

Economic and Skills Development Partnership
Tuesday, 21 January 2020
9.00 - 11.00 am
Easthampstead Works, Town Square, Bracknell,
RG12 1BH



Present: Bob Collis, Chair of the ESDP
 Councillor Bob Wade, Small Business Champion
 Simon Fryer, Fryer Commercial
 Chris Mansfield, Bracknell Forest Council
 Stuart Matthews, Academy Representative
 Peter Reynolds, Activate Learning
 Nick Thring, Duncan Yeardley

In attendance: Anneken Priesack, Bracknell Forest Council

Apologies: Simon Cridland
 Andrew Hunter
 Julie Rees, Wellington College
 Pam Sharman, Regus

Action Points

Minute	Item
16	<p>Activate Learning presentation</p> <p>Pete Reynolds from Activate Learning reported on the plans for T-Levels.</p> <p>Currently, pupils wanting to pursue careers such as nursing needed to stay in school to get A-Levels or a BTEC. Pete commented that there was an understanding amongst parents that A Levels were academically superior, but the BTEC study choice suited some pupils better.</p> <p>To introduce the T-Level, 15 occupational maps had been designed by businesses in the sector. This had led to some occupational maps being skewed by those businesses represented in its design, for example the Health and Social Care T-Level was hospital focussed rather than social care focussed. A pilot for the Health and Social Care T-Level was running from Bracknell and Wokingham College alongside Royal Berkshire Hospital, Frimley Healthcare Foundation Trust, Royal Surrey Hospital and Oxford Health Trust.</p> <p>A T-Level differed from an apprenticeship in that T-Levels consisted of 20% work and 80% training, and an apprenticeship was the opposite. T-Levels included teaching at Colleges in Maths and English, alongside both Core and Specialisms in their subject. Students had to undertake 45 days of work to complete a T-Level, compared to a BTEC which did not require any days of work or experience for students to complete.</p> <p>For Health T-Level students in Berkshire, the LEP had match-funded a care suite at Reading College which was made up like a hospital ward for students to practice in. Peter recognised that students who had been able to use the care suite had performed better in their hospital placements.</p>

	<p>From September 2020, the College was running a T-Level transition programme to ensure students met the entry criteria (Grade C in Maths, English and Science).</p> <p>It was hoped that the introduction of T-Levels would go some way to qualifying local people for local jobs, particularly in the Health sector.</p> <p>Arising from questions, the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colleges found and provided placements for their students and Activate Learning had found placements for 120 students across 11 hospitals. • The costs to the hospitals was noted, as they were required to provide HR support to the induction of new students, along with other costs such as relevant vaccinations and lanyards. • Some students found the balance of college work and placements too overwhelming, but for those who continued their study, some NHS trusts were offering guaranteed interviews to those students who complete the course and placement. • It was noted that different colleges would be specialising in different sectors of T-Level, and the sectors were being released slowly over a number of years. • While BTECs were due to continue, Pete commented that it was not clear how long BTECs would continue to be funded for. • Depending on the sector and the availability of apprenticeship places, it was possible that the introduction of T Levels could push students towards apprenticeships which paid a wage. • Students had to attend a month of college training prior to starting their placements in mid-October.
17	<p>The Smart City Cluster</p> <p>Chris Mansfield reported on the Smart City CluChris Mansfield reported on the Smart City Cluster project.</p> <p>The Thames Valley Berkshire LEP had secured funding for pilot initiatives on the Internet of Things for business communities and Local Authorities. The funding for Local Authority projects had been divided between Bracknell Forest, West Berkshire, Reading and Wokingham to establish two projects per Local Authority.</p> <p>In Bracknell Forest, the two projects were tackling climate change, and tackling isolation through improved accessibility.</p> <p>For improved accessibility, the project aimed to improve the accessibility and information regarding bus services in the borough. Using a sensor placed in disabled spaces on buses, users with access requirements could access information about whether the disabled space was occupied before catching the bus. The project would be rolled out on primary routes in the borough in a pilot project, and live data would be provided to service users in their homes.</p> <p>For addressing climate change, the project had introduced a tap sensor device which would be placed in streets surrounding secondary schools for pupils to 'tap in' each time they walked to school, in return for discounts and offers with retailers. This concept could be extended to employers in the future.</p>

