



Local Partnership Group Meeting 10

Tuesday, 9 December 2025
11:00am to 12:00pm (MS Teams online only)

Attendees

Adrian Davies (AD) Department of Work and Pensions
Chris Mansfield (CM) Bracknell Forest Council
Ben Jokiel (BJ) Activate Learning
Nancy Lalor (NL) Learning to Work
Nikki Burns (NB) Federation of Small Businesses and Bracknell Forest Skills Hub Lead
Chloe Smith (CS) Constituency Support Officer for Peter Swallow MP
Sarah Naxton (SN) Bracknell Forest Council

Apologies

Jo Gosling (JG) Bracknell Forest Council
Cllr Paul Bidwell (PB) Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Regeneration
Andrea McCombie (AM) The Ark Trust Chief Executive Officer
Sean Griffin (SG) Bracknell Business Improvement District

Minute	Item
1	Welcome CM opened the meeting by thanking all for attending.

	<p><u>Project updates</u></p> <p>2</p> <p>The Ark Community Transport Scheme – Update from CM</p> <p>CM referred to the update on the transport service which continues to thrive and offer support to vulnerable residents. CM suggested that he would be speaking with Andrea to explore how the scheme or elements it can continue beyond March 2026.</p> <p>Action – CM to follow up with AM</p> <p>Craft Coop – Update from Heidi Berry</p> <p>The scheme has closed, but Craft Coop collaborated on the remembrance events in November. No immediate plans for revival, but the door remains open.</p> <p>Bracknell Forest Borough Vision</p> <p>The Vision for Bracknell Forest to 2050 will be launched at an event on 29th January. Invitations are being sent to stakeholders and local organizations.</p> <p><u>Bracknell Forest vision 2050 Bracknell Forest Council</u></p> <p>Action – Paula Robertson/JG to ensure all Local Partnership Group members are invited to the upcoming launch event on 29.01.2026.</p> <p>Cultural Programme</p> <p>Sarah Naxton reported a successful year of events, including the White Ribbon event and upcoming Christmas choir showcase. Planning for 2026 is challenged by the end of UKSPF funding, with efforts underway to secure sponsorship and collaborate with local partners.</p> <p>Bracknell Forest Skills Hub</p> <p>Nikki shared that the hub is seeing increased demand, especially from those seeking to retrain due to redundancies, with a focus on tech, cybersecurity, logistics, hospitality, and construction. Collaboration with Activate Learning and local businesses continues. Funding and future sustainability are concerns.</p> <p>The attendees discussed Government skills funding and scope to use Section 106 funding through the development and planning process. Discussion on new government apprenticeships and the challenges of enforcing local employment through Section 106 agreements. Bracknell does not currently have a skills policy in its local plan, unlike neighbouring Wokingham.</p> <p>Major Infrastructure Projects. Reference to Heathrow's apprenticeship model and Wokingham's approach to local employment on construction projects. Monitoring and enforcement remain difficult.</p>
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	<p>Berkshire Prosperity Board</p> <p>CM updated the group on the Berkshire Prosperity Board's ongoing work, including the development of skills and employment initiatives like Connect to Work and Get Berkshire Working, in collaboration with DWP and other partners.</p> <p>CM explained that the Connect to Work launches in January 2026 and Get Berkshire Working plan has been submitted to DWP for approval.</p> <p>Future Programmes</p> <p>Launch of a Youth Employment Hub in January, funded by DWP, to support 18–24-year-olds on Universal Credit. New staff will join, working closely with DWP job coaches.</p> <p>Budget</p> <p>The programme is on track to spend the remaining budget by March 2026, with discussions ongoing about allocating any headroom to existing or new schemes.</p> <p>Next Steps</p> <p>Continued focus on skills and employment support, monitoring funding opportunities, and preparing for the next meeting in March.</p> <p>Proposed Next Meeting Date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tues 17 March 2026 11:00am – 12:00pm
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