June 2016, responsibility for Elevate Bracknell moved to the department of Children, Young People and Learning at BFC and into the team of the Virtual School. It was originally led by a Business and Enterprise Officer in the Regeneration and Economy Team. Bracknell has a co-located hub, currently based at Rectory Lane and overseen by a Hub Coordinator. Due to the regeneration taking place in Bracknell town centre, the Rectory Lane office is the third premises which the Elevate hub has occupied. The current location is working well as a drop-in centre, as it is located in an area of low family income where need for Elevate services is high. The Hub Coordinator sees every young person who calls into the hub, giving them an initial IAG meeting to determine their needs and then referring them on to partners also based in the hub. Bracknell prides itself on an informal and friendly hub where both young people and staff feel comfortable. Other partners who work out of the hub are Breakthrough (the supported employed service for BFC who were previously the sole occupants of the office), Adviza, and at various times, Bracknell College, JCP, Troubled Families, the Virtual School, Catch 22 and Involve. B2B Engage is also looking to co-locate. Bracknell has taken an outward-looking system-change approach from the outset, and has worked to build the partnership up beyond the council.

2.4 Reading

RBC outsourced responsibility for operation of Elevate Reading to Reading UK CIC, the economic development agency for Reading. Reading has a co-located hub on the third floor of

Reading Central Library. Reading UK CIC are based there, alongside RBC's adult education providers New Directions, Adviza, Royal Mencap and Reading Voluntary Action. The 16–18 specialist adviser from JCP has also had a presence in the hub at some points. Reading has the largest co-located hub, with very good facilities including back offices, a conference and training room, six meeting rooms and a large open space which has hosted up to 200 young people. Other partner organisations include: London Irish (who run HITZ, an education programme for 16–19 year old NEETs, out of the hub), Mapis (who have been able to expand their employability work in retail and beauty therapy as a result of Elevate) and Smart Works (who work with young women to build confidence and provide new outfits for interviews). For Reading, City Deal has been a way of taking forward a lot of partnership-working ideas that had already been brought into play, particularly with regard to ensuring that work to help hard-to-reach young people is more coordinated.

2.5 Slough

Slough has a 'virtual hub' coordinated by a City Deal Project Officer who is line managed by the Head of Learning and Community Services. Slough's virtual hub model involves engaging young people through outreach and working closely with SBC services – Young People's Services, the Employment and Learning Team (adult learning), Children's Centres, Troubled Families and Slough Employability (disability support) – alongside supporting partners. Slough's supporting partners are Slough Aspire, East Berkshire College, Learning to Work, The Prince's Trust and JCP. As well as a desire to ensure that the City Deal funding reached young people, Slough's approach was informed by their existing infrastructure – they have a number of accessible buildings around the city from which to deliver skills training, including the Aspire Centre and community centres. Building of 'The Curve' – a new council hub which will house a library, job clubs, adult learning and registrars – is also underway. Slough's decision not to create a physical hub has enabled them to bring in new expertise which has added value to existing council services via a small grants programme, for projects worth up to £5,000, which are heavily linked to City Deal targets and objectives.

2.6 West Berkshire

West Berkshire, which is very rural in places without good public transport, also opted to create a 'virtual hub'. Although all their main providers – Newbury College, West Berkshire Training Consortium and Adviza – are based in Newbury town centre, this gives a false sense of Newbury as a central point when the young people who are not in engaging are spread out in places like Hungerford, Inkpen, Kintbury and Lambourn. The approach in West Berkshire has been to use Elevate funding to incentivise the existing providers to engage with those young people who are difficult to find and difficult to make stay the course. West Berkshire's virtual hub is coordinated by the council's Post-16 Skills Adviser.

2.7 Windsor and Maidenhead

Windsor and Maidenhead have a co-located hub in a unit at the Nicholson's Shopping Centre in Maidenhead town centre which is staffed full time and a hub at Windsor College which is staffed on a part-time basis. The partners are Grow our Own, the council's internal skills and development team, Ways into Work, who provide supported employment for disadvantaged individuals, and East Berkshire College. They also have strong links with Housing Associations, the voluntary sector and local businesses, which means that the hub is working effectively as a single point of contact for young people. From the outset, Elevate Windsor and Maidenhead had a clear sense that they wanted to use Elevate funding to engage with the NEETs who were furthest away from the labour market – by looking at delivery across the area, the strengths of different partners, and innovative and different ways of working. A supported employment model which values young people and employers equally is at the heart of the work they do.

2.8 Wokingham

Wokingham has an accessible and attractive co-located hub on the ground floor of Wokingham Library. There is a Hub Manager, who until June 2016 has been supported by an apprentice, who runs the reception and is responsible for social media and the. Both are lined managed by a Senior Strategy Officer based in the Economic Sustainability Team. There is a Construction and Skills Broker working on WBC apprenticeships who works occasionally out of the hub. Adviza's IAG service in Wokingham is provided by 6–8 advisers sharing a 1.6 FTE post. Other partners who have worked out of the hub include the National Careers Service, JCP, Targeted Families and The Prince's Trust. Wokingham also benefits from an established high-quality supported employment provider in Optalis, who work out of the hub half a day week.

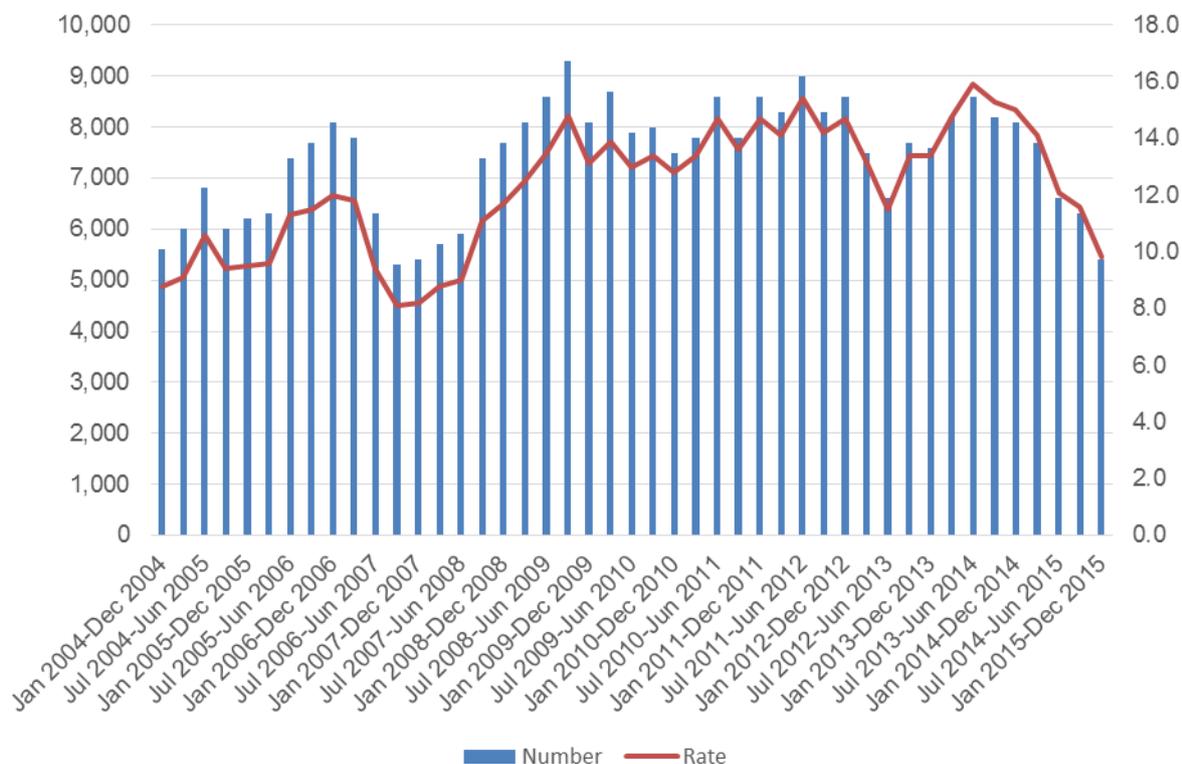
3. Performance against overall aims

3.1 Vision and aims set out in the City Deal Agreement

Young people's needs and business needs: 'a dichotomy which needs to be addressed'

