

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION
27 MAY 2010

REVIEW OF THE ECONOMIC AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT THEME PARTNERSHIP
(Head of Overview and Scrutiny)

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 As part of the agreed approach to the Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) of the Bracknell Forest Partnership (BFP), the Chairman and Lead Officer of each of the BFP theme Partnerships has been invited to meet the O&S Commission or relevant O&S Panel to discuss the Partnership's governance, performance management, financial management, and related issues, with reference to a questionnaire completed in advance of the meeting. The BFP's Economic and Skills Development Theme Partnership is one of the BFP theme partnerships within the purview of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission.

2 SUGGESTED ACTION

- 2.1 **That the O&S Commission discusses with the Chairman and Lead Officer of the Economic and Skills Development Theme Partnership, Mr Timothy Wheadon and Mr Victor Nicholls respectively, its governance, performance management, financial management, and related issues, with reference to the completed questionnaire at Appendix 1.**

3 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The approach to O&S of the Bracknell Forest Partnership has been endorsed by the O&S Commission and Panels, also the BFP Board, and implementation has commenced. The agreed approach includes a structured programme of information gathering and initial analysis of the BFP's affairs. This work has been apportioned as follows:

O&S Commission – BFP's Board and the Town Centre Partnership, the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, and the Economic and Skills Development Partnership.

Environment, Culture and Communities O&S Panel - the Strategic Housing Partnership, the Cultural Partnership, the Transport Partnership, and the Climate Change Partnership.

Children's Services and Learning O&S Panel - the Children's Trust, and the Early Years, Child Care and Play Partnership.

Adult Social Care O&S Panel - the Health and Social Care Partnership.

- 3.2 The information gathering comprises initially asking the Chairmen and Lead officers for the ten Theme Partnerships to complete a questionnaire, and then for the responses to the questionnaire to inform individual meetings by the Commission/Panel concerned with the Chairmen and Lead officers for each of the Theme Partnerships, individually. These will form part of the public meetings of the Commission and Panels throughout 2009/10. The structured series of meetings with

the Chairmen and lead officers of the Theme Partnerships will contribute to relationship building.

- 3.3 The purpose of the questionnaire to be sent in advance of the meetings is to gather all the basic information on the work and organisation of each Theme Partnership, to make best use of members' time at the ensuing meetings.

Background Papers

Agenda and minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission on 1 April 2009

Contact for further information

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A: Name of Partnership: Economic and Skills Development Partnership	Comments
Chairman's name and contact details:	Timothy Wheadon
Lead Officer's name and contact details:	Victor Nicholls

B: Partnership details	Comments
1. Please attach the terms of reference for the partnership. If it is not in the TOR, please outline the agreed aims, key objectives and key functions	See attached
2. Please provide a few examples of the partnership's major achievements	A production of a monthly economic indicators report and priority action plan all within weeks of the Council adopting a new overarching priority
3. Where do you think the partnership currently is in terms of its stage of development? E.g. early formation, delivering shared outcomes, or fully developed?	Early formation
4. Please describe any major obstacles towards the partnership's success	The future of the global economy
Membership	See Terms of Reference
5. If not in the TOR, please list the current members of the partnership and the organisations they represent	
6. If not in the TOR, please describe the arrangements for	See Terms of Reference

appointing members to the partnership	
Minutes	See attached
7. Please provide minutes of meetings in the last year	

C: Governance arrangements	Comments
1. Please provide any recent self-assessment of governance arrangements for the Partnership, or describe any plans to do so.	Recently undertaken through the production of the terms of reference
2. How are decisions made? Is there a scheme of delegation that makes clear who can take decisions?	Decisions are made in the overall interests of the partnership
3. How are decisions recorded?	Through the productions of minutes
4. Who makes sure decisions are acted upon?	Lead officer
5. Please describe how the partnership is held to account, and by whom	Quarterly performance reports to the BFP board including LAA performance
6. Risk management - Has the Partnership itself carried out a formal risk assessment of the Partnership? If yes, please provide details	Not as yet. Early stage in the partnership's development which has been focused on the 'forming' stage

D: Performance management	Comments
1. Please describe the arrangements for setting output/outcome targets, and give details of the partnership's targets for 2008/09	1) Key targets in the LAA 2) Action plan agreed (with priority actions separated out)

