

Action Plan Theme 1: Economic Performance				
Indicators: E.P.: Competitiveness; E.P.2: Productivity; E.P.3: Knowledge economy and specialisation; E.P.4: Internationalisation				
Indicator	Current state	Target State	Metric	Resource/Cost
E.P.1. Competitiveness	Bracknell Forest benefits from its strategic location in the prosperous South East and is a popular business location, at the heart of two important growth corridors, with good international connectivity. However, according to both the UK Competitiveness Index and the Legatum Institute's Prosperity Index 2023, Bracknell Forest does not perform as well on overall competitiveness as the other Local Authority Areas (LAAs) in the Bracknell Forest Functional Economic Area (FEA). In particular, it rates less well on investment conditions and negatively on enterprise environment.	Bracknell Forest scores as well on the UKCI as the best performing Local Authority Areas in the Functional Economic Area	Improved position in the UK Competitiveness Index 2030 Legatum Institute Prosperity Index 2030	
Timescale	Priority action	Lead officer / partners	Notes	
Ongoing	E.P.1.3 Work with partners and Central Government to identify funding opportunities to support business to meet needs. Actively monitor .gov.uk releases, register with appropriate departments such as Innovate UK. (See also B.C.1.1. & B.C.2.2.)	Head of Economic Development and Regeneration (HEDR) Berkshire Growth Hub, Banks, Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce/ Federation of Small Business, and other business representative organisations	Sign up to press releases and newsletters Innovate UK More Structured approach, more regular - more out there to make connections with.	Economic Development team
Indicator	Current state	Target State	Metric	Resource/Cost
E.P.2. Productivity	Bracknell Forest's productivity performance is a cause for concern. The analysis indicates that there is a lack of resilience to economic shocks such as the Covid-19 pandemic and the economy is not recovering as rapidly as those of neighbouring areas. This is in spite of the presence of large companies and high levels of internationalisation which would normally result in higher productivity. The causes are likely to include an over representation of less productive sectors e.g. Warehousing, as well as management and skills issues.	Bracknell Forest's productivity is growing on an annual basis	GVA per job matches that of the best Local Authority areas in the FEA 2034	
Timescale	Priority action	Lead officer / partners	Notes	
Begin April 2024	E.P.2.2. Work with partners to encourage investment in management and leadership skills in SMEs to drive up productivity. (See also P.W.W.2.2.)		Bracknell Forest Skills and Training Hub	UKSPF / ESDP / BFC Economic Development team
Ongoing	E.P.2.3. Using new planning policies and an effective business liaison programme provide the right conditions to encourage more productive, knowledge economy/ high productivity businesses to locate in Bracknell Forest. (See also P.CC.I.C.1.3.)	Head of Economic Development and Regeneration Berkshire Growth Hub/ Henley Business School/RHUL/ESDP/ Activate Learning Thames Valley Chamber, FSB Central Govt, others	Business liaison programme. A regular date each month with Cllr Paul Bidwell and Sue Halliwell / Andrew Hunter. The aim is to see 12 – 20 businesses per annum. 1 Hour meetings at business location if time allows, alternatively via Microsoft Teams	Head of Economic Development and Regeneration & Economic Development Officer. Lead member and corporate management representative
Indicator	Current state	Target State	Metric	Resource/Cost
E.P.3. Knowledge economy and specialisation	Bracknell Forest's knowledge economy is smaller than that of the comparator areas and neighbouring local authorities and appears to be declining. There is some degree of specialisation which could indicate the presence of nascent clusters, e.g. Film & TV, Scientific R&D. These are not confined to Bracknell Forest but extend across neighbouring LAAs. Potential to host the supply chain rather than actual studios.	Knowledge economy matches the best LAA in the FEA	Percentage of Knowledge Economy businesses matches best in FEA by 2030	
Timescale	Priority action	Lead officer / partners	Notes	
April 2024 to March 2025	E.P.3.1. Monitor knowledge economy to ascertain whether recent losses are temporary or ongoing and, in particular, recent losses of large knowledge economy companies e.g. ICT. Tracked through local business intelligence, Department for Business and Trade, Non-Domestic Business rating records.	Head Of Economic Development and Regeneration Berkshire Growth Hub/ LAAs in the FEA/Henley Business School/ESDP/ others	Data sources: LEP/DWP/ Fedap/ Berkshire Observatory/Higher Education research	Head of Economic Development and Regeneration & Economic Development Officer
Indicator	Current state	Target State	Metric	Resource/Cost
E.P.4. Internationalisation	Bracknell Forest's levels of internationalisation are high; it has the second highest level of companies in foreign ownership and the highest percentage of employment in foreign-owned companies among the Berkshire LAAs. This puts Bracknell Forest at risk of outward migration of companies and jobs, should the benefits of staying in the South East or the UK seem insufficiently attractive in future. Furthermore, although foreign-owned companies are more likely to trade and, hence, be more productive, the benefits do not appear to be feeding through to the local economy. Recently, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) activity in Bracknell Forest has been low.	Bracknell Forest retains all current internationally owned companies and increases FDI rates.	No. of foreign owned 250+ companies, steady state until 2028. Increased by 10 by 2034. Five year FDI rates doubled.	