- The City Deal Agreement proposed 'to make it more straightforward to get young people into work, aligning the needs of young people with business needs and the labour market demands of economic success'. This aim – in line with the government rationale for City Deals to drive local economic growth – suggests that it is possible for young people's needs and business needs to be seamlessly aligned. However, Elevate has highlighted how divergent these needs can be.
- Soon after Elevate got underway, there was an upturn in the economy which led to a reduction in youth unemployment and the number of young people classified as NEET nationally, a trend reflected across Berkshire – see Figures 1 and 2. (In trying to establish and monitor the target group Elevate aims to support, it is important to take into account data on both youth unemployment and young people who are NEET. Being unemployed and being NEET are not mutually exclusive. For example, those who are unemployed (in that they want and are actively seeking work) but who are undertaking training or study will not be classified as being NEET. And those who are NEET but who are not actively seeking work will be classified as economically inactive rather than unemployed.)

Figure 1: Unemployment in 16-24 years old, 2004–2015 (Thames Valley Berkshire)



Source: Annual Population Survey, January - December 2015, Office for National Statistics (Data relates to all those who are not working but would like to and are actively seeking work. They may or may not be claiming Unemployment Benefit – Jobseekers Allowance). Some fluctuation likely to be due to sampling error.

Figure 2: Number and % of 16–18 year olds NEETs and Unknowns (by academic age, adjusted), 2012–2014

	2012			2013			2014		
	Estimated number of NEETs	%	% whose activity is not known	Estimated number of NEETs	%	% whose activity is not known	Estimated number of NEETs	%	% whose activity is not known
Bracknell Forest	210	6.0%	1.9%	140	4.0%	2.6%	160	4.5%	2.8%
Reading	360	8.4%	2.6%	270	6.3%	3.4%	360	8.1%	8.7%
Slough	230	4.9%	6.6%	280	6.1%	7.6%	200	4.0%	9.3%
West Berkshire	210	4.4%	2.1%	150	3.1%	1.8%	120	2.5%	1.9%
Windsor & Maidenhead	170	4.8%	7.1%	150	4.1%	14.3%	130	3.3%	12.9%
Wokingham	180	3.6%	3.8%	150	3.1%	3.1%	110	2.3%	4.4%
Thames Valley Berkshire	1,360	5.2%	4.0%	1,140	4.4%	5.2%	1,080	4.0%	4.1%
South East	14,540	5.4%		13,620	5.1%		11,490	4.2%	
England	100,040	5.7%		92,240	5.3%		80,830	4.7%	

- Under these conditions, those who remained NEET were the hardest to reach and furthest away from the labour market. These young people are care leavers, youth offenders, and lone parents. They might be dealing with disability, SEN, poor mental health, substance misuse, difficult family circumstances, gendered role restrictions, low basic skills or undiagnosed social anxieties and difficulties which nevertheless create a significant barrier to mainstream routes into further education or employment.
- To fulfil the ambition of helping every young person and offering personalised support, Elevate staff have emphasised that the sheer complexity of the issues facing these young people needs to be acknowledged. For those with multiple barriers it might never be straightforward to get into work or training – it requires intensive, and therefore expensive, support. As one staff member put it, for some of the hardest-to-reach young people, being in a job or training is not their immediate need: having a roof over their head, caring for their baby, not having a partner that beats them up, accessing mental health support – these are the things which need tackling.
- This tension between meeting business needs and the needs of young people has been further highlighted when overall responsibility for Elevate has sat with Economic Development departments in LAs and not Children's Services and Education. As another staff member explained:

What we're doing through Elevate is very close to social work – we're talking about people with mental health issues, engaging with Targeted Families – it's not nothing to do with economic development, but it's on the boundaries. If you're a business here like Microsoft, there's no barrier which needs to be overcome in terms of recruitment because the people they want have got much higher skills sets. Whilst it's a brilliant project, there is a dichotomy here that needs to be addressed. ... We do a lot of employer engagement from an economic development point of view, but it's quite different to engagement from a skills point of view. We're talking to them about inward investment at the moment, but it's a very different conversation to ask them to take some of our most vulnerable young people.

Addressing the dichotomy: supported employment, high-quality providers, and outreach

- The hubs which have communicated the strongest sense of having been able to bridge the gap between young people's needs and employers' requirements are ones where supported employment, outreach work, and the flexibility to commission high-quality, innovative providers has been central to the system change implemented by Elevate.
- In Windsor and Maidenhead, the supported employment model used by the national-award-winning Ways into Work has been a key part of the Elevate offer. Ways into Work specialises in supporting individuals who are furthest away from the labour market. They do this by getting to know the individual really well, through a process called vocational profiling, and developing an action plan with them. They then go out and engage with employers on a very specific and bespoke basis for them, advocating for the young person's skills. They work with employers to look at recruitment in a completely different and more creative way. Rather than the traditional methods of recruitment, which are the biggest barrier faced by the people they support, they encourage employers to use work trials and working interviews. They also offer ongoing support to employers and to young people, which they believe to be an essential part of making the process sustainable.

- Ways into Work characterises the supported employment model as one of equality: ‘the supported employment model values the individual and the employer as equal partners, so we have a responsibility to both ... We’re constantly keeping in touch with the skills and aspirations that are coming through from our young people but we’re also keeping in touch with the needs of the business community, how that’s changing, and how we can work with our young people to match that’.
- Through Elevate funding, Ways into Work have also been able to commission a positive psychologist who works with young people with really low self-esteem, young people who don’t know what they want to do and don’t know what they’re good at. The psychologist works with them to identify and tap into genuine strengths which contribute to more productive and happier experiences of work. He helps them to put together CVs based around their strengths in ways which will show employers how this will add value to their business, and also undertakes work around resilience-building and general wellbeing.
- In Slough, by looking at young people’s needs and speaking to employers they identified that a lack of soft skills was ‘a massive crisis’. They therefore commissioned Employability Town to provide one-to-one training sessions tailored exactly to individual’s needs. With the level of engagement offered, the work represents real value for money at a cost of £250 per session and it adds value to the IAG already offered by the council.
- Elevate Slough have also joined up with Ways into Work and Heathrow Airport to offer a supported pathway into work for 50 disabled people. Without Elevate, this would not be happening. Although SBC’s Economic Development team have strong links with Heathrow, it is Elevate’s skills focus which has enabled them to identify and work with the airport’s aim of employing more disabled people.
- Staff at all the hubs spoke about the importance of outreach work. Those with co-located hubs are aware that the hardest-to-reach young people need to be sought out. As the Virtual Head for Vulnerable Children at BFC put it: ‘it’s important to remember that the people who will drop-in to a centre are not the hardest to reach. They need to be targeted at home, children’s centres, community centres, libraries, churches – wherever they actually are – that’s true outreach’.

