



Local Partnership Group Meeting 12

Tuesday, 22 September 2026
11:00am to 12:00pm (MS Teams online only)

Attendees

Chris Mansfield (CM) Bracknell Forest Council
Nancy Lalor (NL) Learning to Work
Jo Gosling (JG) Bracknell Forest Council
Dilip Ladwa (DL) Interfaith Forum
Cllr Paul Bidwell (PB) Cabinet Member for Adults, Economy and Regeneration
Adrian Davies (AD) Department of Work and Pensions
Andrea McCombie (AM) Chief Executive Officer The Ark Trust

Apologies

Rory Lewis (RL) Bracknell Business Improvement District
Aaron Hilton (AH) Constituency Support Officer for Peter Swallow MP
Nikki Burns (NB) Federation of Small Businesses

Minute	Item
1	Welcome and introductions CM opened the meeting by thanking attendees and confirmed that it was the Local Partnership Group's final meeting. CM also thanked everyone who had contributed over the past four years, noting that their collaboration had significantly improved how the Council and its partners delivered the UKSPF projects.

2	Project updates The Ark Community Transport Scheme – Update from AM AM confirmed the project had remained busy and still actively recruiting volunteers. AM explained the transport scheme works alongside Keep Mobile; however their client base is mostly focused on physical disabilities. The scheme is actively seeking funding and has been running unfunded since June. So unfortunately, the process of winding down the project has commenced. AM envisaged this will affect other organisations, residents and their families within the borough due to transporting to and from essential services and respite, such as day centres. PB asked if there was an opportunity for some of the charities that use the service to contribute. AM responded they have not approached them as they are also small local charities too. The main one being young people with dementia and a couple of day centres and they are under the same financial pressure. AM will speak to the trustees about requesting support from other charities, but I think they will feel reluctant because we're all under the same pressure. AM explained that service users make a small contribution towards the mileage of the volunteer, but the scheme is set up very differently to a neighbourhood transport scheme. This scheme has a greater safeguarding and vetting process with a centralised booking system; this allows volunteers to safely transport some of our most vulnerable residents safely. AM confirmed that the annual running costs for the scheme are £20,000 but any contributions would be welcomed and utilised by the charity to operate as long as they could. NL agreed to be vigilant to any fundraising or match funding opportunities from her networks that could benefit the scheme. DL enquired if we had unspent UKSPF funding, could it be used for this purpose. CM confirmed that if UKSPF money has not been spent by the local authority that it must be returned to central government. It is fully expected to use all available funds by the required date.
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	Cultural Programme CM gave a summary of the successful annual summer events in Bracknell with Armed Forces Day, Bracknell Forest Pride and the Communities Festival to be held on 26th September supported by the UKSPF. Support was also given to the South Hill Park Food Festival Food and Music this year. Forthcoming events are now in the stages of securing sponsorship and external funding to ensure these popular community celebrations can continue. The aim being that these become well established and we want to support them in becoming legacy annual events. Bracknell Forest Communities Festival 2026 Bracknell Forest Council Capital Works CM detailed updates to our capital element of expenditure for the UKSPF fund. This has been focused on enhancements around Bracknell town centre, including implementing protection and security for the weaker spots around the town centre. In the Weather Way car park, bollards have been installed to help minimize risk of vehicles gaining unauthorised access into the town centre. Work is due to commence in Jubilee Gardens. This is the area adjacent to the old Royal British Legion building. Works include planting, brickwork, replacing public benches and additional measures to deter unauthorised vehicles entering the town centre. Final public realm improvements were implemented at the Skimped Hill Medical Centre and Winchester House sites. This again included additional protective measures of bollards to ensure that vehicles aren't accessing the pedestrianised areas of the town centre, and general resurfacing and paving to complete works. EcoRewards A new rewards platform for EcoRewards that enables residents to track their progress on total green (walking, cycling or public transport) miles to date via the app or online account. Rewards such as cash-back, discounts and special offers are available to members holding an account. Members have received £100's in cash-back by clicking through links from their Eco Rewards account. Eco Rewards - Rewarding Green Travel Choices
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3 Action	UKSPF Reporting & LPG Feedback CM confirmed the intention to spend the full grant allocation. The LPG group have been kindly invited to provide any reflections/observations and what had worked well or not over the past four years, including the impact and benefits of the various projects and any learnings. We thank you in advance for this contribution which will be included in our final programme report. For convenience, some reminders have been detailed below of the projects over this time including a summary from our transition year reporting. Please may we have your feedback by 19th October 2026. UKSPF Project Summaries The below is a reminder of the transition year project summaries that have been reported back to The Government Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). Progress summary Our projects had all broadly performed and developed as we had hoped and forecasted. The Bracknell Craft Coop store closed due to unsustainable footfall and financial challenges that have been experienced sadly throughout the entire Craft Coop organisation. The shop has been greatly missed by many in the Bracknell Forest community, having supported various workshops and vast amounts of outreach. The Ark Volunteer Community Transport provides a successful community transport scheme, utilising volunteers, for older and disabled residents across the whole of the Bracknell Forest local authority area. Journeys are booked via the office and requests sent out to volunteers. Payment is also made to the office so no cash changes hands during the journey. The service is open to any Bracknell Forest residents who have difficulties accessing public transport due to age/disability/health condition. The benefits to service users are reduced isolation, community cohesion and increased independence. This scheme will be benefitting from additional funding for a further quarter, from the UKSPF funding stream. The Borough Vision is a plan of a developed vision outlining aspirations for Bracknell Forest over the next 25 years, focusing on health, economy, well-being, and the physical environment whilst building on existing community strengths. The Borough Vision has been formally endorsed by the Council and promoted across the Borough. Meaningful changes in our infrastructure, environment, economy, and communities require sustained commitment across generations. At this important moment in our history, we're setting out a shared vision for our places that embraces transformative, long-term thinking. A well-attended launch event was held on 29th January 2026 at Bucklers Park Community Hub.
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The Bracknell Forest Skills and Training Hub ceased operating after eighteen months, at the end of March 2026. The Bracknell Forest Skills and Training Hub was established to support local businesses by providing access to a talent pool equipped with relevant skills and ultimately enabling the local economy to grow through productivity and driving innovation. Through this initiative we strengthened local skills, connected people with opportunities and supported businesses to meet their skills requirements and contribute to Bracknell Forest's wider economic vision. During this time the Bracknell Forest Skills and Training Hub delivered and developed a large-scale hospitality sector programme and a facilities management upskilling pathway, designed to address specific business needs and create internal career progression opportunities. The hub successfully engaged with career seekers and businesses, delivering bespoke training, and promoting bootcamps.