	<p>In response to questions, the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The data collected by both projects would be anonymous and would sit under Bracknell Forest Council. • The 'tap in' function would only be recognised once per morning and afternoon. <p>The 'tap in' project had been trialled in other Local Authorities across the country already, and followed a similar scheme called Beat the Streets which did not offer incentives to individualsster project.</p> <p>The Thames Valley Berkshire LEP had secured funding for pilot initiatives on the Internet of Things for business communities and Local Authorities. The funding for Local Authority projects had been divided between Bracknell Forest, West Berkshire, Reading and Wokingham to establish two projects per Local Authority.</p> <p>In Bracknell Forest, the two projects were tackling climate change, and tackling isolation through improved accessibility.</p> <p>For improved accessibility, the project aimed to improve the accessibility and information regarding bus services in the borough. Using a sensor placed in disabled spaces on buses, users with access requirements could access information about whether the disabled space was occupied before catching the bus. The project would be rolled out on primary routes in the borough in a pilot project, and live data would be provided to service users in their homes.</p> <p>For addressing climate change, the project had introduced a tap sensor device which would be placed in streets surrounding secondary schools for pupils to 'tap in' each time they walked to school, in return for discounts and offers with retailers. This concept could be extended to employers in the future.</p> <p>In response to questions, the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The data collected by both projects would be anonymous and would sit under Bracknell Forest Council. • The 'tap in' function would only be recognised once per morning and afternoon. • The 'tap in' project had been trialled in other Local Authorities across the country already, and followed a similar scheme called Beat the Streets which did not offer incentives to individuals.
18	<p>Action Points from Last Meeting</p> <p>The minutes of the previous meeting held on 22 October 2019 were approved as a correct record.</p>
19	<p>Sub-group updates</p> <p>Bob Collis reported that the Infrastructure subgroup had submitted a response to the South East England Transport strategy consultation. It was noted that the draft strategy had included reference to a bypass for Bracknell town centre, and the subgroup had sought further detail on this. Bob welcomed the improvements to the</p>

	<p>Reading to Waterloo line, and commented that there was a lack of clarity around the Southern and Western orbital routes to Heathrow. The consultation had been a good opportunity to make the views of Bracknell businesses clear, and the subgroup awaited the final version of the report.</p> <p>Arising from questions, the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was not clear what exactly would be improved about the Reading to Waterloo line, although the draft strategy had said accessibility would be improved. • Studies for sub-regional strategies were planned to support the overall strategy for the South East. • The photographic competition for 2019 was now closed, and had resulted in a number of good images. Partners queried whether the photos were available online and Bob agreed to check this. (Action: Bob Collis) <p>Nancy Lalor reported on the Employment and Skills subgroup. The subgroup had discussed unemployment figures, and the need to track young people to find out whether they go where they say they will go after leaving school. The subgroup had discussed the need for more support rather than signposting.</p> <p>The subgroup had raised the lack of job promotion on the Lexicon website, and Sue Boor had encouraged retailers to put their vacancies on the main Lexicon website.</p> <p>Learning to work were holding an event for parents to promote local opportunities and qualifications.</p> <p>Peter Smith had stepped down as Chair of the Chamber of Commerce, but the subgroup was pleased that Peter had agreed to stay as a member and would also continue to represent the Chamber on the Partnership Board. The new Chamber president is Tony Bellis from 3M who has been a supporter of the ESDP for many years.</p>
20	<p>BID Update</p> <p>The BID ballot had been successful in October 2019 with the majority of both the number and rateable value of businesses in the Southern and Western Industrial estates voting in favour of the BID. The BID would go live on 1 April 2020, becoming a limited company.</p> <p>All businesses in the Southern and Western Industrial estates were encouraged to join the BID company or become supporting businesses. All business rates payers with a rateable value over £12,000 would pay 1.5% of their rateable value as a levy to the BID to fund projects for the enhancement of the BID area, which in total would fund £3m over 5 years.</p> <p>The next steps were to recruit a BID manager as a paid role.</p> <p>The ESDP would be a guest organisation of the BID as a body with influence and interest in the area, and all were invited to the BID launch on 24 March 2020.</p>

21	<p>ESDP Spring/Summer event</p> <p>The next ESDP event was planned for May 2020, and it was hoped that this would be held at Wellington College. The event would likely consider the results of the Bracknell Forest Business Survey planned for the Spring (see below) and the implications for Bracknell's business community.</p>
22	<p>Bracknell Forest Business Survey</p> <p>Anneken advised that the Local Authority was running a repeat of its Business Survey, to go out in the next few months.</p> <p>A new consultancy had been appointed to deliver the survey, but the telephone interview questions had been designed to replicate previous Business Survey for comparison purposes.</p>
23	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Peter Smith advised that he had handed over Chairmanship of the Bracknell Chamber of Commerce to Tony Bellis.</p> <p>Bob Wade advised of concerns around Crowthorne High Street, including independent businesses planning to close and concerns around increasing business rates.</p> <p>Nick Thring reported that Bracknell had placed 37th in the GlobalData Top 50 UK Shopping Centres.</p>
24	<p>Dates of Future Meetings</p> <p>Rescheduled from 21 April 2020 to 29 April 2020</p>