3.2 Targets

Isolating the impact of Elevate

- The cumulative outputs for Elevate Berkshire show that the targets for IAG contacts, apprenticeship starts, apprenticeships sustained for six months, new employment starts and new employment sustained for six months are on track to meet or exceed the overall targets set for April 2017.
- Every area has struggled to meet the target for work experience placements, which staff have described as unachievable.

Figure 3: Elevate Berkshire cumulative outputs, March 2016

Measure	Overall target, April 2014–April 2017	Outputs, March 2016
IAG contacts (Number of 16–24 year olds given initial IAG or employment brokerage)	4,500	3,003
Work experience placements (Number of work placements delivered as a direct result of Elevate)	1,500	345
Apprenticeship starts (Number of apprenticeship starts for 16–24 year olds delivered as a direct result of Elevate)	300	545
Apprenticeships sustained for 6 months	300	314
New employment starts (Number of 16–24 year olds in employment through Elevate interventions)	1,300	913
Employment sustained for 6 months	800	361

- Some think that the numerical targets are an unreliable measure of success because in the context of a national upturn in the economy, it is impossible to isolate what impact Elevate has had in reducing youth unemployment and the number of NEETs.

Person-centred not target-driven

- The numerical targets of City Deal are also seen as problematic as a measure of success because they do not reflect the fact that different young people need hugely varying levels of support to get into work, apprenticeships or work placements.
- In practice, targets are often seen as at odds with the personalised approach to support which the City Deal Agreement originally set out. This is illustrated by the view which some hubs have taken with regard to the work experience targets, choosing a more person-centred approach over pursuing ‘targets for the sake of targets’. As one put it:

We were reluctant to go and set up work experience for the sake of it, because that’s what we’d always done. Elevate was about innovation and working differently. We could have set up 30 work experience placements at the council, but it won’t get them a job, it won’t add value to them or their experience and it can actually be more damaging if they go and do a placement where it’s clear there isn’t really a role for them. I met a young guy who wanted to be a dancer and he’d been given work experience in an office doing data tracking. He was a really flamboyant, creative guy and I could just see how for him it was a soul-destroying experience. But I could also see how there were other things which he would be amazing at. It wasn’t just about the numbers in any area – we’ve looked at it from the point of view of what young people need rather than what the targets were.

Need for an all-age system

- For some, Elevate’s focus on 16–24 year olds has been limiting because they would like to be more immediately responsive to changes in the economy and government priorities. Elevate Reading, for example, would like to have been able to offer support to the over 50s.
- Other areas, such as RBWM and Bracknell, feel that they have enough existing training and employment support for all ages to be able to signpost customers to appropriate help.

3.3 System change

'What is Elevate?'

- The aim of the City Deal funding was to improve the system of skills and employment support for young people by bringing together partners, better aligning services and reducing bureaucracy and duplication.
- Two years in, there remains a degree of internal and external confusion about Elevate Berkshire messages and 'brand identity' because of the complexity of the project and the different approaches in different areas: there are a huge number of organisations involved, some hubs coordinate hubs services while others deliver them, and systems are not consistent across the LAs.
- Elevate staff have praised the Central Team's ability to offer support under these circumstances, especially their ability to 'keep everyone outward-looking and aware of the bigger picture'.
- The overall message from staff is that while partnership working and co-location have been complex and difficult, some progress is now being made towards collaboration and alignment rather than duplication and competition. However, at both the organisational and individual level there has clearly been huge variation in understanding of, and commitment to, system change and common goals.
- While some have seized Elevate as an opportunity to facilitate new ways of working for the common good, others have seen it as means of sustaining existing ways of working in the face of reduced government funding. While some have seen Elevate as an opportunity to ask how they can enrich and complement each other's services, others have been protective, defensive and inflexible.
- Those who have worked to build Elevate partnerships report that organisations have often seen Elevate as a competitive move. Across Berkshire, it has taken a lot of time and effort to instigate a culture shift from competition to partnership working, though as Elevate has become more established this is beginning to improve.

Lack of control over funding and contract management

- A key barrier to achieving better coordination has been co-located organisations having different sources of funding and contract management.
- In particular, where Adviza are the main providers of tracking (of young people) and IAG in hubs, but their contracts are managed by Children's Services, there is a sense that they are not a fully integrated part of Elevate, and that they are not incentivised to work towards common goals. Cutbacks to the Adviza contract in Wokingham have had a significant impact on partnership working there, with 6–8 advisers sharing a 1.6 FTE post and visiting the hub irregularly.
- From the Adviza point of view, the lack of central decision-making about Elevate has been confusing and not transparent, leading to time-consuming negotiations in each area. There is also concern that Elevate has created extra work for them which is not covered by their

LA contracts – for example obtaining hard evidence from employers (in the form of a letter or email) about a young person’s job.

- Another key challenge has been the delay in receiving ESF funding. Originally expected to co-fund Elevate as of January/February 2014, delays to the ESIF programme has meant that it has taken until 2016 to arrive. In the meantime, £1.4 million of match funding for City Deal has had to be found from other sources. The Grant Funding Agreement was issued on the 17 March 2016 and the first financial claim was submitted on the 30 June 2016.

Sustainability

- Some staff are concerned that the need to identify the next funding source for Elevate constantly takes focus away from young people.
- There is also concern that all of the effort which has gone into establishing the Elevate brand and partnerships will be lost if future funding sources are not secured.
- Some think that when there’s no new money ‘we have to become smarter about the money which is already in the system and make sure that it best meets the needs of young people in a particular local area’. They see Elevate as an opportunity to develop a model of good practice and build up an evidence base which could channel existing funds from LAs, DWP and Public Health in a sustainable way.

4. Employment and skills support system

4.1 Partnership working

- All staff, even those most sceptical about the programme's value, think that Elevate has encouraged Berkshire LAs to have frank and useful discussions and take a more outward-looking approach to skills and employment.
- Though there is still much work to do, there is a greater sense of accountability and mutual responsibility between organisations.
- Some believe it has strengthened the Berkshire-wide offer, enabling them to build relationships with neighbouring local authority areas so that young people are able to access more support which have been of benefit to them.
- Organisations have also been encouraged to look outside of the work they do and consider the work going on around them, opening up new opportunities for young people and providing more joined up support:

A young person who lives nearby had had a bad time with employment. He saw our vacancies in the window of the hub, so he dropped in. He is autistic and had struggled to get support elsewhere. He also needed to find somewhere to live. He was seen by the Hub Coordinator, Adviza, National Careers Service, the College and Breakthrough. We gave him a lot of advice about starting up his own business and he is now self-employed as a fitness coach – a real success story.

One young woman said that prior to Elevate she was all over the place: she would have to go to the Job Centre and the Housing Association and would get

slightly different advice with everyone she spoke to. Now she knows she can come in here and have one point of contact and that we have relationships, for example with the Housing Association, so if it's impacting on her ability to get a job, we will help resolve the issue. Finding a job for her wasn't going to happen until her housing issues were resolved – she didn't have the headspace to cope with both.

