



**THAMES VALLEY BERKSHIRE CITY
DEAL (ELEVATE BERKSHIRE) JOINT
COMMITTEE**
22 MAY 2018
10.15 - 11.20 AM

Present:

Councillor Stuart Munro, Wokingham Borough Council
Councillor Sabia Hussain, Slough Borough Council
Councillor Tony Page, Reading Borough Council
Councillor James Swindlehurst, Slough Borough Council

Co-opted Members:

Tim Smith, Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership

Also Present:

David Bolam, Elevate Central Team
Mark Browne, West Berkshire Council
Rhian Hayes, Wokingham Borough Council
Emelye Janes, Elevate Central Team
Rebekah Malcolm, Elevate Central Team
Kashif Nawaz, Bracknell Forest Council
Cathy Price, Slough Borough Council
David Randall, Ways into Work
Grant Thornton, Reading Borough Council

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillor Jo Lovelock, Reading Borough Council
Councillor Marc Brunel-Walker, Bracknell Forest Council
Councillor James Fredrickson, West Berkshire Council
Councillor Jack Rankin, Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead
Katharine Horler, Thames Valley Berkshire LEP

7. Substitute Members

The Committee noted that Councillor Tony Page had replaced Councillor Jo Lovelock as Reading's representative.

As Councillor Lovelock had been vice-chairman, the Chairman proposed that Councillor Page should be appointed as vice-chairman of the Joint Committee.

RESOLVED that Councillor Page be appointed vice-chairman of the Joint Committee for the remainder of the municipal year.

8. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

9. Urgent Items of Business

There were no urgent items of business.

10. Minutes and Matters Arising from the Last Meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 26 September 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

11. Elevate Berkshire ESF Update

The Committee considered a report providing an update on the Thames Valley Berkshire Elevate programme.

Emelye Janes highlighted a number of points arising from the report which covered the following topics:

- Item 1 – Update From Central Team on Key Projects
- Item 2 – Partner Updates
- Item 3 - Performance and Funding
- Item 4 - Project Change Request
- Item 5 – Future projects

The Committee noted in particular that:

- Kennedy Scott had won Slough Project 1- A contract for £170,000 to engage and support 390 eligible young people into employment, education or training or to gain basic skills, with a particular focus on supporting those from an ethnic minority (BME) background.
- Slough Project 2- A contract for £40,000 to engage and support 40 lone parents into education, employment or training was being re-advertised following an unsuccessful first procurement exercise, but it was also noted that the high cost of living in Berkshire and the DWP's definition of lone parents made meeting the targets more challenging.
- During October- December 2017, Elevate Berkshire and West Berkshire had commissioned Projects with Purpose to undertake some research into how best to attract and engage with young people with a view to moving them into employment, education or training and test the theory of setting up an online peer led programme but the conclusion had been that a digital service in isolation would not work as the young people were very vocal about their continuing need for in-person services, with huge value put on being able to 'trust' the person providing that service.
- Projects with Purpose had proposed a potential pilot model but there were concerns around funding a pilot with ESF money which would not directly deliver against the programme targets.

- The partnership had agreed that lessons could be learned from the Projects with Purpose report with regard to digital marketing and better outreach and engagement with participants using digital channels.
- Traffic to the Elevate Me website remained low in some areas and, as the Projects with Purpose report had pointed out, more could be done across the programme to promote Elevate and engage with young people in more meaningful ways online.
- Focus groups had been held with young people to identify what was good about Elevate, what could be different, or what else they would like to see the programme doing.
- A digital marketing apprentice was to be employed to build the online presence of Elevate Berkshire, improving the content of the ElevateMe local websites and working with partners to increase outreach via social media.
- The central team was to source some digital marketing training for Elevate staff so all partners could become more proactive in this area.

A summary of progress from each of the following partners was also provided:

Bracknell Forest
 Prince's Trust
 Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead
 Adviza- Reading
 Ways Into Work
 West Berkshire
 Wokingham

An oral update was provided in relation to Slough. The main points made were that:

Bracknell Forest:

- The Council was embedding Elevate in Children's Services to ensure it had a life beyond this project.
- The Council was aiming to build on opportunities with the Lexicon and other businesses.
- Elevate was featuring in the Council's Transformation Programme to demonstrate to partners how important it was to work with Elevate.
- A project with Adviza had ended in December 2017 but another project was now moving forward.
- Partners' capacity had been an issue so more was being done digitally.

Princes Trust

- Courses had been successful but not pan-Berkshire and therefore needed to be made available pan-Berkshire.

Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead:

- Reaching the young people had been the main challenge.

Ways into Work

- In the last quarter, there had been engagement with 10 new employers.

