

**Economic and Skills Development Partnership**

**Tuesday, 22 January 2019**

**9.00 - 10.52 am**

**Venture House, Arlington Square, Downshire Way,  
Bracknell, RG12 1WA**



Present: Bob Collis, Chairman  
Nancy Lalor, Learning to Work  
Peter Smith, Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce  
Councillor Bob Wade, Business Champion  
Anneken Priesack, Bracknell Forest Council  
Andrew Hunter, Bracknell Forest Council  
Simon Cridland, Bracknell Forest Council  
Katie Flint, Bracknell Forest Council  
Joe Covill, ProjeKt  
Nick Hartright, ProjeKt  
Charlotte Robinson, ProjeKt  
Colin Willman, Federation of Small Businesses  
Simon Fryer, Fryer Commercial  
Lisa Harvey, Job Centre Plus

Apologies: Julie Rowe, WWP The Key Group  
Stephen Chown, Bracknell Forest Council  
Gerald Hegarty, Bracknell Forest Council  
Lesley Hoey, Adviza

**Action Points**

Minute	Item
139	<p><b>Action Points from Last Meeting</b></p> <p>The minutes of the previous meeting held on 20 November 2018 were received and noted as a correct record. Arising from the minutes, the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Harry Pickering's presentation on the development of The Lexicon had been distributed to all partners, but could be requested from Anneken Priesack.</li><li>• It had been decided that all members of the ESDP and its Partnership Boards would be invited to attend the main Partnership meetings.</li><li>• It had been decided to reduce the number of Partnership meetings from 6 to 4 in a year.</li><li>• Bob Collis had met with Peter Smith to discuss joint events between Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce and the ESDP, however it had been agreed that there was not yet an appropriate topic for such an event.</li></ul>
140	<p><b>Sub-group updates</b></p> <p><b>Nancy Lalor</b> reported that the Education and Skills Subgroup were due to meet on 27 February, and would have a presentation from the Berkshire Apprenticeship service.</p>

**Bob Collis** reported that the Infrastructure Subgroup had developed a revised workstream with actions attached. The subgroup would be focussing on encouraging flexible working to reduce congestion, and the implementation of electric vehicle charging points. Stuart Jeffries had advised the subgroup on the ways businesses could support electric vehicle charging on private property. Partners commented on areas of concern with electric vehicle charging points, such as responsible parking and health and safety issues at smaller premises.

The Infrastructure Subgroup were also working on a Natural Estate project with the Local Authority's Parks and Countryside team to look at outside spaces for business activities. A demonstration had been proposed, for businesses to explore this idea further.

The ESDP photo competition held in conjunction with the Local Authority's Parks and Countryside team had been a success, with 6 winners being chosen. All prizes had been donated by ESDP Partners, from Bob Collis, Fryer Commercial and Duncan Yeadley Estate Agents. The Partnership had sponsored the business and young persons' prize. The competition would be repeated next year with a new theme, and Partners proposed that 'Then and Now' or 'Old and New' could be a suitable topic. It was stressed that the photos were only for use by the ESDP and the Council, unless permission was sought from the photographers.

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## **Presentations**

**Andrew Hunter, Director of Place, Planning and Regeneration at Bracknell Forest Council** presented on the future steps of the town centre development.

The Lexicon had a current footfall of over 16 million visitors per year. TKMaxx and Matalan were due to open soon. Snagging and final details works were ongoing. The project had won the Revo Gold Award for the Renew category and the Overall Award.

The refurbishment of Princess Square was the next planned development, followed by the development of The Deck. Bracknell Forest Partnership had begun arranging lettings for The Deck for three large units on the lower level and multiple units on the upper level. The downstairs area of the old Bentalls unit would be used for a leisure provider. As part of The Deck regeneration, Eagle House was being converted into residential units, and McDonalds had been moved further up the High Street into the old Cargo unit.

Bracknell Forest Council was exploring the possibility of a Joint Venture on Jubilee Gardens, Market Street and Cooper's Hill.

The Town Centre Vision for 2032 had been published, which assessed the future residential, commercial and retail uses in the town centre. The strategy aimed to connect the town centre to the train station and other gateways into the town centre. In the longer term, the Strategy aimed to integrate the Peel Centre with the rest of the town centre.

In response to comments, the following points were noted:

- It was agreed that commercial units should be included in the town centre mix, to bring in workers who might use the food and leisure units during lunchbreaks.
- It was suggested that a hotel site would be a useful addition to the town

centre.