Where partners think outside of what they do, the customer journey has been made better. All of a sudden that person's not just walking into Adviza to get their CV done, they can also access some mentoring, they can also access some work experience, some training courses, some volunteering – whoever they deal with must be aware of everything which is going on around them. And then in that case their journey has been enhanced by Elevate. When it works it can be brilliant.

4.2 Co-location

At a practical level, the benefits of co-location have been:

- Conversations with colleagues from other agencies are easier and more likely to result in problem solving and coordinated support for young people.
- Sharing of expertise among staff and continuous learning has been made easier, raising the standard of advice and guidance for young people.
- Time and money have saved been saved by not having to travel or set up formal meetings when colleagues are in the same room or next door.
- Lower cost or fixed rents.
- Free access to meeting and training rooms.
- Some sharing of resources such as IT and office furniture.

At a practical level, the challenges of co-location have been:

- Ensuring that everyone who visits the hub is welcomed. This has been a problem at Reading, who have not had a dedicated reception (apart from a period when volunteers from Reading Voluntary Action offered a 'Meet and Greet' Service'). They cite Bracknell as a better model, where the Hub Coordinator acts as a job broker who greets everyone who walks in.
- Finding the optimum location for the co-located hub. Adviza note that while the Wokingham hub is more accessible than their previous premises, in Reading and Bracknell this is not the case and they have seen a drop in footfall from their previous town centre locations.

4.3 Added value

These are all examples of things which staff believe would not have happened had it not been for Elevate (see also the examples given in Sections 3.1, Vision and aims, above, and 4.9, Evaluation and Feedback, below).

Apprenticeships

- A supported apprenticeship scheme for more vulnerable young people at Wokingham Borough Council has increased from two places to thirteen. The Hub Manager has helped sustain the placements by running a support group for the young people and providing support and occasional respite to their managers at the council.
- Elevate Wokingham's own apprentice has been a big success story and was interviewed on Radio Berkshire to talk about her experience. Taken on as NEET, she has been brilliant at the hub's social media, producing all of their videos and photography. She has been responsible for the website and for producing a virtual careers fair. She is finishing her Level 3 apprenticeship in July and has a place at a specialist film school to learn editing.
- Elevate Bracknell have worked closely with Mace, the construction company heading up the Lexicon development, who were required to take on apprentices under a 106 agreement. From a small pool of candidates they have filled four out of ten vacancies and are working with other partners such as B2B Engage to find suitable people to fill the remaining ones.

Better links and communication with frontline workers

- Elevate Reading staff now take part in triage meetings with RBC's Children's Action Teams so that information is shared about children in care or those who are known to the Troubled Families programme.
- Elevate Reading were also able to contribute to the reduction in NEET numbers brought about by the NEET task group: 'without partnerships already formed by Elevate and the sense of a common goal this wouldn't have happened. All partners helped with Adviza's data and tracking, drawing on their contacts in schools, training providers access to SFA apprenticeship data'.

Better links with the voluntary sector

- Reading Voluntary Action (RVA) are an integral part of Elevate Reading and run RVA Youth, a project specifically targeted at recruiting young volunteers.
- In Bracknell, Involve are well-connected to the hub and the Business and Enterprise Officer has been able to put businesses interested in Corporate Social Responsibility in touch with them.
- Elevate Wokingham have supported Just Around the Corner (JAC) – a faith-based organisation that works with young people who have severe social anxiety issues – to find volunteers to manage their shop.

Job Clubs

- Elevate Reading run a job club with the aim that whatever people arrive needing they walk away with: a new CV, help with job applications, a video interview to be uploaded as part of applications.

Skills Development

- Elevate Slough has been able commission Destiny Support to run soft skills sessions for women who have been victims of domestic violence: ‘one young woman came along who had been through a forced marriage. She had confidence and social anxiety issues and was really nervous about attending. The session had a real impact on her – and when she was invited to present on her aspirations at the end she gave a really good presentation. Now she is being supported with IAG and more confidence building’.
- Elevate Wokingham runs Create, an art commission for people who are interested in getting into the creative industries. The submissions are displayed throughout the hub. The person who won last year was offered a college place to do art but turned it down in order to start a job with a graphic design firm.

Supported Employment

- RBC does not have a dedicated service for helping people with SEN into work, but by joining up with Elevate funding they were able to draw up a contract with Royal Mencap to come into the hub and provide that supported employment.

Work Experience

- Elevate Wokingham are setting up a two-year project at Dinton Pastures with funding from Elevate and Children’s Services. They have recruited a work experience officer and are going to send some of their hardest to reach young people. They will be offered week-long work experience placements which feature work tasks, training, and water sports. There is also a restaurant there, for those interested in catering.

4.4 Labour Market Intelligence

- The LMI is compiled from a variety of sources – some of which are publicly available, such as data from the Office of National Statistics – and some of which are commercial tools which have been purchased with Elevate funds. The LMI also includes local intelligence from the press and word of mouth.
- The commercial tools have provided a more granular level of detail than the publicly available sources in terms of live vacancies, occupations and specialisms in Berkshire, and identifying the main local employers in different sectors (for example, childcare employers within a five-mile radius). The MINT business database needs to be supplemented with local knowledge as it does not have named contacts and email addresses for each company.
- All of the Elevate projects have said they find the Labour Market Intelligence supplied by the LEP useful. It is seen as a trusted source of information and staff appreciate being able to approach the Economic Research Analyst with requests for specific information to support their work.

- Staff say they would like to be able to use the LMI more: currently they don't always have the time to properly digest it, use it to anticipate upcoming developments or apply it to new projects and delivery in a timely way.
- There is more potential for LMI to be built into processes at a strategic and day-to-day level. For example:
 - Reading has used data supplied by the Economic Research Analyst to identify disadvantaged people at ward level – this enabled them to focus their outreach efforts geographically and knock on people's doors.
 - Identifying local business needs has enabled Reading to set up a finance training project which is focused on intermediate-level skills rather than degrees.
 - Slough's use of LMI was given as an example of best practice by a number of hubs and seen as something which should be replicated on their websites. Slough use LMI to create profiles of different sectors, which are downloadable from their website. The idea was partly to make these accessible for young people, but the main focus is on providing information for schools, colleges, JCP, Adviza – anyone working in employability – to keep them up-to-date and informed. These will be updated every six months, kept freely accessible and promoted as much as possible.
 - The Economic Research Analyst is working directly with schools and young people to ensure that LMI is more accessible to the end user. Posters and presentations for careers advisers are being prepared for September 2016 – these will contain simple and powerful messages to engage young people and schools.
- The Head of Learning and Community Services at Slough pointed out that because LMI tends to be about business needs, it is important to remember to balance it by thinking about young people's needs:

Lack of soft skills, as identified in the LMI, is why we do Employability Town – we would do it anyway but it really links with what the LMI tells us. It reinforces and gives a framework for why we're doing what we are doing. It's high level though ... whereas City Deal is about people who are further from the market. Schools use it more now. Where it should be useful is in raising ambitions of where you can get to. In Slough we need to stretch people and raise aspirations and say it's not just about going to university, there are other ways for young people to aspire. It's good information for adults and careers advisers, and tends to be used by them rather than young people. Careers advisers need to know where to get people to think about.