Timescale	Priority action	Lead officer/ partners	Notes	
Begin April 2024	E.P.4.1. Track levels of foreign ownership and FDI. Focus on retention of large, foreign-owned businesses and ensure that they have the right conditions to remain in Bracknell Forest.		Tracking available data sources - HM Government and LEP sources.	Economic Development Officer
Commence Jan 2024	E.P.4.2. Promote the benefits of locating in Bracknell Forest and work with Department for Business and Trade (DBT) to land more FDI projects. Creating up to date promotional material that can be supplied to Businesses and Government agencies	Head of Economic Development and Regeneration/ Comms/ DBT / Berkshire Prosperity Board /ESDP	Promotional material for Bracknell Forests local economy. Highlight existing businesses with case studies on the benefits of locating in Bracknell.	BFC Communications and Marketing. Potential production costs up to £3,000

£3,000

Action Plan Theme 2: Business Competitiveness					
B.C.1: Business growth; B.C.2: Business creation and survival; B.C.3: Business size structure; B.C.4: Key industries and sectoral shift; B.C.5: Information and Communications; B.C.6: The visitor economy					
Indicator	Current state	Target State	Metric	Resource/Cost	
B.C.1. Business growth	A growing business population is an indicator of an area's attractiveness as a business location as well as the entrepreneurialism of its people and the resilience of its businesses. The business population in Bracknell Forest has declined by 1.92% between 2018 and 2022. Slow growth before the pandemic was followed by losses during and since, indicating a potential lack of resilience.	A growing and resilient business base	Business growth rate to match the best of the Local Authority Areas in the Functional Economic Area by 2028		
Timescale	Priority action	Lead officer / partners	Notes		
From April 2024	B.C.1.1. Work with partners such as the Growth Hub to target business support in those sectors that are most important to retain and grow in Bracknell Forest e.g. <i>ICT, Professional, Scientific &amp; Technical, Arts Entertainment &amp; Recreation</i> . Organise sector specific events with targeted support. (See also: E.P.1.3 & E.P.2.1)	Head of Economic Development and Regeneration/ Berkshire Growth Hub	Focussed support by way of tailored workshops. Networking events for particular sectors.	Berkshire Growth Hub. Head of Economic Development and Regeneration and Economic Development Officer. Event/venue costs and promotion etc. Up to £5,000	
From Jan 2024	B.C.1.2. Monitor business growth/decline and analyse causes e.g. economic shocks, birth/death/ churn rates, out migration, low start-up rates, barriers e.g. premises, skills in Bracknell Forest and the FEA. Utilise a combination of official statistics (ONS) supplemented by any specific local data to create a benchmark to monitor against, ideally annually but in-line with ONS release schedule.		Regular monitoring of ONS data, Berkshire Observatory. Data sources to be confirmed, potentially LEP and HM Government.	dedicated data source cost up to £3,000	
Indicator	Current state	Target State	Metric	Resource/Cost	
B.C.2. Business creation and survival	Bracknell Forest's rate of business creation per 10,000 WAP has been significantly lower than the comparator areas over time and has declined markedly since 2017. Both 4- and 5-year survival rates are lower than in the comparator areas.	Entrepreneurial and dynamic local economy	Business births per 10,000 WAP to match the best in the Functional Economic Area		
Timescale	Priority action	Lead officer / partners	Notes		
April to October 2024	B.C.2.1. Engage with large companies and those in the BID area to map local supply chains and identify gaps which local companies might fill. (See also: B.C.3.2.)	Head of Economic Development and Regeneration /Comms Growth Hub/ BID/ESDP others	Work with Bracknell Forest businesses on supply chains. Compile database of businesses in the borough.	BFC Economic Development Team	
Indicator	Current state	Target State	Metric	Resource/Cost	
