

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY HEAD OF CUSTOMER SERVICES

TO:	THAMES VALLEY BERKSHIRE ELEVATE (CITY DEAL) JOINT COMMITTEE		
DATE:	22nd January 2016	AGENDA ITEM:	5
TITLE:	ELEVATE THAMES VALLEY BERKSHIRE – PROGRAMME UPDATE		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	CLLR MUNRO	PORTFOLIO:	
SERVICE:		WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
LEAD OFFICER:	Paul Gresty	TEL:	07912 068 916
JOB TITLE:	Elevate Programme Manager	E-MAIL:	Paul.Gresty@reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides an update on key activity / elements of the Thames Valley Berkshire Elevate programme locally, and is provided by the Elevate Programme Manager, based at Reading Borough Council.
- 1.2 The Thames Valley Berkshire City Deal (known as Elevate Berkshire) is focused on increasing the participation of 16-24 year olds in education, training and work, to develop work-related skills and to streamline the pathway to employment for young people. This is linked directly to a broader objective of delivering economic growth locally, and to address local concerns about the number of young people who are NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training).
- 1.3 Elevate Berkshire aims to address the skills gaps and unemployment and underemployment of the 16-24 year old population. Overall the aim is to deliver employment and skills support for 4,500 young people. The deal will deliver improvements in existing schemes to generate:
 - 1,300 new employment opportunities for young people including helping 800 sustain work for at least six months;
 - 1,500 work experience placements
 - 300 additional apprenticeships
 - 800 new Youth Contract wage incentives
- 1.4 New approaches will also be developed to help more young people into sustainable employment ensuring 900 young people do not make a repeat claim within 9 months of their last, and increasing the earnings of 450 young people.
- 1.5 More information on the 'Deal' can be found here - https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/25323

2.0 RECOMMENDED ACTION:

2.1 That Joint Committee Members note the report and progress made within their own Authorities.

2.2 Joint Committee is asked to note the local, and collective, outputs achieved to date.

3.0 PROJECT UPDATE

3.1 Aims of the City Deal

The aim of the City Deal is to have joined up provision for young people in one place, bringing together fragmented services and partners, in order to simplify the journey from NEET to EET and to reduce youth unemployment and to better meet labour market needs.

3.2 Elevate Outputs to Date

The table set out in Appendix I shows outputs achieved to date set against the collective Elevate targets, broken down to local level.

Please see Appendix i for Elevate Outputs to Date.

Highlights:

- Collectively met and surpassed the three year target for Apprenticeship starts and sustained apprenticeships for 6 months.
- Over 50% of three year project target reached for IAG contacts, new employment starts and sustained employment.

Lowlights:

- Underachievement of work experience target.

4.0 Local Authority (spoke) update

Elevate Berkshire is the physical place for 16-24 year olds in Berkshire to seek help, advice and support on employment, work experience, volunteering and mentoring. This is part of a Berkshire wide project supporting young people on their journey to employment.

Implementation of the local spoke projects began in April 2014; local spokes continue to make progress in implementing their project.

4.1 **Bracknell – Progress Update**

- Annual Bracknell careers event took place at Coppid Beech Hotel. Over 80 exhibitors from a wide range of sectors offered information and advice to over 900 students and 300 afternoon visitors. A variety of “have a go” activities were organised by businesses in addition to personality and psychometric testing and virtual reality games that were offered. The event was organised by Bracknell Forest Council and Learning to Work with support from Elevate Bracknell Forest and other partners.
- **Construction Work-** Elevate Bracknell Forest is working closely with Mace (principal contractor for the town centre regeneration) to deliver a Construction Apprenticeship Pathway offering construction apprenticeships with Mace and its sub-contractors for young people in the local area. The first opportunity will be with Mace followed by at least 9 other apprenticeships in a variety of construction areas.
- **Care Sector Work-** Elevate Bracknell Forest is working closely with a local care provider to raise the profile of the care sector locally. Links with the college, specifically the sector based work academy for health and social care, have been facilitated with Elevate staff around careers in Social care.
- **Schools work-** Elevate Bracknell Forest has visited all secondary schools in Bracknell and the local college to build links and discuss support that Elevate can provide. In close collaboration with the Council’s Transition Co-ordinator Elevate will have a presence at school results days and will do presentation at year 9 assemblies to inform students about Elevate and introduce Elevate Me. Schools have been encouraged to use Elevate Me as tool in lessons and the website is being used by the Transition coordinator in advice sessions with students at risk of becoming NEET.