- Though the LMI looks at the bigger picture through the lens of young people, there is room for more refinement in terms of considering young people's needs. The LMI might identify that there are job opportunities in the retail sector, but not the sub-sectors and roles which would be most accessible to hard-to-reach young people (for example, jobs in garden centres). The Economic Research Analyst is working to make these refinements.

- LMI should be a two-way process between the central team and the Elevate hubs, with the hubs being aware of the information which is already available and asking the Economic Research Analyst for supplementary information.

4.5 Data tracking

- Co-location has made IYSS, the tracking system used by Adviza (in Reading, Wokingham and Bracknell), more readily available to partners – meaning that information about young people is more easily recorded and shared.
- However, Elevate has also exposed concerns with the IYSS system used by Adviza:
 - There are concerns that that the ‘City Deal Active’ box is not always checked, meaning that all relevant data is not being captured.
 - In Reading, there have been technical issues with the IYSS software which meant that the end of year two totals for job starts and apprenticeships were not calculated correctly – though this has now been resolved.
 - The data which is input in-house is not independently collected and verified.
- Windsor and Maidenhead also use IYSS and report that ‘other than a few internal operational challenges it records what we require as a basic system’.
- West Berkshire’s data tracking was previously carried out by Adviza using IYSS, but they are in the process of bringing it in-house to the council, with the installation of a Capita module in September 2016. They have employed a dedicated person to carry out the data tracking and report that this has already allowed them to achieve a much clearer overview of all the council services which young people have contact with.
- Slough (who don’t use IYSS), report that it has taken months of effort to ensure that the importance of data-gathering is understood and that all contacts and destinations are being recorded (not just for young people who are NEET).
- There is a concern that, Berkshire-wide, there has not been an analysis of data based on protected characteristics such as ethnicity, gender or disability, to ensure that Elevate champions equality and diversity.

4.6 JCPs

- The relationship between Elevate and JCP has been characterised by frustration, disappointment and misunderstanding on both sides.
- From Elevate staff’s point of view, the restructuring of JCPs has made it difficult to broker relationships with people locally and regionally: just as relationships are forged staff have left or moved on, meaning that effort and work has been lost. For some, JCP’s lack of engagement has been the ‘missing link’ in Elevate.
- There is a sense that JCP haven’t been able to honour agreements to have job coaches present in the hubs or refer young people to Elevate.

- All of the hubs are disappointed that JCP have been unable to share data about specific young people with them (anonymised claimant data is shared).
- Local JCP staff assert that the sharing of sensitive data about young people would need to be authorised at a much higher level – they give the example of a data sharing agreement with the Troubled Families programme which has taken an act of Parliament to put into place.
- JCP are happy to share their extensive database of providers with Elevate partners at JCP offices.
- The restructuring at JCP has meant that all Employment Coaches have mixed caseloads, so they aren't just focusing on young people.
- Some employment coaches have said they couldn't always feel confident that a young person they referred to an Elevate hub would be welcomed.
- In recognition of these issues, recent discussions between the Elevate Central Team and JCP colleagues have identified a number of actions to develop maximise partnership working including: Elevate staff having a presence in Job Centres to promote Elevate to JCP staff and clients, and ensuring that JCP staff are more frequently updated on events and opportunities which will be of benefit to their young clients.

4.7 Schools and colleges

- The clear message from staff is that relationships with schools, virtual schools and colleges are crucial to the Elevate project in terms of:
 - identifying those at risk of becoming NEET
 - managing the transition period from school to further education or work at 16, to make sure that no-one falls off the radar at this point
 - promoting the opportunities for young people which Elevate offers
 - ensuring that schools have access to LMI and that it is used to inform careers advice

Each area has different relationships with their schools, but examples of proactive engagement include:

Windsor and Maidenhead

- In Windsor and Maidenhead, where Adviza aren't contracted by schools to provide IAG, Elevate has commissioned and piloted a lesson plan based around using the Elevate Me website in a Personal, Health, Social and Economic Education (PSHE) class to support IAG. This has had good feedback from pupils.

- They have also designed a bespoke programme for a group of young people at one school who were very difficult to reach and couldn't access online resources in the way that other pupils could.
- The approach at RBWM is to see Elevate as menu which they can offer to schools: 'schools can look at it and think, we know our young people, what bits from that menu can we put together to add value? Rather than having to buy a whole programme that suits some but not others'.
- Before GCSE and A Level results they also ensure that schools are aware of the services which Elevate offers.

Bracknell

- The Hub Coordinator works with year 10s and 11s in schools – running assemblies and lessons, using the Elevate Me website, and encouraging them to call into the hub. He has been working with Kennel Lane School, for children with SEN, and booking appointments for parents and young people to visit him at the hub when they leave school.
- The Virtual Head for Vulnerable Children is very involved with and supportive of Elevate Bracknell. As he explains:

My role is part-school, part-LA and part-community, so I'm well-placed to take a longer term view of education, skills and employability. More resources are needed to enable schools to be able to join up with Elevate. In a small borough like Bracknell it should be possible to maximise the resources available. We need to co-produce cultural creativity in young people with school leaders and make sure that school leaders understand how the job market is changing.

4.8 The Elevate Me websites

- The vision set out for the Elevate Me websites, that they would be a 'powerful tool to shift the culture towards the customer being in the driving seat rather than the service providers' assumes a motivated and engaged 'customer' already close to the job market.
- Indeed, the message from staff is that it is these easiest to reach young people who are making use of the websites, whereas they are unlikely to be of use to the hardest-to reach young people. Slough gives the example of a group of young offenders struggling to make sense of their website, but a group of young people who had just completed apprenticeships finding it more useful. RBWM had some feedback from Windsor Boys School who said that while they enjoyed looking at website with a teacher they wouldn't look at it by themselves.
- The message from staff is that the impact of the websites has been minimal. While some feel that the websites don't add much to the information which young people can already access, others feel that the websites represent a useful tool which has yet to be maximised. Each month, only a handful of enquiries are received through the websites across Berkshire.
- To maximise the potential of the websites, some felt that a dedicated member of staff is needed to promote them (encouraging staff in schools and colleges, job centres and hubs to use it with young people) and to ensure that the information on the websites is kept up-to-

date in terms of providers' contact details and events, and making sure there are no gaps in information (for example, disability support).

- An online booking system on the Elevate Me websites for appointments at co-located hubs has proven too difficult to implement, highlighting the work still to be done in unifying information systems.
- Wokingham has seen an increase in traffic to their website with the introduction of job adverts, as has Bracknell by adding a job search function that is tailored to entry-level jobs, apprenticeships and volunteering opportunities in their area.
- Although young people had input into the development of the website with O2, it is felt by some that the city-building tool is quite patronising, inaccessible and not well used.
- Some staff highlighted the importance of investment in social media as a means of publicising Elevate (citing Twitter and Facebook campaigns as having more traffic/interactions than the websites) but also as a way of keeping up-to-date with recruitment methods:

The way people are job searching has changed so much in the last 18 months, the Elevate Me website has quite quickly become outdated. ... one of the top recruitment tools is now LinkedIn which is a social media platform for professionals. We need to work with residents around how they job search: more and more employers are now using Snapchat and Instagram. It's rare now to see a job advert which says send a CV and a covering letter. It's all about online applications. For somebody looking for work who doesn't have access to a PC, that will be very challenging – computer skills are key and we as experts are having to learn continuously about new platforms for recruitment.

