

Economic and Skills Development Partnership
Tuesday, 2 May 2017
8.30 - 10.35 am
3M, Cain Road, Bracknell, RG12 8HT



Present: Bob Collis, Chairman
 Tony Bellis, 3M
 Campbell Christie, Bracknell & Wokingham College
 Victor Nicholls, Bracknell Forest Council
 Derrick Nirmalan, Berkshire Technologies
 Sheila Robbie, UKPI
 Peter Smith, Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce
 Justine Thompson, Bracknell Forest Homes
 Nancy Lalor, Learning to Work
 James Sackley, Bracknell Forest Council

Apologies: Councillor Bob Wade, Small Business Champion
 Anneken Priesack, Bracknell Forest Council

Action Points

Minute	Item
55	<p>Action Points from Last Meeting</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2017 were approved as a correct record.</p> <p><u>Matters Arising</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Vice-Chair for the ESDP was still sought. • A Chair for the Infrastructure Sub-group was still sought, however conversations were ongoing with a potential person for this. • The ESDP response to the Government's Industrial Strategy and Draft Airports National Policy Statement consultations had been compiled and submitted. ESDP members were thanked for their contribution to the response. It was agreed that the responses to both consultations would be circulated, and future use for these documents would be considered. (Action: James Sackley) • A press release to highlight the departure of the previous ESDP chairman and to promote apprenticeships and training had been released, however when published, the section about apprenticeships had been left out of the news story. It was suggested another attempt be made to publicise apprenticeships. (Action: Campbell Christie)
56	<p>Membership Update</p> <p>The ESDP recognised the need for a Vice-Chair of the ESDP and Infrastructure Sub-group, and for more members to join the ESDP to make the suggested 18 members. Members were asked to consider whether they knew any business representative who may contribute to the ESDP's membership.</p> <p>Members suggested:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • extending an invitation to Advisa to represent the Voluntary and Community Sector, (Action: Campbell Christie) • include David Orren, Thames Valley Business Advisers on the ESDP membership. (Action: James Sackley) • inviting BTLC to be represented on the Infrastructure sub-group as a representative of broadband provision • including a member/regular visitor from Thames Valley Police to the Infrastructure sub-group (Action: Campbell Christie) • inviting BID members to sit on the Infrastructure Sub-group • inviting a representative from Pegasus to participate on the Infrastructure sub-group (Action: Peter Smith) • inviting more independent training providers to join the Employment and Skills Sub-group (Action: Campbell Christie/Sheila Robbie) • encouraging larger companies such as Waitrose, Fujitsu, Honda and Dell to consider representation on the ESDP. <p>It was suggested that having a time limited ‘term’ of membership may encourage more attendees.</p> <p>Bob Collis informed the ESDP that Ian Robertson had stepped down from the ESDP following the conclusion of the Business Development Group. The ESDP thanked Ian for all his contributions to the Sub-group and Partnership work. (Action: Bob Collis)</p>
57	<p>Sub-Group Updates</p> <p><u>Employment and Skills</u></p> <p>Campbell Christie informed the ESDP that the 11-19 Partnership had been disbanded, which had been a major conduit for Bracknell and Wokingham College to communicate with Secondary School Headteachers.</p> <p>Regarding the Employment and Skills Sub-group workstream, Campbell gave the following updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timothy Wheadon, Chief Executive of Bracknell Forest Council had been keen to enter into an agreement with Bracknell and Wokingham College over an apprenticeship programme to make use of the apprenticeship levy. Bracknell Forest Council required upwards of 90 apprenticeships, to include the upskilling of existing employees. • Kashif Nawaz had advised that the Bracknell Forest element of the Elevate Berkshire programme was fully compliant. Funding for the Elevate programme was secure until October 2018. • A work experience placement calendar was under development, to advise the business community when education providers may be seeking placements. It was hoped that this calendar would prevent the employer community from being swamped with work experience requests. • An ongoing survey with local businesses aimed to establish employment and skills needs, while also promoting the Bracknell Chamber Council. However, it was noted that reaching businesses in this way was difficult. <p><u>Infrastructure Sub-group</u></p> <p>Bob Collis gave the following updates arising from the Infrastructure Sub-group workstream:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rail access to Bracknell will improve, increasing to four trains per hour to London Waterloo and Reading. First Group would be taking over the rail service from October 2017. • A local partner of City Fibre, BLTC, had advised that cable for 'hyper speed' broadband had been laid, and that they were waiting for business take up. (Action: James Sackley to invite BLTC to join Infrastructure) • The ESDP was advised of a third potential funding scheme under the National Productivity Investment Fund Bid to fund improvements to the A322/A329 Downshire Way junction. A business case was being developed for this, and the ESDP gave their full support and endorsed the proposal. (Action: James Sackley to liaise with Stuart Jefferies) • In response to issues around congestion, it was noted that there was still more that could be done to encourage businesses to promote flexible working and to make use of staggered start times for employees. The ESDP recognised the difference between flexible working and home working, but noted the impact of set school start times which limited working parents. • The importance of encouraging sustainable travel such as cycling and walking to work was noted. Victor Nicholls commented on the work from Council officers to improve walking and cycling routes through the town centre and advice and copies of the promotional pack for businesses were available from the council's sustainable travel team.
58	<p>Consultation Updates</p> <p>As discussed under the action points of the last meeting, it was agreed that the recent ESDP responses to Government consultations would be circulated.</p>
59	<p>Working with other Partnerships and Groups</p> <p>The ESDP discussed opportunities to work with other partnerships, following a suggestion made at the 2 Year Plan Workshop to attend other partnership meetings.</p> <p>Amongst suggestions to connect with were Thames Valley LEP, Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce, and the Institute of Small Businesses. It was also suggested that Business Networkers Institute and 4 Networking may be approached.</p> <p>Peter Smith agreed to arrange for Bob Collis to speak about the ESDP at a Chamber event. (Action: Peter Smith/Bob Collis)</p> <p>It was agreed that an email should be sent to all the considered partnerships to advise them of the ESDP and its work. (Action: Bob Collis/James Sackley)</p>
60	<p>LEP Update</p> <p>Campbell Christie updated the ESDP on the work of the LEP.</p> <p>The LEP had responded to the Government's Industrial Strategy, highlighting areas of concern including the provision of adequate funding for skills training.</p>