2. Please describe the arrangements for monitoring and reporting progress against targets	1) Part of the partnerships performance monitoring every quarter (for LAA) 2) Action plan monitoring at each meeting
3. How does the partnership agree action on targets that are not likely to be met?	Through discussions at the partnership meeting involving robust challenge from the chair
4. How do you demonstrate publicly that the partnership adds value?	Through the work of the BFP and the partnership newsletter, available on the BFP website
5. How does the public know that the partnership achieves value for money?	Through the work of the BFP and the partnership newsletter, available on the BFP website and the 'Beat the Credit Crunch' website
6. Does the Partnership contribute accounts of success to the BFP's communications group?	Yes through the 'Beat the Credit Crunch' website

E: Financial Management	Comments
1. How is the partnership funded? (on the basis of the last financial year)	Last financial year – partners organisation staff time Note that this financial year a small (£37k) budget has been allocated for initiatives
2. Who decides on how to spend the money?	Partnership members
3. Can the money be reallocated? If so, who can authorise this?	Chair
4. What are the financial reporting arrangements?	Through the Council's financial reporting system and action plan monitoring each quarter

F: Serving the Public (For response just by BFP's Board)	Comments

1. Does the partnership have a communications policy? If so, please provide this	No
2. How does this partnership achieve accessibility for the public? (for example, are meetings open to the public?)	Meetings are not open to the general public
3. Is there a complaints and suggestions process the public can use?	N/A

G: Overview and Scrutiny of the Partnership	Comments
1. Does the partnership have any views on how O&S can assist in its development and achievement of objectives?	At this early stage, the partnership needs to continue to focus single-mindedly on action to support local residents and Bracknell Forest economy
2. Does the partnership have any suggestions for O&S reviews to be considered for the partnership O&S programme?	It would be valuable to review potential areas for O&S reviews towards the end of the financial year

If there are any queries on the completion of this questionnaire, please contact Richard Beaumont, Head of Overview and Scrutiny, Bracknell Forest Council on 01344 352283 or Richard.Beaumont@Bracknell-Forest.gov.uk

Bracknell Forest Partnership

Economic and Skills Development Partnership

Purpose and principles:

1 Purpose:

- To sustain and promote Bracknell Forest's thriving economy.
- To promote skills and availability of local people to fill local jobs as a key element of sustaining the local economy.

2 Terms of reference:

- Create and sustain a vision for economic well-being and skills development for all living and working in Bracknell Forest.
- Lead the economic development, enterprise, and skills elements of the Local Area Agreement
- Address the Regional Economic Strategy in Bracknell Forest, including the principles of "smart growth"
- Ensure that local economic developments benefit local people
- Develop a dialogue with business and educational and skills providers around common interests to make Bracknell Forest a better place in which to do business
- Maximise the number of local people in local employment
- Ensure that the benefits of regeneration are enjoyed by existing and new residents.
- Provide the spatial context (physical, social, environmental, economic) for existing businesses to remain in the borough, and for new start up businesses to be encouraged.

3 Principles

- To build trust and understanding between organisations
- To encourage partnership working
- To support innovation
- To support communities through a thriving economy
- To support joint funding and the best use of resources

- To promote community cohesion and equalities

4 Key aims:

- Stimulate leadership and consensus over economic and skills issues in Bracknell Forest
- Engaging with the local economy and businesses to remove barriers to success where possible
- The key forum for economic and skills issues arising from national, regional and local plans/initiatives
- Implement and monitor local economic and skills development plans
- Identify sources of funding that would help achieve local plans
- Research activity or action needed to underpin the long term economic success of the Borough
- Address the changing sub-regional economic development agenda
- Actively work with surrounding areas to sustain the local and Thames Valley economy, including liaison with the Berkshire Economic Strategy Board.
- Lead the production of a local economic assessment
- Acknowledge and support the Council's future commissioning role for training and skills promotion following the dissolution of the Learning and Skills Council.

5 Suggested Membership

- 5.1 The Partnership Board is not a body which is elected by the public. The Partnership is a group of organisations from the public, community and private sectors who come together voluntarily to improve the quality of life of the residents of Bracknell Forest. The Partnership Board is composed of representatives of the main public, community and private sector organisations and agencies that deliver services that can make a difference to quality of life. Its membership is selected by the partnership members rather than elected by the public.