4.9 Evaluation and Feedback

- Aside from the statutory data tracking, evaluation and feedback from young people and employers has not been embedded in the Elevate model of delivery. As a result, feedback has been captured sporadically.
- What has been formally captured tends to be good news stories and successes rather than a critical/constructive perspective. The latter relies mostly on anecdotal/informal feedback gathered by staff, although Reading Youth Cabinet did carry out a 'mystery shop' of Elevate Reading.
- Elevate Bracknell are sending out review sheets to all of the young people they will be contacting anyway in order to get copies of their ID for ESF compliance.

Examples of feedback which has been gathered:

- Central Team have case studies of people who participated in the employability programme for lone parents with Gingerbread which one person described as ‘a life changing experience’.
- Central Team have a beautifully written account of their apprentice’s personal experience of accessing advice and support through Elevate, leading to her current role.
- Elevate Reading asked Reading Youth Cabinet to write a mystery shopping report based on four visits to the hub and using the Elevate Me website. This offers constructive feedback on staff attitude and welcome, accessibility and advice received.
- Ways into Work: have a case study on their website of James, a young man with autism, who now works for Housing Solutions. It explains how the supported employment experience has benefited James, his mother, and Housing Solution’s approach to recruitment.
- Ways into Work are piloting a scheme where they’ve bought young people (inexpensive) flip cams so they can video their journey from their own perspective – they will do video entries around what it’s like trying to find a job and what it means to have a job and then these will be edited together as case studies for their website.

5. Summary of good practice and success stories

- Supported employment model
- Flexibility to commission services which meet local need for skills training
- Better coordinated problem-solving and support for young people in co-located hubs
- Cost-savings of co-location
- Welcome and triage provided by Bracknell Hub manager for all drop-ins
- Adding job feeds to websites
- More targeted use of LMI such as the fact sheets on Slough’s website and Reading’s outreach work at ward level
- Better, more outward-looking partnerships across Berkshire
- Better links with frontline staff in Children’s Services and Troubled Families
- Better links with the voluntary sector

6. Conclusions and recommendations

This evaluation points to a number of recommendations that align with the delivery priorities set out in the ESF bid, namely that Elevate Berkshire should:

- Continue to harness the energy and expertise of staff who are committed to working in partnership to support young people – by fostering a culture of innovation and continuous learning.
- Acknowledge the complexity and expense of addressing the issues facing hard-to-reach young people and invest in outreach, community engagement, and intensive supported employment programmes.
- Retain flexibility to commission high-quality providers who can deliver forward-thinking programmes of supported employment, skills development and outreach.
- Continue to develop relationships of mutual benefit with schools and colleges.

- Continue to monitor and build relationships with DWP and JCP.
- Review Elevate's web and social media presence and implement a delivery plan to maximise their impact.
- Increase analysis and use of LMI to inform delivery, balanced with attention to the needs and aspirations of young people.
- Embed processes of feedback and evaluation – to build up an evidence of the impact of Elevate, champion best practice, and ensure that young people's views inform service delivery.
- Consider devising additional measures of success, over and above numerical targets, against which the programme can ultimately be evaluated.

Appendix 1: List of staff interviewed

Central team	Paul Gresty	Elevate Programme Manager	RBC
	Zoe Hanim	Head of Customer Service	RBC
	Grant Thornton	Head of Economic & Cultural Development	RBC
	Emelye Janes	Project Co-ordinator	RBC
	Caroline Perkins	Economic Research Analyst	Thames Valley Berkshire LEP
Wokingham	Sandie Evans	Elevate Hub Manager	WBC
	Rhian Hayes	Senior Strategy Officer (Project Lead)	WBC
Slough	Shanzeeda Chowdhury	City Deal Project Officer (Project Lead)	SBC
	Philip Wright	Head of Learning and Community Services	SBC
Windsor and Maidenhead	Joanne Horton	Grow Our Own Manager	RBWM
	Laura Davis	Managing Director	Ways into Work
Bracknell Forest	Anneken Priesack	Business & Enterprise Officer (Project Lead until June 2016)	BFC
	David Bolam	Elevate Hub Co-ordinator	BFC
	Kashif Nawaz	Virtual School Head for Vulnerable Children (Project Lead as of July 2016)	BFC
Reading	Nigel Horton-Baker	Executive Director (Project Lead)	Reading UK CIC
	Julie Light	Elevate Reading Operations Manager	Reading UK CIC
	Alexa Volker	Elevate Reading Pathways Co-ordinator	Reading UK CIC
West Berkshire	Mark Browne	Post-16 Advisor (Project Lead)	West Berkshire Council
Providers	Karen Brown	Senior Partnership and Employer Manager	DWP
	Sharmin Khan	DWP lead for Elevate Reading	DWP
	Lisa Harvey	Employment Coach (East Berkshire)	DWP
	Roz Peters	Senior Tutor	Nacro (Bracknell)

	Chris Greaves	Assistant Delivery Director	Adviza
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Appendix 2: Documents reviewed

City Deal Baseline Figures – July 2014

City Deal and ESF Project Overviews

City Deal Implementation Plan

Elevate Berkshire ESF Application

Joint Committee Papers: March 2014 – January 2016

Labour Market Intelligence Updates: November 2015 – February 2016

The Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership City Deal

Appendix 3: Research Questions

- How well has Elevate Berkshire performed to date against its overall aim to address skills gaps, unemployment and underemployment of 16-24 year olds?
- To what extent has the Elevate Berkshire simplified the employment and skills support system and providing a more customer focused service? What has been the impact of establishing physical drop-in facilities and have they been good value for money?
- To what extent has the Labour Market Intelligence function added value to the work of Elevate partners and how could it be improved?
- What has been the impact of the Elevate Me websites?
- Has Elevate Berkshire added value to existing local projects?
- Which projects are considered ‘best practice’ and why?
- How well have the organisations involved worked together and what has been the added value of partnership working? What difference has the co-location of different agencies made (where applicable)?
- How satisfied have individuals and employers, who have come into contact with Elevate Berkshire, been with their experience? How have ‘customer’ journeys changed as a result of Elevate Berkshire?
- What have been the main challenges in delivering the Elevate Programme? Where do improvements need to be made in the future?
- What, if any, additional data needs to be collected, and/or processes need to be put in place, to enable a robust evaluation of the impact of the Elevate Programme in the future?

Appendix B - Outputs & Results (Collective)

ID	Indicator	Current Total Target Value	Yearly target- 33% each year	Compliant participants to date- As per data schema submitted with Claim 3 (Nov'15- Sep'16)	Actual- End of December '16
O2	Participants (below 25 years of age) who are unemployed or inactive	3,380	1126	180	928
ESF - CO01	Unemployed, including long-term unemployed	2,370	790	106	575
ESF - CO03	Inactive	850	283	74	188
42 O6	Participants without Basic Skills	600	200	26	444
ESF - CO14	Participants who live in a single adult household with dependent children *	130	43	0	9
O5	Participants from ethnic minorities	470	157	40	143
ESF - CO16	Participants with disabilities	280	93	46	255

Results					
ID	Indicator	Current Total Target	1/3 each year	Compliant to date	Actual
R3	Participants gaining basic skills	24	8	0	47
R5	Participants (below 25 years of age) in employment including self-employment	1,453	484	15	191
ESF CR06	Participants in employment, including self-employment, six month after leaving	479	160	0	34

43

PLEASE NOTE – we will set these numbers against indicative targets for each partner in the meeting.