The Cultural Programme builds on the broad variety of arts, performance and creative media promoted in the Town Centre (The Lexicon) and wider communities. The many local events have brought together residents, and community partners to celebrate diversity, inclusion, and shared values. These community events are no longer supported by the UKSPF funding stream so we have actively applied for sponsorship and support from the private sector, to enable this important engagement to continue. The following local events and initiatives have been supported from the UKSPF funding stream; Bracknell Forest Pride , Culture and Community Day, VE & VJ Day commemoration, Armed Forces Day, White Ribbon event, Christmas lights and school choir showcase and a Festival of Food and Music and Arts Festival.

The Berkshire Prosperity Board has been created to help drive forward and deliver future economic success across the county and is endorsed by all six Berkshire Councils. The six councils work together to help seize opportunities to promote Berkshire to investors, businesses and Central Government. Projects include the development of skills and employment initiatives like Connect to Work and Get Berkshire Working, in collaboration with the Department of Work and Pensions and other partners.

Other UKSPF Projects 2022-2024

Town centre ambassadors

Town centre ambassadors employed by NSL, worked closely with The Lexicon security team.

NSL provided the service and their ambassadors worked within the town centre, seven days a week, interacting with visitors.

Interactions range from directing visitors, first aid and dealing with low level anti-social behaviour and public order issues.

The ambassadors worked effectively with both The Lexicon security team and Thames Valley Police.

The ambassador scheme started in May 2024 and the project was concluded in March 2025.

During this time a five-person team recorded 6221 logs, their interactions with cyclists and E-scooters riders showed a reduction over the year. Staff were thanked for their assistance and knowledge of the town centre and provided a positive uniformed presence.

	Berkshire Growth Hub The Berkshire Growth Hub delivers the government funded business advice service and supports small and medium-sized enterprises in Berkshire to achieve sustainable business growth. Start-up Programme - An intensive 5-week programme of workshops and coaching sessions designed to provide skills and knowledge needed to launch a business successfully. High Growth Programme - Tailored support, for existing small businesses providing a dedicated business adviser and access to 1-1 sessions with sector specialists. Bracknell BID Feasibility Study The study has been successfully signed off by the Bracknell BID Board. The Bracknell BID will appoint a consultant to assess the scope and opportunities to enhance the accessibility and functioning of the Western Road and Easthampstead Road area. Bracknell BID Area Strategy The outcome of the feasibility studies will define a range of interventions to support businesses to maximise the economic value of the business areas, strengthening the location as a premier destination. The aim will be to harness carbon reduction benefits and wider environmental improvements linked to productivity and public health and wellbeing. UKSPF funding had been allocated towards improved way finding and signage alongside CCTV and ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Recognition) coverage for the BID area, which supplemented BID funding. This coverage is monitored by RBWM Council Control Room, with Thames Valley Police monitoring ANPR coverage. The system going live on 28th March 2025.
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