



**THAMES VALLEY BERKSHIRE CITY
DEAL (ELEVATE BERKSHIRE) JOINT
COMMITTEE
25 SEPTEMBER 2018
10.25 - 10.50 AM**

Present:

Councillor Phillip Bicknell, Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead
Councillor Tony Page, Reading Borough Council
Councillor Wayne Smith, Wokingham Borough Council

Co-opted Members:

Tim Smith, Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership

Also Present:

David Bolam, Elevate Central Team
Mark Browne, West Berkshire Council
Joanna Flaxman, Elevate Central Team
Hilary Hall, Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead
Rhian Hayes, Wokingham Borough Council
Rebekah Malcolm, Elevate Central Team
Kashif Nawaz, Bracknell Forest Council

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillor Marc Brunel-Walker, Bracknell Forest Council
Councillor Stuart Munro, Wokingham Borough Council
Councillor James Swindlehurst, Slough Borough Council
Katharine Horler, Thames Valley Berkshire LEP

12. Apologies for Absence and Substitute Members

The Joint Committee noted that apologies had been received from Councillor Munro, for whom Councillor Smith was substituting. In addition, it was advised that Councillor Rankin would no longer be representing the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead. Councillor Bicknell would be taking on the role he had previously held on the Joint Committee.

13. Appointment of Vice-Chairman

RESOLVED that Councillor Page be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Joint Committee.

Councillor Page in the Chair

14. **Election of Chairman**

RESOLVED that Councillor Munro be elected Chairman of the Joint Committee.

15. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

16. **Urgent Items of Business**

There were no urgent items of business.

17. **Minutes and Matters Arising from the Last Meeting**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 22 May 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

18. **Elevate Berkshire ESF Project Update**

The Joint Committee considered a report providing an update on the Thames Valley Berkshire Elevate programme since its last meeting.

The report included:

- An update from the Central Team on Key Projects
- Partner Updates
- An update on Performance and Funding
- Future Plans

The topics covered included

- Slough Project 1- A contract for £170,000 to engage and support 390 eligible young people into employment, education or training or to gain basic skills. With a particular focus of supporting those from an ethnic minority (B&ME) background.
- Slough Project 2- A contract for £40,000 to engage and support 40 lone parents into education, employment or training.
- Digital Marketing – Recruitment of a Digital Marketing Assistant, who, once in post, would provide some digital marketing training for Elevate staff so all partners could become more proactive in this area. Although only a temporary post, 40 applications had been received.
- Employment is Everyone's Business Project
- Dynamic Purchasing System

Partner updates were included in the report from:

- Bracknell Forest
- The Prince's Trust
- Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead
- Adviza - Reading

- Ways Into Work
- West Berkshire Council
- Wokingham Borough Council
- Slough Borough Council

The reports were supported by some case studies. Other points made during the discussion were that:

- The Office of National Statistics' records showed that, in Bracknell Forest, 85 young people had signed up for job seekers allowance in the 18-24 age range.
- There were 25 NEETs in Bracknell Forest.
- Capacity was an issue so Bracknell Forest was engaging virtually with its partners, but the arrangement was remaining strong.
- West Berkshire was aiming to identify those who had not gone on to college or work.
- Wokingham was close to achieving its target and was working out how to take the work forward.
- 1% were unknown in Slough.
- There were 40 plus NEETs in the looked-after cohort in Slough.

With regard to performance, the Joint Committee was advised that:

- The partnership had engaged 1624 young people since November 2015, of these 358 had been supported into employment education or training.
- The partnership had already delivered against the disability target for the programme, supporting 488 participants who had declared a disability against a target of 280.
- The partnership had supported 31 young people to gain basics skills; this was against a 3 year target of 24.
- Good progress was being made against the ethnic minority target, as delivery of Slough Project 1 had made a positive start this would make a considerable contribution to this target being met.

The Joint Committee was advised that the current priorities were:

- Ongoing work to ensure that evidence was collected for results where they had been achieved.
- Work by all partners to ensure that the lone parents target was met, although the delivery which had begun in Slough by Kennedy Scott would make a considerable contribution to this target.

- Continued effort to engage with eligible young people, particularly via outreach.

The DWP had paid seven claims covering the period from November 15 to September 17, the last since the agenda had been published, but the programme was awaiting payment of claim 8 (£296,111.27), claim 9 (£232,265.28) and claim 10 (£261,476.04).

The Joint Committee was concerned to learn that DWP payments were a year in arrears as this made managing the project harder. It was noted that there was to be a consultation regarding the UK Shared Prosperity Fund which was intended to replace EUSIF funding. This would provide an opportunity to highlight the challenges posed by the detail currently required to substantiate claims, the time lag between expenditure and payment of claims, and the implications for the project's cash flow. It was hoped the new fund would be more user friendly.

In response to a question, the Joint Committee was advised that the funds withheld by the Central Team due to under-performance by some partners, would be released in June 2019.

The Joint Committee was advised that the central team was looking for opportunities for funding that would bring longevity to the Elevate Berkshire 16 to 24 project, to continue the system change and support new models and ways of working it had introduced. The DWP was keen for 'Berkshire' to continue the project beyond June 2019 and had spoken positively of the way in which Elevate Berkshire had striven to knit the skills and employment system together across Berkshire. It was noted, however, that the partners were still finalising how the work initiated as part of the project would be taken forward beyond June 2019. In Bracknell Forest, efforts had been made to embed Elevate in its services, working with partners, to ensure its sustainability.. It was becoming more self reliant and the increased digital marketing and brand awareness should aid this process. The Joint Committee was reminded that the authorities would continue to have a duty to support the 16-18 year-olds. There was, however, more uncertainty over the capacity to continue the work with 18-24 year-olds.

The Joint Committee noted the success of the collective Elevate Berkshire programme and endorsed the actions, proposals and agreements within the briefing paper; to ensure the programme continued to be delivered in-line with ESF processes.

It also noted that although the project would conclude in June 2019, the Central team would remain in place until October 2019, to wrap up all outstanding matters. At this stage, it was not clear whether a further meeting to deal with any matters would be needed beyond June 2019. A decision on this would be taken at the next meeting in May 2019.

On behalf of the Joint Committee, the Chairman thanked the officers for the very good work that had and was being done across the County.

19. **Date of Next Meeting**

The Joint Committee was advised that its next meeting would be held at 10.30am on Tuesday 21 May 2019, following the meeting of the Thames Valley Berkshire LEP Forum that morning..

With the project due to end of 30 June 2019, this should also be the last meeting of the Joint Committee. However, if any issues arose between this meeting and 21 May which required formal input from members, an additional meeting would be arranged. In addition, the meeting on 21 May 2019 would determine whether there was a need for a further meeting.

CHAIRMAN