

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**



Present: Bob Collis, Chair of the ESDP
Ankur Shiv Bhandari
Councillor Paul Bidwell
Adrian Davies, Department of Work and Pensions
Tim Griffith, Secondary Headteachers Representative
Aino Halla, Activate Learning
Susan Halliwell, Bracknell Forest Council
Susan Jones
Nancy Lalor, Learning to Work
Chris Mansfield, Bracknell Forest Council
George Marengi
Peter Smith, UK Business Advisors/Bracknell Improvement District
Dawn Thompson, ECITB
Phil Williams

In attendance: Antoinette Johnston, UK Shared Prosperity Fund Project Officer
Simon Matthews, Matthews Associates
Paula Robertson, Bracknell Forest Council
Seb Wright, Bracknell Forest Council

Apologies: Nancy Buckley, Activate Learning
Nikki Burns, Federation of Small Businesses
Stephen Chown, Bracknell Forest Council
Simon Cridland, Bracknell Forest Council
Aaron Curtis, 3M
Neil Edwards, Activate Learning
David English, Panasonic
Ian Ferguson, Partnership for Better Business
Bernadette Fisher, Stepping Stones Bracknell Recovery College
Simon Fryer, Fryer Commercial
Olivia Fuller, Silva Homes
Shelley Furey, Oxford Innovation Hub
Anna Gration, Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce
Sean Griffin, Partnership for Better Business UK
Andrew Hunter, Bracknell Forest Council
Stuart Jefferies, Bracknell Forest Council
Simon Lanaway, FedCap
Teresa Morten, DWP
Paul Newman, Activate Learning
Maria Sabey, Fujitsu and Chair of BID Board
Gary Scroby, Premier Education
Jacqui Self, Wellington College
Andy Smith, Waitrose
Andrew Spiers, Lens Digital
Nick Thring, Duncan Yeardley
David Walton, Reliance High Tech
Cathy Wilkins, Stepping Stones Bracknell Recovery College

Action Points

Minute	Item
1	<p>Welcome, Introductions and Apologies for Absence</p> <p>The Chairman, Bob Collis welcomed members to the Partnership and each made their introductions.</p>
2	<p>Action Points from Last Meeting</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 7 February 2023 were approved as a correct record.</p> <p>Actions noted had been undertaken and progressed.</p>
3	<p>Welcome the New Administration - Executive Member for Economic Development & Regeneration</p> <p>Councillor Paul Bidwell was welcomed to the meeting and introduced as the newly appointed Executive Member for Economic Development & Regeneration.</p> <p>Councillor Paul Bidwell expressed the importance of economic growth and the change programme to deliver this and welcomed feedback from local businesses, He wanted to add value and, under the new administration, wanted to help local businesses to thrive,</p>
4	<p>Economic Strategy</p> <p>On behalf of the Council Simon Matthews provided a verbal update on the Economic Strategy,</p> <p>It was noted that there were areas of improvement but nothing of great concern, Data would be shared, Areas to look at were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Slow links into London• Branding• Accommodation and apprenticeships• Leisure offerings• EV charging points <p>During discussion, it was noted that, local businesses needed support especially SMEs, Help for funding could be achieved through the BID and network events, Growing skills locally was key,</p> <p>Economics and skills needed to flow together as one rather than separate issues, The Department of Education were supporting a Local Skills Improvement Plan and this would be shared with the Partnership once published, as well as the</p>

	<p>data,</p> <p>The first draft of the Economic Strategy would be delivered towards the end of July and shared for consultation in the autumn.</p> <p>Sue Halliwell advised that an EV Strategy was being developed by the Council but the energy supply infrastructure needed to be fit for purpose,</p>
5	<p>Chamber of Commerce Update - Local Skills Improvement Plan and Skills Challenges</p> <p>Anna Gration was unable to attend the meeting and this item would be deferred to a subsequent meeting.</p>
6	<p>UKSPF Update</p> <p>Chris Mansfield provided an update on the UKSPF (UK Shared Prosperity Fund), It was about levelling up opportunities and prosperity and overcoming deep-seated geographical inequalities that had held businesses back for too long.</p> <p>It was also, fundamentally, about levelling up people's pride in the places they lived and seeing that reflected back in empowered local leaders and communities, a stronger social fabric and better life chances.</p> <p>The Board was advised that three initiatives of four were up and running, With the support of BID funding a feasibility study of the Easthampstead Road/Western Road area was being planned for later this year</p>
7	<p>Climate Change Update</p> <p>Seb Wright provided a verbal update on the climate change agenda within the Borough.</p> <p>The Team wanted to work with local businesses, particularly SMEs to dispel the myth of the cost of small changes that could be made to help the climate change agenda, Further work was on-going, but any thoughts were asked to be sent through,</p>
8	<p>BID Update</p> <p>Bob Collis provided a verbal update on the BID,</p> <p>They were advised of the work underway, specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCTV and ANPR • Wayfinding Scheme • Farley Moor Lake improvements

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Western Road improvements <p>EV charging points were important to achieving net zero but existing provision in Bracknell Forest was currently 'patchy', Guidance for the provision of charging points needed to be given to help enhance the take up of the available government grant,</p> <p>On-going work by the BID included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Litter cleansing • Fitness bootcamp sessions • The loyalty card scheme; and • Landscape work and maintenance. <p>It was noted that there was to be a jobs fair on 29 June and everyone was encouraged to attend if possible as well as spreading the word, The fair was set to showcase vacancies, apprenticeships and training opportunities, Link noted below:</p> <p>https://www.thelexiconbracknell.com/news/bracknell-jobs-fair</p>
9	<p>Employment and Skills Sub-Group</p> <p>Nancy Lalor provided updates from the Employment and Skills Sub-Group, It was noted that a lot of work was being undertaken, particularly around skills for 18-25yr-olds to help find employment,</p> <p>The work programme had been reviewed since the last meeting, and now included the Skills and Training Hub and supporting parents who needed guidance, advice and support with young people's careers choices</p> <p>Communication was key and if any local businesses wished to join the sub-group they should get in touch,</p>
10	<p>Infrastructure Sub-Group</p> <p>Bob Collis provided a verbal update from the Infrastructure Sub-Group and the review of the work programme,</p> <p>Recent activities were noted which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership of the Climate Change focus groups. • Involvement in the Economic Strategy as discussed. • A presentation on broadband availability. <p>In terms of the work programme key topics were consultations, active travel, economic infrastructure, the climate emergency and the BFC/ESDP photography competition,</p> <p>The Group would welcome new Members,</p>

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Any Other Business and Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting would take place on 17 October, The Next EDSP annual event would take place on 19 September with a theme around strategy, The meeting would focus on Bracknell Forest but would look at issues further afield in the Berkshire area,

Waitrose was thanked for kindly hosting the meeting.

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