4.2 **Reading – Progress Update**

- **‘Routes Into’-** the Employer Engagement team with Reading UK CIC are running three ‘Routes Into’ events in February, covering care, hospitality and construction. The events are informal, and are being supported by a range of employers (Walkabout, Novotel and Hilton) who will be able to tell attendees about the range of work on offer in their sector-as well as having live vacancies to fill.
- **Social Media Campaign-** Elevate Reading has continued to use social media to push out skills and employment messaging. Campaigns around specific events and activities (the Christmas job fair and Reading job fair) have been by far the most successful. The October Construction event reached 5,234 people with 191 likes. The Christmas Temp Fair reached 21,000 people with 1300 likes. Reading will push Elevate through January on a New Year, New Start jobs campaign, followed by promotion of the three ‘Routes Into’ events and the pop-up business school in Feb/March.
- **Reading Jobs Fair 2016-** Held at Hexagon in early November, and produced in partnership with the office of Rob Wilson MP and DWP. The event included over 80 stands of employers and providers, including many recruiting for Christmas. This year the Elevate team also organised sector based talks for attendees including retail (provided by Ikea), care and the armed forces.

Supported Employment Outcomes:

- Job Clubs are now run every Thursday at the Elevate Hub and in Whitley
- London Irish have run a succession of courses for up to 12 young people per course, all based at Elevate Reading
- Employability Courses for DWP clients aged 18-24 - being run in partnership with New Directions at the Reading hub.
- Ikea have been using the Elevate Hub to run a succession of recruitment workshops and interview session at the hub.

4.3 Slough – Progress Update

- **Prioritising Work Readiness and Soft Skills-** Based on LMI, employer feedback and analysis from employment that young people lack soft skills which is a key barrier to employment, Elevate Slough has established outcomes focused Employability Sessions (soft skills and traineeship events) with multiple providers. Two sessions were held in 2015 which led to engagement with 30 NEETS, 11 of whom have progressed onto traineeships. The opportunities element of these events will focus in 2016 on engaging with employers e.g. mini careers fairs.
- **Lone Parents-** Since the establishment of a Lone Parents task group 115 lone parents have received IAG with a qualified adviser leading to progression into maths and English provision and others into employment. Three areas were priorities including confidence building' basic skills training and IAG/employability training as key engagement areas. Slough has taken the opportunity to develop more integrated approach to the delivery if City Deal activity through better integration of Skills Funding Agency Community Learning funding.

4.4 West Berkshire Progress Update

- **Young families-** Some successful projects with young parents including a project to support 16-24 year old parents through Children's centres to access employability, maths, English and parenting skills. also targeting family learning in Children's Centre's for young families
- The DWP employee working on Turnaround families has been referring young people to Elevate providers.

4.5 Windsor and Maidenhead-Progress Update

- **Getting into Line Painting- Ways into Work** has facilitated a getting into event aimed specifically at Young People Youth Offending and Care leavers teams. The event is in partnership with Elevate Slough, Elevate RBWM, Ways into Work and Wilson and Scott. The line painting industry is growing and there is a need for increased numbers of young people into work.
- **RBWM-** has launched a new round of Work Experience Opportunities aimed at the most disadvantaged young people accessing good quality experience. Three placements have been supported since September and further placements will be identified in 2016.

- **Job Club-** Grow our Own started a new job club aimed at young people aged 16-24 in September which is based at the Hub. This enabled the staff team to focus on the needs of this cohort in the co-located environment so a more holistic approach can be taken.
- **Schools-** Elevate RBWM has continued to build positive relationships within Schools with a further workshop being run at Cox Green in November. There are discussions with another two schools for the Elevate Me workshops and Lesson plans being introduced; this area of work is growing.

4.6 Wokingham – Progress Update

- **Create and Elevate Art Commission-** This is encouraging young people from Wokingham Borough to create artwork to chance in the Elevate gallery at the Wokingham hub. The commission will be announced in January.
- **Work Experience-** Elevate Wokingham is working with a local business 'Code Boutique' to support work experience and skills development opportunities. Elevate are continuing to support young people with work experience opportunities within the Council and at Elevate.
- **Employability Course-** Two employability courses have been successful run by Elevate Wokingham on the topic of CV writing skills and Interview Skills.

