

# London Borough of Bromley

Report No.  
ELS05101

PART 1 - PUBLIC

Agenda  
Item No.

**6**

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Title:	<b>TOWN CENTRES - AREA ACTION PLAN FOR BROMLEY TOWN CENTRE AND VISION DOCUMENTS FOR ORPINGTON AND BECKENHAM TOWN CENTRES</b>		
Decision Maker:	<b>Development Control Committee</b>	Decision Date:	<b>19<sup>th</sup> April 2005</b>
Decision Type:	Non-Urgent	Non-Executive	Non-Key
Budget/Policy Framework:	Within policy and budget		
Chief Officer:	Chief Planner		
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Ward:	Bromley Town, Orpington, Copers Cope, Kelsey and Eden Park		

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## 1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The recent Retail Capacity Study (DTZ 2004) indicated that there is potential for major development in Bromley Town Centre and interest has already been shown from differing commercial sectors. In order to deal with the interrelated challenges of competition from neighbouring towns and other commercial centres it was considered appropriate to appoint consultants to undertake an Area Action Plan (AAP) for the town to help provide the framework for assessing the cumulative impact of current and future proposals.
- 1.2 The aim of the AAP is to prepare a visionary, masterplan strategy which strengthens current planning policy, provides a clear direction for the town centre and identifies commercially viable, development opportunities within Bromley Town Centre. Donaldsons have also been appointed to advise on Bromley's property market to ensure that the future proposals are supported by sound development economics.
- 1.3 EDAW, planning consultants, are currently working on an Initial Planning Statement that will be presented to the next Development Control Committee in June.
- 1.4 The Corporate Town Centre Officer Group will also, over the coming months, work with stakeholders to develop Vision documents for both the Beckenham and Orpington town centres in order to identify opportunities to improve the experience of visiting, working or living in the towns.

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Members note the appointment of consultants to carry out an Area Action plan for Bromley Town Centre; and also
- 2.2 Note the development of Vision documents for Beckenham and Orpington town centres.

### 3. COMMENTARY

- 3.1 The government states, in the recently published Planning Policy Statement No 6: Planning for Town Centres, that local planning authorities should use area action plans, compulsory purchase orders and other strategies to promote growth and manage change in their town centres (PPS6 para 2.1). Last year's Retail Capacity Study identified Bromley Town Centre as being capable of sustaining an additional retail floorspace of approximately 40,000m<sup>2</sup> by 2016.
- 3.2 Bromley Town Centre is a centre of employment and a strategic retail destination and given the economic importance of the town it is, therefore, imperative to the well being of the Borough that the town sustains its position as a successful metropolitan centre through a competitive retail, leisure and commercial offer that attracts both local residents and visitors.
- 3.3 In order to optimise the economic role of the town centre over the next 5-15 years the AAP will explore challenges and opportunities including how to provide the right environment in order to attract new businesses, as well as 'drivers for change' that will influence future development in the town centre and surrounding areas.
- 3.4 The appointed consultants have a strong, experienced team who have the ability to focus on the urban environment framework and other related disciplines including development appraisals, environmental improvements, valuations, transportation and accessibility and compulsory purchase and compensation procedures.
- 3.5 The aim of the project is to prepare a strategy which identifies commercially viable, development opportunities by:
- Identifying the current strengths and weaknesses of the town;
  - Analysing the challenges and opportunities the town;
  - Developing proposals for how the town centre can optimise its economic role for a 5-15 year horizon;
  - Ascertaining the future direction of the town centre through consultation with key stakeholders;
  - Assessing the social, political, commercial and economic realities that will drive change;
  - Ensuring that structure is in place to facilitate and review implementation and that aspirations are met;
  - Establishing principles of planning policy and mechanisms for delivering design quality; Marketing development opportunities;
  - Monitoring proposals against masterplanning principles;
  - Being prepared to accommodate changes to baseline conditions and amendments to the masterplan ;
  - Ensuring strategies and processes are in place to ensure successful delivery to take forward the strategy; and
  - Concluding the implementation strategy including timetable, funding strategy, delivery strategy, partners, marketing, management and maintenance strategy, risk analysis, etc.
- 3.6 EDAW will offer options in terms of managing the various elements to ensure that development opportunities are more focused, commercially viable and provide a long-term vision for the town, based upon a co-ordinated and competitive advantage. Once adopted the AAP will act as a guide to the Council's expectations for development. This will assist the Council when responding to development pressure and highlight areas of commercial growth and development opportunities within the town.
- 3.7 EDAW will be project managed by the Corporate Town Centre Officer Group and their work will be divided into three phases (showing indicative timescales).
- Phase 1: undertake baseline study, produce an initial Planning Statement as well as undertake consultation with key local stakeholders - including businesses, local residents groups and landowners. (January – September 2005)