**Nick Hartright and representatives of ProjeKt** attended the meeting to present on the meanwhile use of Easthampstead House, which would be called Easthampstead Works.

ProjeKt worked with Local Authorities and developers to develop meanwhile use for buildings which would otherwise be demolished. ProjeKt had been created 10 years ago to support small, creative businesses at affordable rental rates. Previous projects included the Green Rooms in Haringey and Silver Building in East London which was a similar project to Easthampstead Works.

Easthampstead Works was planned to change perceptions of the Eastern area of the town. The space would provide commercial space for startup creative enterprises, but the remit for tenants was broad. The building would also include a café / event space, and space for use by community groups. The building had been leased to ProjeKt for 5 years with a 3 year break. The internal design of the building was designed to be bare and minimalist to save cost.

ProjeKt had taken possession of Easthampstead House on 1 January 2019. It was hoped that the unit would be open to businesses from March 2019. ProjeKt had created a website and Instagram account for the building at [www.easthampsteadworks.co.uk](http://www.easthampsteadworks.co.uk) and @easthampsteadworks

In response to questions, the following points were noted:

- ProjeKt had received a number of interested clients, ranging from counsellors to graphic designers and iPad repair companies. It was also anticipated that large Headquarter buildings in Bracknell may look into overspill space in the building.
- Desks at Easthampstead Works were costed at £25 per week, and a small 100 square foot office would be £75 per week. All space included access to the wireless internet, but packages were available for companies who required separate internet.
- Partners welcomed this addition of town centre office space, which was different to all existing commercial space in Bracknell.
- It was stressed that this was ProjeKt's first site outside of London.
- Partners were asked to spread the word about Easthampstead Works to colleagues and contacts to encourage take up.
- The total lettable space was 30,000 square foot, however the configuration of this was to be confirmed.
- Handouts on the project would be circulated to partners in the coming weeks, for information.

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**Feedback from the ESDP Autumn Event 'Making the Move'**

The ESDP Autumn Event had been held on 21 November 2018 at Lightbox, in conjunction with Property Forums UK. The event had been well attended, with 50 people in attendance from property agents, businesses and the Local Authority. Andy Smith from Waitrose and David English from Panasonic had given presentations about moving a company within Bracknell Forest.

In response to questions, the following points were noted:

- Feedback from the event had been largely positive, although some attendees had felt that there had not been much time for questions. This

	<p>feedback had been taken into account for future events.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The next event was planned for Spring/Early Summer 2019, which would focus on the Employment and Skills area.</li> <li>• Partners proposed that a future event could focus on driverless cars, and TRL could be approached to speak on the future of travel for businesses.</li> </ul>
143	<p><b>BID Update</b></p> <p>Bob Collis presented an update on the Business Improvement District.</p> <p>The BID steering group had a renewed effort to engage with more businesses in the Southern and Western business areas. Workshops had been planned for both business areas, to assess the different needs of both areas. The transport and parking and security and safety were key areas of focus in surveys carried out this far.</p> <p>The BID ballot would consider services over and above provision through the Local Authority.</p> <p>It was anticipated that business surveys and workshops would be conducted throughout January to May, with feedback into budgeting in June, business plans being developed in July to August and a ballot being held in October / November 2019.</p> <p>Partners proposed that connectivity in Bracknell was a key issue. It was also noted that the collective voice of businesses in the BID gives business a more significant voice in relation to issues such as electric car charging.</p>
144	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p>Partners were informed of a number of areas for their attention:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Bracknell Town Neighbourhood Plan Consultation was ongoing from 7 January to 18 February 2019. Partners were encouraged to respond <a href="#">on the Council website</a>.</li> <li>• The Bracknell Forest Council Budget had been published, and Partners were encouraged to comment on the proposals <a href="#">on the Council website</a>.</li> <li>• The Berkshire Local Industrial Strategy (BLIS) was in development from the LEP, and an informal consultation had taken place. A formal consultation would be opened in late Spring 2019.</li> <li>• The interactive LEP Impact Report had been <a href="#">published on their website</a>.</li> <li>• It was commented that school governors were sought from the business sector, and partners were encourage to look into school governor vacancies.</li> <li>• Partners were encouraged to attend the <a href="#">Bracknell Business Club</a>.</li> </ul>
145	<p><b>Dates of Future Meetings</b></p> <p>16 April 2019</p>