B.C.3. Business size structure	Bracknell Forest benefits from having higher percentages of medium and large companies who are major sources of local employment. However, this leaves Bracknell Forest open to potentially heavy losses of local jobs, if big companies were to downsize or relocate. Companies in the £1-5m turnover brackets have been shown to be where fast growth companies can be found but percentages in this turnover bracket are lower in Bracknell Forest than in the other LAAs in the FEA.	Medium and large companies are embedded in BF & fast growth companies are increasing	No. and %ages of companies 250+ / 50-249 employees & £1m-£5m turnover are steady/ growing.		
Timescale	Priority action	Lead officer / partners	Notes		
From April 2024	B.C.3.1. Produce annual risk assessment for large companies and identify any at risk of relocation/downsizing. (See also: P.W.W.3.1. & P.W.W.3.2.)	Head of Economic Development and Regeneration /Comms/BID Some outsourcing maybe required.	Produce a register of businesses outlining likely risks or changing circumstances		
From April 2024	B.C.3.2. Through the business liaison programme of active engagement continue to build relationships with large companies to understand any issues e.g. recruitment, planning, try to address any concerns and make sure they are positive about Bracknell Forest. (See also: B.C.2.1. & B.C.3.2.)	Head of Economic Development and Regeneration /Comms/BID Some outsourcing maybe required.	Active business liaison programme	Head of Economic Development and Regeneration & Economic Development Officer.	
Indicator	Current state	Target State	Metric	Resource/Cost	
B.C.4. Key industries and sectoral shift	<i>Information &amp; Communications, Professional Scientific &amp; Technical, and Arts Entertainment &amp; Recreation</i> have all lost share in Bracknell Forest in the last five years, while <i>Construction, Transport and Motor Trades</i> have all increased making the business structure less knowledge-intensive, less productive and less environmentally sustainable.	A sustainable and productive knowledge intensive economy	Percentage of businesses in key sectors matches Functional Economic Area best by 2034		
Timescale	Priority action	Lead officer / partners	Notes		
Begin Industrial Strategy April 2024.	B.C.4.1. Work with Partners to develop a <b>local industrial strategy and action plan</b> for Bracknell Forest to ensure it retains its position as a location for knowledge-based businesses. This could include building on nascent clusters e.g. <i>Scientific R&amp;D and Film &amp; T.V. and Medical Devices</i> as well	BFC Economic Development and BFC Comms and potential outsourcing		BFC Economic Development Team £5,000	
Indicator	Current state	Target State	Metric	Resource/Cost	
B.C.5. Information & Communications	B.C.5.1. Bracknell Forest, known for being a location for ICT businesses, seems to be losing share of these industries while other LAAs nearby are doing much better, e.g. Wokingham. Bracknell Forest could exploit niches in the creative digital IT subsectors where it seems to have a strength, e.g. <i>Publishing, Broadcasting</i> and nearby <i>Film &amp; TV</i> sectors	Bracknell Forest is the leading location for ICT businesses	Percentage of ICT businesses, digital creative matches FEA best 2030	BFC Economic Development and BFC Communications Team and external sources	
Timescale	Priority action	Lead officer / partners	Notes		
Indicator	Current state	Target State	Metric	Resource/Cost	
B.C.6. The Visitor Economy	Bracknell Forest has mainly day visitor tourism. The relatively small percentage of overnights stays tend to be business-related and is predominantly the meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions (MICE) sector. This may be at adversely affected if key companies downsize or relocate.	Bracknell Forest has a thriving day trip visitor economy and is a popular MICE location for business	No. of day visits and overnight business visits increased by 15% by 2028 (VE data)		
Timescale	Priority action	Lead officer/key partners	Notes		

£5,000

£3,000

£5,000

Action Plan Theme 3: People, work and wellbeing				
P.W.W.1: Population change; P.W.W.2: Qualifications and skills; P.W.W.3: Employment & employment specialisms; P.W.W.4: Occupational structure; P.W.W.5: Earnings; P.W.W.6: Wealth, health and wellbeing.				
