



**THAMES VALLEY BERKSHIRE CITY  
DEAL JOINT COMMITTEE  
21 MARCH 2014  
11.00 AM - 12.05 PM**

**Present:**

Councillor Rob Anderson, Slough Borough Council  
Councillor Marc Brunel-Walker, Bracknell Forest Council  
Councillor Richard Kellaway, Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead  
Councillor Alan Law, West Berkshire Council  
Councillor Jo Lovelock, Reading Borough Council  
Councillor Rob Stanton, Wokingham Borough Council

**Co-opted Members:**

Anne Murdoch, Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership  
Tim Smith, Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership

**Apologies for absence were received from:**

Steve Lamb, Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership

**1. Apologies for Absence and Substitute Members**

The Joint Committee noted that the Thames Valley Berkshire LEP Forum had agreed to nominate its Chairman, Steve Lamb, and Business Director, Tim Smith, as its non-voting co-optees. However, Mr Lamb had tendered his apologies and Anne Murdoch was therefore substituting for him at this meeting.

**2. Election of Chairman**

**RESOLVED** that Councillor Stanton be elected Chairman of the Joint Committee.

**3. Election of Vice-Chairman**

**RESOLVED** that Councillor Law be elected Vice-Chairman of the Joint Committee.

**4. Urgent Items of Business**

There were no urgent items of business but a supplementary paper detailing amendments to agenda items 5 and 6 was drawn to the attention of the Joint Committee.

**5. Terms of Reference and Constitution**

The Joint Committee received a report advising it of its terms of reference and constitution. A supplementary paper was circulated with suggested amendments to



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paragraph 1.2 in relation to the outcomes of the Growth Hub. In addition, the decision of the Thames Valley Berkshire LEP Forum to opt for just two places on the Joint Committee, meant that paragraph 2.1 also required amendment. In addition, it was noted that a LEP Grants Panel was to be established to determine the allocation of grants as part of the Growth Hub outcomes.

**RESOLVED** that the terms of reference and constitution of the Thames Valley Berkshire City Deal Joint Committee be endorsed subject to:

1 The outcomes relating to the Growth Hub being amended to read:

- To set up a one stop shop web site as the single gateway for Berkshire's growth businesses, providing access to information, an overview of grants and business support services that are available, and an open innovation platform.
- To offer a programme of coaching, advice & training, and 'account management' from an experienced team that will assist businesses develop strategies and plans for growth. The Growth Hub will partner with other national offerings such as MAS, UKTI, GrowthAccelerator, TSB, and with the LEP's Funding Escalator.
- To offer a competitive grants programme (determined by a LEP Grants Panel) to directly fund businesses that need between £10k and £40k to develop new products, prove new technologies and get ideas to market.
- To develop a business network delivering relevant events and topical activities across Berkshire, to provide knowledge and information exchange for growth businesses.
- To be located at the University of Reading but ensuring comprehensive coverage across Thames Valley Berkshire through local 'touch points'.

2 The membership in paragraph 2.1 being amended to read:

The Committee will consist of six members with each of the six Berkshire unitary authorities appointing one member to the Committee plus two non-voting co-opted representatives of the Thames Valley Berkshire LEP. A substitute member may be nominated for each voting and non-voting member of the Committee to deputise when necessary.

## 6. **Thames Valley Berkshire City Deal - Implementation Plans**

The Joint Committee considered a report outlining the approach to the implementation of the Thames Valley Berkshire City Deal. The Joint Committee was reminded that the City Deal covered the six Berkshire Unitary Authorities and had three major elements:

- A coordinated Employment and Skills Gateway for 16-24 year olds which would halve youth unemployment in three years.
- A Business Growth Hub.

- The Development of new techniques for engaging young people and businesses

The report set out:

- A diagram showing the Thames Valley Berkshire Employment and Skills Gateway.
- Details of the six local authority projects (spokes) and LEP (hub) projects.
- The draft funding proposals for the spoke and hub elements.

The Joint Committee noted that the design of the main programme of City Deal activities would:

- 1 Redesign and simplify the “customer journey” in the interests of young people and employers.
- 2 Reduce overlaps and duplications by encouraging co-location of services to young people and businesses.
- 3 Where possible, reduce overheads by pooling budgets, sharing line management and unifying information systems.
- 4 Introduce ElevateMe – a universal website to provide coordinated signposting, access to services and a personal planning tool.
- 5 Provide a coordinated Labour Market Intelligence service bringing more timely information and better analysis.

In addition to these main activities, the City Deal would also:

- Support and develop the Business Growth Hub, operated by Vital Six1, as a resource for high growth companies.
- Work with the Behavioural Insights Team (Cabinet Office) to research and evaluate effective ways of working with 16-24 year old NEETs and businesses.
- Develop a project aimed at encouraging 16-24 year old lone parents into positive destinations.
- Provide a professional development network to improve the levels and effectiveness of support and continuing professional development for IAG staff.