- Phase 2: Formal consultation with the public and stakeholders on possible options. Produce draft AAP (October 2005 – July 2006)
  - Phase 3: Public Inquiry, adoption of AAP (December 2006 – Spring 2007)
- 3.8 Donaldsons have considerable experience in working along side masterplanners/ urban designers, including EDAW, on other similar projects Their property baseline study will provide the Council with a comprehensive property market analysis and commentary for Bromley Town Centre. The purpose of this analysis will be to act as an audit of Bromley's property market to ensure that the future proposals are supported by sound development economics and to ensure that any proposals are deliverable and commercially viable.

### **3.9 ORPINGTON**

- 3.10 Orpington is classified in the town centre hierarchy as a Major Shopping Centre. It serves the local population and its success is dependent upon the provision of a strong convenience offer and current vacancy rates are low (4%) in comparison to the national average of 11%.
- 3.11 Recently, Tesco has been granted planning permission for a superstore, subject to the completion of a legal agreement, on the site of the car park in Station Road. It is considered, therefore, timely to explore how the Council together with key stakeholders can ensure the towns continuing success through a Vision Document that would identify incremental changes and opportunities to improve the fabric and condition of the town.
- 3.12 The DTZ study reported that there are opportunities to attract new businesses to the town and has a potential capacity for 11,400m<sup>2</sup> additional comparison floorspace by 2016. As a result the Corporate Town Centre Officer Group will, during the coming months, commence the process of engagement with local agents and businesses to determine whether there is any potential for further commercial/retail development and how the physical environment could be improved.

### **3.13 BECKENHAM**

- 3.14 The town centre of Beckenham is classified as a District Centre and as in Orpington it serves the local catchment area in the capacity of a convenience centre, there are low vacancy rates and the town also benefits from a strong, lively evening economy which distinguishes it from similar sized towns.
- 3.15 The DTZ study recommended that whilst the quality of the centre's leisure offer should be strengthened encouragement should be given to maintaining and enhancing its retail offer. As in Orpington the Corporate Town Centre Officer Group will, as soon as resources allow, commence the process of engagement with local agents and businesses to determine whether there is any potential for further commercial/retail development and how the physical environment could be improved.

## **4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 Any proposals for the town centre will have to take account of government policy especially PPS6 as well as other relevant documents. Prior to the adoption of an LDF (March 2007) any new development proposal sites within the town centre and not envisaged in the UDP, are likely to be considered as 'departures' from the Plan and therefore referable to the Secretary of State.
- 4.2 The Area Action Plan will constitute a Development Plan Document (DPD) and would therefore be subject to independent examination in public but it can, however, introduce new policies.
- 4.3 Both the Greater London Authority (GLA) and the London Development Agency (LDA) have welcomed the AAP process for Bromley town centre, the undertaking of which is supported by the London Plan.

## 5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The consultancy for Bromley Town Centre is being funded by the Planning Delivery Grant. The Visions for Beckenham and Orpington will be dealt with in-house with the commercial expertise advice provided by Donaldsons.

<b>Non-Applicable Sections:</b>	LEGAL IMPLICATIONS PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	Retail Capacity Study DTZ July 2004 PPS6 ODPM March 2005