5.0 Hub Projects Update - Pan Berkshire

5.1 Elevate Me

Local spokes are responsible for monitoring and maintenance of local sites, as a result there have been some additions made locally to Elevate Me sites to ensure they are meeting local needs.

Local changes to Elevate Me:

- **Opportunity Search-** the Children and Young people department of Bracknell Forest Council in collaboration with Elevate Bracknell Forest has commissioned Waters Creative to include an opportunity search function on Elevate Me. The new feature allows website visitors to search for local entry level opportunities, volunteering opportunities and apprenticeships in Bracknell Forest Council and the surround areas.
- **Vacancy Search-** Elevate runs a fortnightly vacancy service, identifying local vacancies for users, this is updated regularly on the Elevate Wokingham website
- **LMI Pages-** A new LMI page has been added to the Elevate Slough website; the page includes 10 local sector profiles for Slough as part of an LMI project with the LEP's Economic Research Analyst.

Analytics

All local projects have access to the analytics for their website which are monitored locally. Website analytics have shown that visits to the websites have increased or remained consistent in Reading, Bracknell and Wokingham. There will be a review of the Elevate Me website in March.

During January project officers from Elevate Reading and Elevate Wokingham were invited to BBC Radio Berkshire to discuss the Elevate Me Website and promote the service.

Elevate Business

The employer facing website for Elevate is nearing completion and expected to launch in early 2016 across Berkshire, the site includes links to the Business Growth Hub, as well as content on the benefits of employing a young person as an apprentice or employee, case studies and other business support information.

5.2 Pilot project for 'hard- to- reach' Groups

In anticipation of a decision around EU funding we are scoping out a number of creative projects with 'hard-to-reach' groups; focusing on lone parents, SEN young people, and looked after children or care leavers. The EU Structural and Investment Fund (EU SIF) project and outcomes aligns with the current Elevate outputs and seeks to work more specifically with particular cohorts of young people. EU funding will fund these creative employment programmes with these cohorts of young people.

Please see European Structural Investment Fund (EU SIF) report for an update.

5.3 Thames Valley Berkshire Business Growth Hub

Background

Thames Valley Growth Hub's Main Activities

- A web portal for Thames Valley Berkshire's Business (www.berkshirebusinesshub.co.uk)
- A business network to bring together Thames Valley Berkshires businesses to benefit from events, short training workshops, topical activities across the year to provide knowledge and information for growth businesses.
- Network activity is delivered in partnership with local touch points such as Slough Aspire Centre, Henley Centre for Entrepreneurship at the University of Reading and Buzz network in West Berkshire to ensure the Growth Hub can be accessed easily through local points of contact.
- A programme of business clinics, advice and coaching and support from an experienced team of business people to develop business strategies and plans for growth. The growth hub delivers support directly to eligible high growth business and partners with national programmes (UKTI, Innovate UK), and with the LEP's funding escalator.
- Business leadership training is delivered through the Berkshire Business Accelerator at Henley Business School.

Phase one (April 2014 to June 2015) funded by the Regional Growth Fund, concluded in June 2015 with all funding fully defrayed. All key milestones and targets were met.

Phase two (from July 2015), primarily funded by the Local Growth Deal, continues to deliver the core services outline above.

All KPIS and project targets are on track as at end of November 2015.

Please see Appendix ii Business Growth Hub Update.

5.4 Labour Market and Business Intelligence Update

- The LEP's Economic Research Analyst (ERA) support Elevate by providing regular LMI and Business Intelligence reports to inform the work of Elevate and ensure that it addresses the need in Thames Valley Berkshire. The latest reports are available to download from the LEP's website- <http://thamesvalleyberkshire.co.uk/Data-Research>
- In November 2015 the LEP produced a Skills Priority Statement for Berkshire that provides more granular information on the nature of Berkshire's skills gaps this will be used to further refine the offer.
- Elevate Slough and the Economic Research Analyst at the LEP have created a number of key sector profiles based on the Slough economy these sectors include ICT, logistics, retail manufacturing. These pages bring together information from a number of different sources and will be reviewed on a six monthly basis. These profiles are available via a LMI page which has been launched on the Slough Elevate Me website, here: <http://slough.elevateme.org.uk/labour-market-intelligence.htm>. If the LMI pages have a positive impact similar pages may be rolled out on other Elevate Me web pages.

Please see Appendix iii Labour Market and Business Intelligence Update