

TO: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION  
DATE: 19 MARCH 2015

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**BRACKNELL FOREST ECONOMIC AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP  
UPDATE  
Assistant Chief Executive**

**1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This note summarises some key work of the Bracknell Forest Economic and Skills Development Partnership (ESDP) over the past year.

**2 BUSINESS INVOLVEMENT**

- 2.1 The Partnership has grown its representation from the business sector. The Sub-Groups working on infrastructure, promotion and the new knowledge network are all led by current (or recently-retired) Directors from the TRL Ltd, Oracle Corporation and Sharp Telecommunications Europe.

**3 KEY ACTIVITIES OVER THE PAST YEAR**

- 3.1 Members will recall from last year's presentation that the next key step was to establish a new Business and Enterprise Service (BES) in the Council, to support economic growth and to work with partners to make the Borough an even better place for business. This team was recruited during the first quarter of 2014-15 and has established its work programme approved by the Executive in September 2014.
- 3.2 Much of the work of the team has been to put in place the essential foundations and work with partners for this brand-new service.
- 3.3 Working with the team and partners, the ESDP has achieved the following during the year:
- **The fourth Bracknell Forest Careers Event:**
    - Support for 950 daytime students and helped 350 evening visitors
    - Careers fair
    - Interview technique and CV advice
  - **Inward investment and promotional activity:**
    - Working with the Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce to promote the Borough to potential firms looking to relocate from abroad
    - Working with the UKTI on regeneration and retail
    - The Link to China programme
  - **Elevate Bracknell Forest:**
    - Government programme under the City Deal to support young people into work and attracting some £224,500 from the Cabinet Office
    - Elevate Business Relationship Co-ordinator in post
    - Since the programme started in April 2014 until end of January 2015:

- An information Advice and Guidance Hub has been opened where different organisations and services co-locate to provide a one-stop shop to support young people into education, employment
  - 160 young people received an IAG session;
  - 38 have been supported into a work experience placement or training
  - 23 started an apprenticeship;
  - 194 have been supported into employment;
  - 194 have experienced an increase in their salary by 10%
  - The Elevate website went live, a tool for young people to inform and support them in their search for education, employment or training.
- **Bids through Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership for funding for infrastructure under the Local Growth Fund:**
  - Round One bid secured £7m (out of £11m allocated to Berkshire)
  - Round Two bid secured £2m (out of £10.2m allocated to Berkshire)
- **Hosted Delegations from China:**
  - Hunan province – business growth opportunities
  - Tianjin – regarding opportunities to develop governance and anti-corruption issues
- **Support for small businesses:**
  - A keynote event attracting over 60 local companies
  - Responding to businesses call for a new group to learn how to win more business from the Council
- **Establishing a new Business Contact Programme:**
  - Links senior council officers with the top 30 companies in the Borough
  - Clearing away barriers to business success
  - Account Manager model
- **Surveying the Borough's Businesses:**
  - Identify their needs
  - Skills survey
  - Infrastructure survey
  - To feed into the new Local Economic Framework
- **Superfast Broadband rolling out across the Borough:**
  - Bracknell Forest still on track to be the best provided borough in Berkshire
- **Making the views of business known to:**
  - Network Rail regarding the plans for future rail services serving the Borough
  - Heathrow Airports Limited regarding airport capacity

#### 4 FORTHCOMING WORK INCLUDES:

- A survey of the skills needs of businesses

- Publication of the new Local Economic Framework (to replace the current Local Economic Strategy)
- Roll out of a new business centric website
- Setting up the new Local Business Partnership of regulators and small businesses to tackle barriers to success

Contact for further information

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