

Economic and Skills Development Partnership
Tuesday 6 June 2023
10.00 am - 12.00 pm
Surrey Room - Waitrose Conference Centre,
Willoughby Road, Bracknell, RG12 8FD



AGENDA

Item	Description	Page	By	Time
1.	Welcome, Introductions and Apologies for Absence		Bob Collis	10.00
2.	Action Points from Last Meeting	1 - 4	ALL	10.10
3.	Welcome the New Administration - Executive Member for Economic Development & Regeneration		Councillor Paul Bidwell	10.20
4.	Economic Strategy		Simon Matthews	10.30
5.	Chamber of Commerce Update - Local Skills Improvement Plan and Skills Challenges		Anna Gration	10.55
6.	UKSPF Update		Chris Mansfield	11.10
7.	Climate Change Update		Seb Wright	11.20
8.	BID Update		Bob Collis	11.25
9.	Employment and Skills Sub-Group		Chris Mansfield, Nancy Lalor	11.35
10.	Infrastructure Sub-Group		Bob Collis	11.45
11.	Any Other Business and Date of Next Meeting		ALL	11.55

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**ECONOMIC AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT
PARTNERSHIP
7 FEBRUARY 2023
9.30 - 11.30 AM**

Present:

Bob Collis, Chair of the ESDP (Chair)
Nikki Burns, Federation of Small Businesses
Simon Cridland, Bracknell Forest Council
Adrian Davies, Department of Work and Pensions
Neil Edwards, Activate Learning
Simon Fryer, Fryer Commercial
Olivia Fuller, Silva Homes
Sean Griffin, Partnership for Better Business UK
Tim Griffith, Secondary Headteachers Representative
Simon Lanaway, FedCap
Chris Mansfield, Bracknell Forest Council
Teresa Morten, DWP
Geoff Pye, Thames Valley Berkshire LEP
Peter Smith, Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce
Andrew Spiers, WebDesign and SEO
Nathan Spilstead, C J Found Associates
Lee Teideman, Adviza
Dawn Thompson, ECITB
Councillor Bob Wade, Small Business Champion
Cathy Wilkins, Stepping Stones Bracknell Recovery College

Apologies for absence were received from:

Stephen Chown
Aaron Curtis
Anna Gration
Karen Hampton
Nancy Lalor
Gary Scroby
Nick Thring
David Walton

Also Present:

Joanna Birrell, Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce
Faith Everett, Climate Change, Bracknell Forest Council
Paula Robertson, Bracknell Forest Council
Lynne Wilson, Berkshire Digital Infrastructure Group
Sebastian Wright, Bracknell Forest Council

77. Welcome, Introductions

The Chairman welcomed members to the Partnership and each made their introductions.

78. Action Points from Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 2022 were approved as a correct record.

79. **Business Survey - Presentation of Results**

Mark Yeadon presented summary slides of the BFC/ESDP 2020 Business Surveys undertaken by Public Perspectives. The final report was to be issued soon and would be made available to businesses. The slides are attached at Annex 1.

Mark responded to a number of questions from members. Notably, there was some concern about the lack of commitment by smaller companies to achieving government's net-zero target. Furthermore, the increased energy costs faced by businesses needed to be addressed in order to support them.

The Partnership was asked to forward any further comments to Chris or Paula who would share them with Mark.

80. **Chamber of Commerce update - Local Skills Improvement Plan and Skills Challenges**

Joanna Birrell of the Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce and Thames Valley Berkshire LEP presented slides on the Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIP) that the Chamber had been commissioned to produce for Berkshire and Oxfordshire. The University of Reading had been commissioned to undertake an engagement/survey programme for the project. Chris Mansfield would be sitting on the LSIP Steering Group. The slides are attached at Annex 2.

There were a number of questions around the plan, and it was thought that a Microsoft TEAMS meeting would need to be organised to discuss these further. A 1:1 with Joanna could be arranged if any of the partnership would prefer.

Action: Paula Robertson to share Joanna's contact details with the Partnership.

It was noted that LSIP should include retail and not just tech skills. Chris and Paula would be meeting with Joanna to discuss the proposed Apprenticeships Week.

81. **Digital Infrastructure Group Update**

Lynne Wilson of West Berkshire Council presented slides on the Berkshire Digital Infrastructure Group. These are attached at Annex 3.

Discussion was focussed on whether or not 5G was an option that would be commercially viable to local businesses. It was noted that it wasn't necessarily speed but reliability which needed to be considered collectively. Also, that both the speed and connectivity needed to be considered; a generic solution did not therefore work for all and a more specific tailored approach was required for some businesses.

82. **Employment and Skills Sub-Group - Skills and Training Hub Update**

Chris Mansfield advised that work was being undertaken by the Council on Supported Internships. The next step for the development of the Skills and Training hub was to set up a steering group with members from the ESDP. Chris was to email invitations to the initial meeting in March. As part of the UKSPF a pop up shop initiative was being explored for the town centre.

83. **Infrastructure Sub-Group - Climate Change Update**

The Chairman advised that he would share the notes from the latest meeting of the Infrastructure Sub-Group. The date for the next meeting was to be circulated shortly.

84. **Economic Development Strategy**

Chris Mansfield advised that there had not been a Bracknell Forest Economic Development Strategy in place for over 10 years. Therefore, it was timely to develop a strategy, with this in mind the procurement process to appoint a consultant to undertake the work had begun. Chris sought support from the ESDP members to support and be a part of developing the strategy. Bob Collis confirmed that in principle the ESDP would like to be involved in this and support Chris as required.

Bob mentioned the ESDP were involved in the previous strategy, and welcomed this piece of work.

The date of the next meeting was 6th June 2023. More information on the time, location and agenda would be made available nearer the time.

CHAIRMAN

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