Amongst the main points made in response to issues raised during the ensuing discussion were that:

- At the heart of the proposals was a wish to see schools and colleges delivering young people with the skills actually required by businesses.
- Cabinet Office funding was based on the authorities’ best endeavours to deliver the proposed targets and was not refundable, but EU funding was provided on a payment by results basis and therefore the Cabinet Office

funding was key to work in the first two years, whilst the EU funding would kick in as progress was made, the first payments being expected in January/February 2014.

- A number of authorities had fully developed their proposals and had identified targets to be delivered whilst others were still refining their projects and scoping the projects based on intended outcomes which would be developed into formal targets by 30 June 2014.
- The funding was to be released immediately regardless of whether targets had been finalised.
- The failure of one authority to achieve its targets was not expected to impact on the others but there was an expectation that the officer steering group would seek to ensure that all delivered their intended targets.
- The LEP was in the process of recruiting an Economic Data Analyst who would have a key role to play in the delivery of the City Deal targets.
- Reading Borough Council had recruited a City Deal Project Manager to co-ordinate the work.

**RESOLVED** that:

- 1 That the outline budget for the Thames Valley Berkshire City Deal as set out in Appendix 3 of the report be approved.
- 2 That authority be delegated to Zoe Hanim, Head of Customer Services and lead officer for City Deal in consultation with the Head of Finance at Reading Borough Council as the accountable body, to implement the transfer of funds summarised in Appendix 3 of the report to the local authorities and the Local Enterprise Partnership for the first year subject to them being satisfied that the projects concerned were fully developed and ready to be implemented.

## 7. **Thames Valley Berkshire City Deal - Performance Monitoring**

The Joint Committee considered a report seeking endorsement of the proposed performance monitoring arrangements for the City Deal. The Joint Committee noted that it was proposed to produce quarterly performance reports in the form of a grid showing overall progress to date against the Berkshire-wide targets. Detailed progress was to be monitored monthly at the City Deal Officer Steering group via highlight reports for each project and a spreadsheet detailing spend against outputs. Monthly progress updates and a quarterly monitoring and evaluation tracker were also to be submitted to the Cabinet Office.

The Committee noted that the officer steering group would be monitoring progress on at least a monthly basis.

A key concern of the Joint Committee was the work on apprenticeships. It was suggested that, as the economy grew, there were less apprenticeships available as businesses opted to recruit on a permanent basis. Such jobs were more attractive to potential apprentices as they involved payment of the national minimum wage rather than the lower rates payable to apprentices. West Berkshire Council was already paying its apprentices the national minimum wage to make the jobs more appealing. In addition, it was suggested that the amount of paperwork associated with apprenticeships made offering them less attractive, particularly for small businesses

without large HR teams with the capacity to deal with the paperwork. Concerns were also expressed about a change in culture which meant that many businesses managers had grown up in an environment in which apprenticeships were not as common as in the past and therefore were not as likely to offer them as companies in the past. It would therefore be necessary to market the apprentice concept effectively to maximise the number of opportunities, and to encourage schools and parents to recognise their value.

The Joint Committee noted that the LEP's Strategic Economic Plan contained a whole programme aimed at promoting apprenticeships which would link into the City Deal. There were, however, concerns that schools were much more interested in directing young people to degree courses rather than promoting apprenticeships. With this in mind, the LEP was sponsoring an event to which 25 secondary headteachers and further education principals were to be invited to discuss the importance of engaging with business to achieve OFSTED's outstanding category in relation to leadership. The Joint Committee believed that all secondary heads in Berkshire should be invited to this event. In addition, it was suggested that OFSTED should be encouraged to treat engagement with business as being indicative of "good" rather than "outstanding" as many schools were content to achieve "good" and did not aspire to being "outstanding". Such schools would not therefore be so concerned about the importance of engagement with businesses.

**RESOLVED that:**

- 1 The proposed performance monitoring arrangements for the Thames Valley Berkshire City Deal be endorsed.
- 2 Quarterly progress monitoring reports be provided to the Joint Committee from July 2014.
- 3 That the Thames Valley Berkshire LEP be asked to invite all Berkshire secondary heads to the event in June 2014 with OFSTED to promote the importance of schools engaging with the business community.
- 4 That OFSTED should be encouraged to review whether engagement with business should be regarded as "outstanding" in terms of leadership or only "good" as to treat it as "outstanding" would be a disincentive to engage with business for those schools which were only aspiring to be "good".

**8. Date of Next Meeting**

The Joint Committee agreed that its next meeting should be held at 10.30am on Friday 18 July 2014 when it would consider:

- 1 The first quarter's performance monitoring report and the final targets for each spoke; and,
- 2 A report on the ElevateMe web site.

**CHAIRMAN**

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