Outputs and Results by Partner:

ID	Indicator	Reading	Bracknell	West Berks	Wokingham	RBWM	Ways Into Work	Prince's Trust
Outputs								
O2	Participants (below 25 years of age) who are unemployed or inactive	171	106	350	128	108	22	100
Results								
44 R5	Participants (below 25 years of age) in employment including self-employment	76	44	17	52	5		27

Appendix C – Outputs Background and Additional Points

Outputs - Background

In our expression of interest we put forward a set of outputs and results for the Elevate Berkshire programme. These outputs and results were accepted by DWP the managing authority for the Elevate Berkshire ESF programme.

In the EOI - The output target was 1650 and the result target was 600. The outputs and results were based on the number of eligible 16-24 year olds across Berkshire, at the time of developing the expression of interest, and also took into consideration future flow (the number of eligible participants would reduce as the economy picked up and changes to welfare reform are introduced, including the benefit cap which would mean that more people would go into work. Since the benefit cap has been introduced, Reading Borough Council has seen a significant increase in people who have said for a number of years that they were unable to work - go on to find employment independently.)

When developing the targets - We also took into consideration the competitive nature of the skills and employment agenda. It is unrealistic to expect the Elevate Berkshire programme to engage with every single 16 to 24 year old inactive/unemployed young person in Berkshire. There are a range of other providers and ESF funded projects competing for the same young people and we feel this needed to have been taken into consideration. For example, we have been presented with difficulties in being able to work with young people 16-24 who are JCP clients and those delivering the National Careers Services on behalf of DWP – which has resulted in the pool of eligible young people we can work with reducing.

Although we were told that the programme was resource based at EOI and application stage, and was not an outputs and results programme, we applied an indicative unit cost around engaging eligible young people and supporting them into a destination (as per the result definitions). A great deal of work was undertaken with partners around the actual cost of supporting hard-to-reach young people – and this informed our targets.

These outputs and results were then indicatively profiled over three years, splitting them equally 33.3% each year. (not 20 / 30 / 50 for example)

After submitting our full application we were told by DWP that Angus Gray had re-profiled the outputs and results for the Elevate Berkshire programme. The output target was increased to 3380 eligible participants and the result target was increased to 2,434. However, we were not given a rationale or methodology around how the new set of outputs and results targets we had to deliver were arrived at. We continually questioned this with DWP but were told that the targets would not be changes and we had to sign the agreement “as is” with regard to targets.

We still believe that the output target of 3,380 participants is too high and should be reduced:-

Current Data

As of June 2016, there are 9,100 16-24 year olds who are inactive or unemployed across Berkshire.

-Of those 9,100 young people 2,640 are ‘in the system’.

-Of the 2,640 people 790 are claiming unemployment benefit.

-The remainder (1,850) are claiming a lone parent of disability benefit. (Although a number of young people are in the system, a number of lone parents for example don’t want to work, and therefore don’t want to be engaged with and won’t engage- to even be considered as an output. There is a difference between being eligible to work and being able to work (work ready) and in-fact wanting to work.

The remaining people (6460) are not known to JCP and this figure is a guesstimate. Those not in the system are notoriously difficult to engage with and seeking them out is resource intensive.

Across 16-19 (NEET) we have again seen a year-on-year reduction in Berkshire there are around 700 NEET 16 to 18 year olds.

Taking into consideration the above - what we are left with currently across Berkshire (since the project started in Nov 15) are the hardest to reach young people. These are young people that, although the economy has picked up, and the benefit cap has come in, are still unemployed and in some cases- long-term unemployed.

Results- Percentage & Unit Cost

The original (current) result percentage is 73%. This is what we were told that result percentage had to be, at the same time as we were told the project outputs were being increased (after submitting our full application).

In mid-late 2016 the central Elevate Berkshire team had a conversation with DWP contract managers around this result percentage. There seemed to be some confusion around this result percentage and it was agreed that we could submit a change request- to reduce the result percentage to 43% (43% of 3,380= 1,453). We still believe this result percentage is unrealistic and is contradictory to the original call which asked up to work with those people "furthest away from the labour market".

The Elevate Berkshire programme is £4.8 million, 50% of which is our own match. Managing the ESF programme and its many compliance requirements is extremely resource intensive. Of the £4.8 million, £1.2 million is not going on direct delivery/engaging young people. Instead this money has to be spent on bureaucracy and administration. To add - since before we submitted the EOI, and until December 2016 (13 months after the project started), we had been told that this is a resource based programme. In light of this, and as per our expression of interest and full application, a large element of the Elevate Berkshire programme focused on system change. As set out in our EOI and application, the aspiration of our Elevate Berkshire programme was to 'knit together' the fragmented and competitive skills and employment system across Berkshire for the benefit of young people.

Moreover, in practice, skills and employment provision is universal in a lot of cases and a number of providers delivering the skills and employment agenda to young people (and to be honest JCP operationally) do not have the resource, knowledge or model of supported employment necessary to get results for the hardest to reach young people. Part of the system change needed was around supporting those delivering skills and employment to think differently about more person centred ways of supporting young people.

It is important to note here that we aspired to deliver a more 'social-work' model of supported employment. A number of the young people across Berkshire have multiple barriers to work and the model of support is resource intensive, dealing with housing and mental health issues for example before even thinking about employment. What some job coaches are undertaking with Elevate young people is more akin to social work (with an employment outcome).

When it became apparent that the ESF project was in fact a hybrid project- so both and resource and outputs and results based- we had to re-profile money to direct delivery.

Evidence from other programmes

When looking at other similar programmes it is clear that both the results percentage and unit cost are not in-line with the available evidence:-

- The Work Programme - approximately 34% of those referred to the programme in Berkshire (from 2011 to 2016) achieved a job outcome
- Youth Contract for 16-17 year old NEETs – approximately 30% of participants entered positive destinations.

47 These two programmes demonstrate, in practice, that a result percentage of 43%, taking into consideration the points made above around characteristics and cohorts of people etc is far too high and unrealistic. As above, we were never given the methodology used for the revised targets.

In terms of unit costs

When the money that is going on direct delivery is looked at in relation to the current output and result target- we end up with a unit cost around £1000.

- ESRA suggest the cost ranges from around £5,000 - £8,000 to support inactive young people into work

Feedback from ESRA is that:

"It's all very ball park in terms of 'average' costs for supporting young people as very much depends on who they are, where they are, what the intervention is and what success looks like. For us, success tends to be a sustained job. However, of course, for young people, getting into education again might be the better option long term.

In terms of youngsters out of work for around nine months (so not necessarily the hardest to help, but with definite problems), £5k would be reasonable. However, for those furthest away (and particularly in rural areas and/or the economy is more challenging), £8,000 would be a better figure.”

Other recent programmes also have a unit cost more aligned to ESRA. Troubled Families projects, the Prince’s Trust and other providers have all undertaken work around the costs of supporting inactive young people into work. The Cabinet Office Life Chances Fund (Social Impact Bond) pay on an outcomes basis, they estimate a unit cost of between £5,000 - £9,000 to support a particular type of young person into sustained work.