Indicator	Current state	Target State	Metric	Resource/Cost
P.W.W.1: Population change	Although Bracknell Forest currently has a slightly younger age profile than the comparator areas, this is forecast to change over the lifetime of the Economic Strategy and there may be a shortage of workers.	A local workforce is readily available and sufficiently skilled.	No. & %age in 25-49 age group (ONS 'prime age' within workforce)	
<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Priority action</b>	<b>Lead officer/key partners</b>	<b>Notes</b>	
Indicator	Current state	Target State	Metric	Resource/Cost
P.W.W.2: Qualifications and skills	The skills of the working age population (WAP) are of particular concern in Bracknell Forest. Not only are they significantly lower at NVQL4+ and NVQL3+ than in the comparator areas, but they seem to be declining further. Businesses find it hard to secure higher skilled employees locally. Bracknell Forest could become a low skill, low value economy if this is not addressed urgently.	Higher level skills and qualifications meeting the needs of the knowledge economy	NVQ4+ and NVQ3+ match the best in the FEA by 2030	
<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Priority action</b>	<b>Lead officer/key partners</b>	<b>Notes</b>	
Ongoing	P.W.W.2.1. Through proactive engagement work with employers, particularly large employers, the ESDP and education providers, to upgrade skills through relevant apprenticeships, tailored traineeships and other business partnering schemes. Maintain engagement with LSIP and other skills providers.	Bracknell Forest Skills lead/ ESDP/ Henley business school/ colleges/training providers / Activate Learning	ESDP - Employment & Skills sub group. LSIP/LSIF Bracknell Skills and Training	
				BFC Economic Development Team and UKSPF
Indicator	Current state	Target State	Metric	Resource/Cost
P.W.W.3: employment & employment specialisms	Bracknell Forest has seen a larger loss of jobs than the comparator areas over the recent period and is showing less labour market resilience. In relation to knowledge economy jobs, Bracknell Forest is losing out to fast growth places such as Reading and Wokingham. ICT job losses are of particular concern. There are encouraging signs of employment specialisms e.g. <i>Film &amp; TV, Medical Devices, Scientific R&amp;D</i> but they are not just in Bracknell Forest but also the wider area.	No. of jobs is increasing. Jobs in knowledge economy and specialisms are a growing percentage of jobs.	No. of jobs in Bracknell Forest increased by 5% by 2030	
<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Priority action</b>	<b>Lead officer/key partners</b>	<b>Notes</b>	
Ongoing	P.W.W.3.1. Monitor employment statistics, maintain good local engagement, working with large employers to minimise job losses should they look likely, through local reemployment/redeployment (See also: B.C.3.1. & B.C.3.2.)	Bracknell Forest skills lead/ESDP/Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce (LSIP)	Local and regional data sources	
				BFC Economic Development Team
Ongoing	P.W.W.3.2. Monitor employment in knowledge economy and knowledge economy sub sectors, actively work with large employers and SMEs to understand skills need and provide more support to prevent further losses and embed nascent clusters.(See also B.C.4.1.)	Bracknell Forest skills lead/ESDP/training providers	Bracknell Skills and Training Hub, LSIP, Apprenticeship promotion. ESDP E&S sub group	
				BFC Economic Development Team
Indicator	Current state	Target State	Metric	Resource/Cost
P.W.W.4: Occupational structure	18% of Bracknell Forest residents work in the lowest occupational groups and are more likely to be in low paid and insecure employment. This is likely to be linked to low educational attainment and low skills.	Residents are able to obtain good, secure, well paid employment	Percentage of those in lowest 3 occupational groups is halved by 2034	
<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Priority action</b>	<b>Lead officer/key partners</b>	<b>Notes</b>	
Ongoing	P.W.W.4.1. Work with local employers to employ more local people and provide work-based training and development through apprenticeships, traineeships and HE access courses. Engage with further education and skills providers, utilise their employer networks. Support any local programmes.	BF skills lead/ESDP/training providers/ DWP	Work experience, connections in with schools. Use business liaison to connect into local schools. Careers leads in schools - UKSPF	
				BFC Economic Development Team and lead member and senior BFC management representatives.