Organisation	Who	Why
Members:		
Bracknell Forest Council	Tim Wheadon	Chief Executive Chair, Bracknell Forest Partnership Board Member of Berkshire Economic Strategy Board.
	Victor Nicholls	Assistant Chief Executive Lead officer for economic development and enterprise

	Cllr Mary Ballin	Executive Member for Planning, Transport and Economic Development; Member of SEERA; BESB Board Member
	Cllr Bob Wade	Small Business Champion
	Bev Hindle	Chief Officer: Planning and Transport
	David Jones	Senior Lifelong Learning Officer
	Simon Hendey	Chief Officer: Housing
		Head of Regeneration and Enterprise
	Communications officer	Head of Communications
	Martin Surrell	Senior Advisor-14-19 Partnership
Bracknell and Wokingham College	Howard O'Keeffe	Principal and Chief Executive
	Reverend Nick Parish	Chair of Governors
Bracknell Regeneration Partnership	Helen Barnett	Key business rep
Business Link	Ganesh Selverajah	Responsible for LAA delivery on business development
Chamber of Commerce	Philip Montague	Key link with local small business Attends Bracknell Forest Partnership
Connexions	Janet Hughes	
East Berkshire Education Business Partnership	Sandra Woledge	Managing Director
Grow Our Own	Amanda Waters	Project Manager
	John Moody	Project Facilitator
Job Centre Plus	TBC	Bringing more people into employment
SEEDA	Claire Gillion	Area Manager
TVEP	TBC	Global competitiveness lead for BESB

POSSIBLE CO-OPTEEES:		
Berkshire Skills and Productivity Alliance		
BFC Transport Officer		
Learning and Skills Council – Thames Valley	Jill Goddard	Economic Development Director
GOSE		
School Head teacher representatives		
Reps from major local business(es)	Richard Knight	Federation of small businesses
Executive Job Club	Robert Tickler/Jim Morrison	Senior Professionals

- 5.2 Membership is open to any organisation or service provider in Bracknell Forest wishing to support the work of the Partnership and its aims. Membership includes the acceptance of the responsibility to work within the terms of this Agreement and Protocol.
- 5.3 Membership is primarily aimed at organisations rather than at individuals who do not represent an organisation. However, the Partnership has a responsibility to actively involve under-represented groups and it may wish to involve individuals on other areas of partnership working, where they represent a minority interest or issue.
- 5.4 The ESDP is a sub-theme of Bracknell Forest Partnership and is bound by the principles set out in the Local Government Act 2000.
- 5.5 Substitutes to the above list will be accepted by the Partnership Board in the event of any member being unable to attend.
- 5.6 The Partnership Board shall require a quorum of 9 members to be present in order to make decisions on behalf of the Board. The chairman of the board will have the casting vote.
- 5.7 Administrative support will be provided by Bracknell Forest Council unless the Partnership Board decides to make other arrangements.
- 5.8 All of the members of the partnership will need to identify how they will support the agreed objectives of the partnership both in terms of general allocation of resources and in terms of the specific allocation of the resources required to deliver the projects/targets agreed by the partnership. It is envisaged that this may be through the commitment of staff time and where appropriate through the commitment of revenue or capital resources. It is not intended that any additional

resources will have to be committed by the voluntary and community sector unless it relates to projects that would normally be funded by them. At all times any funding or resource will remain the responsibility of the member organisation.

- 5.9 Where a partner contributes funds to be spent by another partner, the formal agreement must include provision for the provider to require the Chief Financial Officer of the receiver to provide written assurance that the money has been spent properly in line with the terms of the partnership and properly accounted for. In addition, agreements should include a provision that, in exceptional circumstances (e.g. suspected fraud or corruption), the provider reserves the right to ask the receiver's External Auditors to investigate.

6 Working arrangements

- 6.1 Quarterly closed meetings will be held in places that are accessible and acceptable to all members. The agenda and papers will be circulated one week in advance. The meetings will be formally minuted and the minutes will be published in the internet. The agenda papers will be published on the internet unless it is considered expedient to restrict members only by virtue of the personal, contractual or sensitive nature of the contents.

7 Decision making process

- 7.1 Partners shall bring along their own expertise to the decision making process, but decisions will be taken in the overall interest of the Partnership objectives.

8 Duration and termination

- 8.1 If any individual member wishes to withdraw from the partnership, written and verbal notice must be given of how any funding committed to the partnership will be maintained.
- 8.2 The partnership may be dissolved by mutual consent of all partners if such time arises where this is the appropriate cause of action. In this situation the partnership agreement will be terminated with immediate effect. Upon termination of the agreement, the partners agree to co-operate with each other to ensure an orderly wind down of the partnership arrangements so as to minimise disruption to all members. At dissolution, partners may need to inform the funders; provide appropriate final reports and inform all stakeholders as appropriate.
- 8.3 In the case of statutory partnerships that are a requirement by law (such as CDRP, implemented by the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act) the termination of the partnership will only take place upon such time as a change in Government legislation. In the event of a partnership terminating in these circumstances, the same arrangements of termination will apply.