West Berkshire

- It had been found to be more effective to deal with individuals one by one rather than pursuing groups.
- Many young people just needed re-motivating.
- The Council was working with new providers as the existing providers had largely let it down.
- There was a need to be smarter in working with partners.
- An equine provider had proved particularly useful although their location was not ideal.
- There was a need to be creative to get some young people motivated.
- The Council was struggling to attract 20-24 year olds but was engaging better with 16-19 year olds.

Wokingham

- The Council regarded outreach as important.
- It was going to be hard to achieve the numbers required.
- Regeneration had had an impact on Wokingham's ability to offer opportunities.
- The Council was seeking to increase the number of partners to work with young people.
- The Council had set up an apprenticeship support group.
- The Council was itself taking on NEETs..
- Mental health was a key issue.
- Elevate was now treated as business as usual.
- Performance was good but GDPR was now hindering the sharing of some data.
- The Council was checking its outcomes.

Slough

- The Council was excited about the two new projects.

- There was a desire for the lone parents project to create a legacy that would last beyond the contract period.
- There was a desire to equip children's centres to provide the necessary support.
- NEETs with complex needs were a key issue.
- The Council was confident that it was reaching out effectively to young people as under 1% were believed to be "unknowns".

With regard to performance, the Committee noted that

- The partnership had engaged 1411 young people since November 2015, of these 302 had been supported into employment, education or training.
- The partnership had already delivered against the disability target for the programme, supporting 421 participants who had declared a disability against a target of 280.
- The partnership had supported 31 young people to gain basics skills; this was against a 3 year target of 24 with West Berkshire having done particularly well..
- Good progress was being made against the ethnic minority target, as delivery of Slough Project 1 started, this would make a considerable contribution to this target being met.
- More work was needed to ensure that evidence was collected for results where they had been achieved.
- There was still some work to do by all partners to ensure that the Lone Parents target was met; assuming a provider was found for Slough Project 2, this would make a considerable contribution to this target.
- Continued effort was being made to engage with eligible young people, particularly via outreach.

The Committee was advised that in September 2018, the programme had submitted a Project Change Request to the DWP for an extension of the project end date, from October 2018 to June 2019 to enable the realisation of project outputs and results over a longer period, thereby mitigating the risk of not meeting collective programme targets. However, after some delay, in March, it had been advised that there had been a policy change nationally and that contract changes, in terms of extensions, would no longer be agreed. However, further discussions had taken place about revising the ethnic minorities and disabilities targets that appeared to have led to an extension being permitted, which was supported by all partners, although formal written confirmation had yet to be received. A revised outputs and result profile had also been submitted with the change request. The partnership's performance against the revised outputs and results profile submitted with the change request increased overall performance for engagement to around 76% vs 54% (current profile until Oct '18), should this profile be accepted, it would make the programme target much more achievable and move performance in line with a more achievable profile. This would reduce the risk of claw back and for some partners mean that the underperformance methodology would not be applied to future claim payments.

The Committee congratulated Emelye on the work she had done to bring about the extension. To support her, the Committee agreed that it fully supported the change request and approach proposed. Tim Smith indicated that he would be in touch with the DWP later and would advise them accordingly.

The Committee was also advised that the central team was looking to identify new funding that would bring longevity to the Elevate Berkshire 16 to 24 project, to continue the system change and support new models and ways of working it had introduced. The DWP appeared to be keen for 'Berkshire' to continue the project beyond June 2019 and had spoken positively of the way in which Elevate Berkshire had striven to knit the skills and employment system together across Berkshire.

In addition to the employment of a digital marketing apprentice for 15 months, the funding for which would be supplemented by Bracknell Forest who would also be employing them part time, it was proposed to initiate further work with young people with mental health issues who were currently unemployable and also those from minority ethnic groups. It was noted that to support those with mental health issues, it may be possible to work with the CCGs as they were doing similar work, or Health and Wellbeing Boards, but it was likely to be challenging. The Committee agreed that it would be important to avoid duplication. It was also suggested that members may wish to talk to their Public Health teams about whether they may wish to support these initiatives. There were two ways that this work could be approached, either by recruiting two outreach workers to work with mental health and minority ethnic groups, or a provider could be commissioned. They would be based in Reading and would have very specific targets.

The need to avoid duplication was reiterated and add value to whatever partner initiatives were already underway to help people with mental health issues into work. The Committee was keen for this to be a legacy beyond the project.

Subject to confirmation of the project extension, Emelye was confident that the work should be able to move forward in the next week or so. The Committee would be kept informed by email.

Having discussed the report the Joint Committee:

RESOLVED

- 1 To note the success of the collective Elevate Berkshire programme;
 - 2 To endorse the actions, proposals and agreements within the briefing paper; to ensure the programme continued to be delivered in-line with ESF processes.
 - 3 To support the change request and revised targets proposed.
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CHAIRMAN