Indicator	Current state	Target State	Metric	Resource/Cost
P.W.W.5: Earnings	Despite recent rapid growth, residents' earnings remain significantly below workplace wages, indicating that not all Bracknell Forest residents are able to access local well paid employment and that higher skilled workers are commuting in from elsewhere to better paid jobs.	Local well paid jobs are filled by local people with the right skills	Residents' wages match workplace based earnings by 2030	
<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Priority action</b>	<b>Lead officer/key partners</b>	<b>Notes</b>	
Ongoing	P.W.W.5.1. This is likely to be linked to educational attainment and skills. Encourage local employers to recruit locally and upskill through bespoke Bracknell Forest Programme. (See also: P.W.W.4.1)	BF skills lead/ESDP/training providers /Activate Learning	Links to P.W.W.4.1	
				BFC Economic Development Team and training/skills providers.
Indicator	Current state	Target State	Metric	Resource/Cost
P.W.W.6: Wealth, health, and wellbeing	Bracknell Forest residents are less wealthy than in the local comparators, so although housing is more affordable, they may not be better off as a result. Employment, historically high, has proved less resilient. Health is good but anxiety levels are higher than in other areas.	All are able to benefit from economic growth	GDHI in Bracknell Forest increases by more than inflation year-on-year	
<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Priority action</b>	<b>Lead officer/key partners</b>	<b>Notes</b>	

Action Plan Theme 4: Place, climate change, infrastructure and connectivity				
Indicators: P.CC.I.C.1: Employment space; P.CC.I.C.5: Climate change P.CC.I.C.3: Housing; P.CC.I.C.4: Working patterns; P.CC.I.C.5: ICT infrastructure.				
Indicator	Current state	Target State	Metric	Resource/Cost
P.CC.I.C.1: Employment space	Weaker demand for employment space seems likely to continue due to the adverse economic conditions and increase of home/hybrid working. Only category A space is easy to let, and landlords need to refurbish any that does not meet a high standard with "home from home" amenities. There may be unmet demand for light industrial units and small, flexible, "maker" spaces and workshops. high tech clusters would benefit from a technology park approach.	Outdated employment space stock is upgraded and supply matches demand	Average times to let match the best in the FEA by 2028	
Timescale	Priority action	Lead officer/key partners	Notes	
Ongoing	P.CC.I.C.1.1. Engage with commercial agents to monitor demand. Support/allow further PDR if necessary. Promote local agents forum to monitor the market demand, meet quarterly.	Head of Economic Development and Regeneration/Comms/Commercial property agents/landlords/ developers/ESDP/Bracknell BID	Engagement with landlords - gather information about Bracknell Forest businesses. Business liaison programme.	