9 Risk management

- 9.1 As an essential aspect of good governance, each formal partnership agreement will include provision for a risk management process. The process will identify all significant risks which might threaten the objectives of the partnership. These

risks will be set out clearly in a risk register. Each risk will be allocated an owner and the register will identify the mitigating factors which are already in place or will be put in place (with responsibilities and timetables included). Risks will be reassessed at least annually or with document refreshes.

10 Communications

10.1 Effective communications are critical to the success of any initiative, particularly the ones that seek to strategically integrate the delivery of services to improve the well-being of communities. The Partnership recognises the agreed Bracknell Forest Partnership Communications Strategy and associated Identity Guidelines that set out rules for:

- The badging and promotion of the Partnership;
- The authorising of individual partners to speak on behalf of the Partnership;
- The issues of press statements and public relations material in relation to the activities of the Partnership through its media protocol.

11 Equalities and diversity

11.1 It is important that the Partnership is built upon the fundamental principles of cohesion and equality for all. Equality Impact Assessments will be carried out for every strategy or plan produced by the Partnership.

12 Conduct and behaviour

- 12.1 Members of the Partnership are to be willing to take on a role in the broader programme appropriate to the skills and resources of the partner organisation, to act in good faith at all times and in the best interests of the Partnership's aims and objectives, and be open about any conflict of interests that might arise.
- 12.2 Within Partnership meetings, declarations of interest and provision for withdrawal from meetings of the Partnership Board should be made both orally and in writing prior to each meeting.
- 12.3 Partnership members are also expected to encourage joint working and promote the sharing of information, resources and skills between public, private and community sectors and to act wherever possible as ambassadors for the project. They are also expected to communicate regularly with other partners throughout any project so that problems can be identified and shared to achieve their successful resolution.
- 12.4 All Partnership members must work together in a harmonious relationship based upon mutual respect, courtesy, trust, honesty and understanding of each others roles. This should prevail in all meetings and contacts, whether formal or informal.

13 Dispute Resolution

- 13.1 With goodwill, respect and integrity on both sides, there ought to be very few occasions when a disagreement between members of the Partnership cannot be resolved amicably. If there is a serious dispute of substance it should be discussed, in the first instance, between the members concerned. If such discussions should not produce an acceptable settlement, reference may be made to the Chairman of the Partnership, but this should be seen as a last, rather than a first resort. If the matter cannot be resolved satisfactorily after reference to the Chairman, it may be referred to an expert selected by mutual agreement by the parties involved.

14 Audit and Scrutiny

- 14.1 All members of the Partnership shall abide by the extant and nationally recognised procedures, guidelines and standards for ensuring probity and good governance in public life.
- 14.2 The meetings of the Partnership can be observed by any individual who has received permission from the Chairman of the Partnership to attend. The Partnership shall report progress annually to the public. The Partnership shall carry out an effectiveness self-assessment annually.
- 14.3 The papers, including the agenda and minutes of each meeting are available to the public after each meeting, as long as information is not deemed to contain personal, financial or sensitive confidential information that is not suitable for public disclosure. In this case the minutes will be published without this information. It will be made clear when details have been removed.
- 14.4 Bracknell Forest Council shall facilitate the scrutiny of the work of the Partnership through its Overview and Scrutiny process.

15 Counter Fraud

- 15.1 The Partnership is wholly opposed to all forms of fraud, corruption or theft and will not tolerate fraud in any form in the administration of its responsibilities, from any members. Action will be taken against anyone who attempts to defraud the Partnership by deliberately falsifying, substituting or destroying records for personal gain; intentional breaches of financial regulations and procedures; the offer, giving or acceptance of inducements to influence action or decisions, or by abuse of position as a Member of the Partnership to benefit friends, family or others. This includes the use of deception with the intention of obtaining an advantage, avoiding an obligation or causing loss to another party.
- 15.2 The Partnership also expects that individuals and organisations (e.g. suppliers, contractors, service providers) with whom it comes into contact will act towards the Partnership with integrity and without actions involving fraud and corruption.
- 15.3 The Partnership will treat attempted fraud as seriously as actual fraud.