	<p>The Business in Berkshire 2017 report had been developed and distributed. It was agreed that this report should be circulated to the Partnership.</p> <p>The LEP had undertaken research on the apprenticeship levy payers in Berkshire, of which there were 33 who had mixed views towards the levy.</p> <p>£170m funding was available to build 10 Institutes of Technology across the country through LEPs. The Thames Valley Institute of Technology was proposed to be a virtual centre, with use of existing college facilities across the Thames Valley where necessary and an admin team to support. Redwood Technologies had requested a Post-graduate qualification in Digital Skills to be provided, and it was suggested that this would be available from Reading University. Campbell noted that there was not significant demand from Berkshire businesses for a Institute of Technology.</p>
61	<p>BID Update</p> <p>James Sackley gave an update on the work of the Business Improvement District (BID).</p> <p>Regus, Maxis, 329 building and Capitol building had been recruited as members to the BID, which was notable due to the number of companies housed in these buildings.</p> <p>A BID brand had been established as the 'Bracknell Investment Group (BIG)' with a logo, brand and vision. The core themes for the group were collaboration, investment and improvement.</p> <p>A script had been devised for a telephone survey of affected businesses conducted by QA Research, the results of which were due back in June. ESDP members fed back that they had been contacted by telephone, but callers had not left voicemail messages or arranged times for interviews. James agreed to feed this back to researchers. (Action: James Sackley)</p> <p>The Chief Executive of Victoria BID had been invited to speak to the Bracknell Investment Group to explain their work and progress.</p>
62	<p>ESDP Workshop and 2 Year Plan</p> <p>Bob Collis thanked all ESDP members for attending the recent workshop, and gave an update on the progress of the 2 Year Plan.</p> <p>All tasks on the 2 Year Plan were underway, and the ESDP adopted the Plan as a living document.</p> <p>Progress in meeting the Plan's Objectives and delivering its Tasks would be reported as necessary at future ESDP meetings.</p>

63	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Derek Nirmalan reported that he had formed a company, Berkshire Technology, and was working on a project with Huawei in Reading. Oxfordshire LEP had invited Huawei to participate in a top-down approach to encouraging small businesses.</p> <p>Victor Nicholls reported that The Lexicon would be launched on 7 September 2017, and would be preceded by a stakeholder launch event on the evening of 6 September 2017.</p> <p>Victor also informed the Partnership that had accepted an offer of the role of Executive Director of Borough Development and Deputy Chief Executive at Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council. Subject to that council's formal ratification in May, Victor would probably leave the council in August.</p>
64	<p>Dates of Future Meetings</p> <p>4 July 2017, 8:30am at The Capitol Building</p>