	P.CC.I.C.1.2. Engage with landlords/Developers to encourage refurbishment to higher standards. Most likely via above agents forum but where possible direct engagement is preferable.	Head of Economic Development and Regeneration/Comms/Commercial property agents/landlords/ developers/ESDP/Bracknell BID	Local commercial agents. Build relationships with employers/landlords and landlord agents. BFC Property team	
	P.CC.I.C.1.3. Engage with developers to enable more provision of light industrial space and space suitable for high tech and creative digital businesses in the specialised sectors. Link to Local Plan requirements, take a proactive approach to attract developers to opportunity sites.	Head of Economic Development and Regeneration/Comms/Commercial property agents/landlords/ developers/ESDP/Bracknell BID	Head of Economic Development and Regeneration & Economic Development Officer time.	
	P.CC.I.C.1.4. Promote Bracknell Forest as a business location. Through websites, comms, and social media. Create a specific workstream with ESDP around destination promotion.	Head of Economic Development and Regeneration/Comms/Commercial property agents/landlords/ developers/ESDP/Bracknell BID	Promotional material for Bracknell Forest. BFC Communications and Marketing. Potential production costs.	
Indicator	Current state	Target State	Metric	Resource/Cost
P.CC.I.C.2: Climate Change	Bracknell Forest's emissions are low but any further decline of the knowledge economy may hinder future progress, if less environmentally friendly sectors take its place. Car dependency is high and public transport, cycling and walking rates are low.	Continued progress to net zero	Kt CO <sub>2</sub> e per km <sup>2</sup>	
Timescale	Priority action	Lead officer/key partners	Notes	
Ongoing	Support the knowledge economy (see Business Competitiveness) Encourage modal shift, working with employers on cycle to work schemes, EV charging points. Promote green technologies and sectors to support the drive towards net zero.	HEDR/Comms/Planning/transport providers	BFC Economic Development Team and BFC Climate Change Team	
Indicator	Current state	Target State	Metric	Resource/Cost
P.CC.I.C.3: Housing	Although housing in Bracknell Forest is relatively affordable, it is still out of the reach of many on lower income households. Increased supply of new homes will help to maintain and improve affordability. The green open spaces, good provision of leisure activities and the accessibility of the town should be further promoted. Attracting young people to town centres can also help to counteract population ageing and revitalise town centres.	Housing is affordable and young people are staying in Bracknell Forest and new residents are attracted by the quality of the living environment.	Affordability ratio of 7 times median salary: median house price	
Timescale	Priority action	Lead officer/key partners	Notes	
Commence April 2024	P.CC.I.C.3.1 Monitor the potential conversion of employment space to Permitted Development.	Head of Economic Development and Regeneration /Comms/Planning	Annual local plan monitoring	
	P.CC.I.C.3.2. Promote the benefits of Bracknell Forest as a place to live and work. Destination management prospectus produced.	Head of Economic Development and Regeneration /Comms/Planning	BFC Economic Development and Communications and Marketing Teams	
Indicator	Current state	Target State	Metric	Resource/Cost
P.CC.I.C.4: Working patterns	Bracknell Forest residents have lower rates of working at or near home and higher rates of travelling to work further away. Although this is typical of areas like Bracknell with concentrations of skilled trades and construction employment, it may be that lower skilled Bracknell Forest residents are filling elementary jobs, such as cleaning and care, in other areas with higher skills profiles.	Well paid local employment for all.	%age of residents working at or near home to match the FEA lead 2031	
Timescale	Priority action	Lead officer/key partners	Notes	
From April 2024	P.CC.I.C.4.1. Promote local working and local recruitment, working with large employers so more Bracknell residents can benefit from working locally. Encourage local promotion of vacancies.	HEDR/key employers. / Growth hub/ BID/Comms	Berkshire Opportunites - promote to local businesses	
From April 2024	P.CC.I.C.4.2. Understand the need for local support services e.g., networks, flexible, rentable by the hour, office space, for those working from home. Support these and the creation of new spaces.		Berkshire Innovation & Enterprise Hub, Easthampstead Works	
Indicator	Current state	Target State	Metric	Resource/Cost
P.CC.I.C.5: ICT infrastructure	Currently, Bracknell Forest's performance on broadband and mobile availability is among the best. Support Berkshire Digital Infrastructure Group	Leading position.	Full Fibre/5G availability.	

Timescale	Priority action	Lead officer/key partners	Notes	
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