When working up the result percentage in our expression interest and draft full application, and as we did when working up our outputs target, we engaged with Elevate partners around a realistic unit cost. Ways into Work for example, who support people with disabilities, have a unit cost of around £4000 per participant. Other research around lone parents can put the figure at over £10,000 per participant.

Bearing in mind disabled young people and lone parents are two of the most over-represented groups in the system, and taking into consideration the unit cost information from other programmes, we are unsure how we can be expected to deliver a 43% result rate with such a low unit cost, for such a difficult group. Other similar programmes have never delivered anywhere near that target.

Proposed Outputs & Results Targets

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In summary, we believe that the output and result target for this project should be as follows:-

O2- Participants (below 25 years of age) who are unemployed or inactive (I.P. 1.2. only) - 1800

R5- 33% result target - 600

The outputs target of 1800 eligible participants is more in-line with what we said in our expression of interest and application. We believe this to be a realistic target set against the numbers of 16-24 year olds in the system and future flow. Of those 1800 eligible participants – we believe a 33% result target is more realistic and both combined, would demonstrate a more realistic unit cost; more aligned with current research.

Additional points discussed

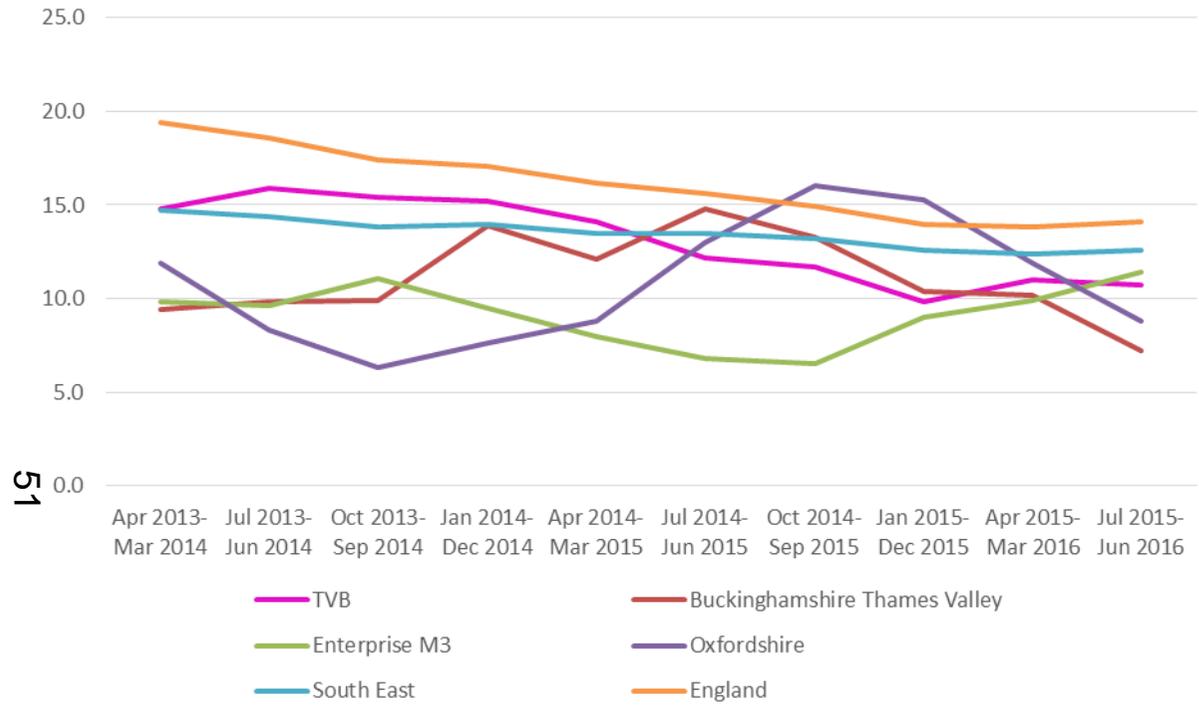
The target result rate for participants moving into education, employment or training is currently 43% (1,453 of 3380 participants engaged with by the project.) We have currently achieved 14% of this target. Our performance against the outputs and results targets continue to improve as the programme system change and delivery embeds. The following points have impacted on delivery:

- It has taken time for the tracking and reporting process, and system, to be adapted to meet changing ESF participant evidence requirements; and for the processes to bed-in across all the delivery partners. However, as partners begin to work more holistically, and delivery activity increases, performance against the outputs and results are improving.
- As outlined in our change request, the number of unemployed and inactive young people has reduced across Berkshire, as it has nationally. Those remaining have multiple barriers to employment and in some cases they do not want to work, or are not work ready. Moreover, engaging with people not in the system / not known, is resource intensive. Engaging and working with young people with complex needs is time consuming and results achieved over a long period of time.
- The programme is still building the necessary culture of collaboration and not competition. For example – taking a person centered approach to service delivery and cross-referring. Partnership working has improved, and Elevate has knitted together a range of partners into a holistic model / system working for together mutual benefit, and the benefit of young people. Culture change and new ways of working is taking time to become core routine.
- Elevate has striven to re-engineer existing resource, align this resource with Elevate to develop a more regional approach to the way skills and employment provision is delivered for inactive and unemployed 16 to 24 year olds across Berkshire.
- There continues to be difficulty with DWP / JCP referring eligible young people into the Elevate programme – which is disappointing. Referral processes are in place but data sharing issues are preventing these from working effectively. This has been raised with our DWP contract manager and civil service colleagues as well as the Berkshire lead for JCP.
- Due to delays in the DWPs lengthy claim process, partners have been cash-flowing the project for over a year. In a number of cases, this has impacted on the ability to deliver targeted and intensive projects to deliver outputs and results.

- Our indicative profile is split equally over three years; we could have split the delivery of outputs and results as 20%/30%/50%. In reality we were not actually able to deliver to 'full capacity' from Nov '15 as we were still receiving programme guidance 6 months into the programme and the first year has been focused on starting up the programme and evolving our practices to meet the changing guidance.
- Leading on from the above, there was no guidance until April 2016 regarding the evidence required to prove participant eligibility and/or a results. Subsequently, we have two data schemas, one with participants who have records that meet compliance requirements (this has been submitted with the claims to date with 180 participant files) and a second data schema with participants which we have undertaken work to obtain the appropriate evidence (this has another 600 other participant records). We have undertaken a risk assessment on participant files before the guidance was received in April 2016 and will be submitting these participants with Claim 4, in total there are 210 participants engaged with between November 2015 and April 2016 that we have retrospectively risk assessed for eligibility. Any participants that we were not able to collect the required evidence, pre-guidance between November '15 and April '16, we have had to re-engage with to seek the required evidence to be able to include them as an output. This has been incredibly resource intensive and in some cases even though we have worked with them we are unable to obtain the evidence we need and therefore count them as an output.

Since April 2015 (when the Elevate programme began), the number of young people in Berkshire who are either unemployed or economically inactive has dropped by about 300, and continues to drop. The number known to DWP (i.e. young people claiming out-of-work benefits, lone parent benefits or disability-related benefits) has dropped by about 200. The pool of people Elevate can engage with is therefore now smaller, more-hard to reach and with multiple barriers to employment.

Youth unemployment rate:



Youth inactivity rate:

