



**THAMES VALLEY BERKSHIRE CITY
DEAL (ELEVATE BERKSHIRE) JOINT
COMMITTEE
21 MAY 2019
10.00 - 10.20 AM**

Present:

Councillor Stuart Munro, Wokingham Borough Council (Chairman)
Councillor Tony Page, Reading Borough Council
Councillor Marc Brunel-Walker, Bracknell Forest Council

Co-opted Members:

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

Also Present:

Mark Browne, West Berkshire Council
Joanna Flaxman, Elevate Central Team
Rhian Hayes, Wokingham Borough Council
Rebekah Malcolm, Elevate Central Team
David Randall, Ways into Work

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillor Dominic Boeck, West Berkshire Council
Councillor James Swindlehurst, Slough Borough Council

20. Declarations of Interest

Katharine Horler declared an interest through her role as Chief Executive of Adviza, a partner provider to the Elevate Berkshire programme.

21. Minutes and Matters Arising from the Last Meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 25 September 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

22. Urgent Items of Business

There were no urgent items of business.

23. Elevate Berkshire ESF Update

The Joint Committee considered a report providing an update on the Thames Valley Berkshire Elevate programme since its last meeting.

The report included:

- An update from the Central Team on Key Projects
- Partner Updates
- An update on Performance and Funding
- Future Plans

The topics covered included:

- The Slough Project 1 went live in May 2018 and Project 2 in September 2018. Kennedy Scott had been delivering the projects and had reported 279 outcomes and 146 results up to the end of March 2019. These had helped improve the performance against targets of the overall Elevate programme.
- The employment of a Digital Marketing Assistant, to build online presence and improve the content of ElevateMe local websites, had lead to an Elevate Berkshire presence on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram with posts tailored according to the audiences for each platform.
- Extended support had been provided through a spot purchase scheme arranged to help participants with a mental health problem. To date ten young people had been assisted, through such measures as counselling and 1:1 placement support, to take steps towards entry to the labour market.
- Chimera Consultants had been commissioned to carry out an evaluation of Elevate Berkshire, to include interviews with stakeholders and participants (and informal feedback from the Joint Committee following the meeting).
- The 'Employment is Everyone's Business' project continued to support Elevate Berkshire and the six Berkshire Authorities to improve life chances and employment outcomes for young people with Special Educational Needs. Support had been provided to the Thames Valley Berkshire LEP on their call around apprenticeships; two events for carers around employment were planned for Newbury College and Bracknell in June/July 2019 with a further shared learning event at Newbury College on 18 July 2019.

Partner updates were included in the report from:

- Bracknell Forest
- The Prince's Trust
- RBWM – The early end date of 31 March 2019 had been accepted by DWP since existing delivery partners would be operating in the RBWM area.
- Reading – A skeleton service provided by the Central Team together with input from The Prince's Trust and Ways into Work had operated following the planned close of the Adviza service in October 2018
- Ways into Work - total number of young people assisted over the lifetime of the project to 119 (90 being currently supported). There was a notable gender bias in those assisted: 69% male and 31% female.
- West Berks – There had been an influx of young people during the last few months, with greater success in engaging with the 16-18 year olds than the older age group. Partners had been advised to cease delivery with the project/funding coming to an end and continued uncertainty over future possibilities.
- Wokingham – Targets were likely to be reached in Wokingham and efforts were now centred on looking at what scaled down activity could be continued for the future eg. the Elevate hub would remain in the library for the next year (although occupying a smaller space).
- Slough

With regard to performance, the Joint Committee noted the detail in the most recent performance table attached as an appendix to the report. The following highlights were reported:

- The partnership had engaged 2258 young people since November 2015; of these 603 had been supported into employment, education or training.
- The partnership had already delivered against the disability target for the programme, supporting 721 participants who had declared a disability against a target of 280.
- The partnership had supported 49 young people to gain basics skills; this was against a 3 year target of 24.
- Good progress was being made against the ethnic minority target, assisted by the specific project in Slough, with performance exceeding the target for this point in the project.
- There was a good upward trend in the number of lone parents receiving a service, although there was still work to do to meet the target.

The payment of claims by the DWP had improved since the report to the last meeting of the Joint Committee; 11 payments covering claims for the period to September 2018 of Funding had been received. Payment of the claim for Oct-Dec 2018 was outstanding; the claim for Jan-Mar 2019 had only recently been submitted. An application to the local DWP partnership grant scheme for further funding had been made on which a decision was awaited. Even if successful this would be at a much lower level than previously, and match funding this had been proposed from sums remaining in the City Deal budget. Tim Smith agreed to review this option. The application to the DWP was in respect of three projects:

- Supported Employment
- Extended Support / IAG
- Your Move (a project which uses sport to engage participants)

In conclusion, the Joint Committee noted the success of the collective Elevate Berkshire Programme and recognised the good results and outcomes for the significant number of young people supported. It further endorsed the actions, proposals and agreements within the briefing report to ensure the programme continued to be delivered in line with ESF processes.

Informal Discussion

At the conclusion of the formal meeting, Councillor Page left the meeting and an informal 35 minute discussion to review Elevate Berkshire for the formal evaluation took place.

24. Elevate Evaluation – Informal Discussion

Following conclusion of the formal meeting, Adam Jeffery from Chimera Consultants joined members to initiate some discussion to inform the Evaluation of the Elevate programme. He invited reflections on:

- What elements of the programme worked really well;
- What might have been done differently; and
- What happens next.

Feedback was offered on the overall programme and some individual aspects of it. The following particular points were referred to:

- The City Deal concept as promoted by the Cabinet Office lacked focus and was difficult to get to grips with; moreover, the complex ESF regime had been hard to work with.
- After the initial time spent to get the Programme up and running, a momentum had been generated only to be dissipated now the funding had come to an end.
- Given the number of different organisations/players involved and the shifting priorities, there was an overall sense of achievement in the engagement of a significant number of young people Programme and the results obtained.
- While there had been value in developing the Elevate brand along with the website and social media presence, some thought the greatest success had been through the on the ground face-to-face contact with young people where a greater impact had been made.
- There was a view that programmes such as this were structured around set up and delivery with little attention or emphasis on what happens next.
- The Programme had served to underscore the continuing need to support a range of young people with complex and differing needs, to overcome barriers to employment.
- It should be possible to use relevant information and results from the Programme to inform the draft Berkshire Local Industrial Strategy, currently at the consultation stage.

It was anticipated that the evaluation report would be completed by around mid June 2019, to be followed by an event to present the findings to which all would be invited.

CHAIRMAN