

EXECUTIVE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR LOCAL ECONOMY

Minutes of Meeting held on 29th March 2004 at 6.30p.m.

Present:

Councillor Graham Arthur (Portfolio Holder)

Also present:

Councillors Colin Bloom, Martin Curry, Sue Gibbens
and Martyn Reddin

34 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

35 CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 29TH JANUARY 2004

The Minutes of the meeting held on the above date were confirmed.

36 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

No questions had been received.

37 LOCAL ECONOMY PORTFOLIO PLAN 2004/05 DR04049

Further to Minute 33 of the last meeting, the Portfolio Holder received an updated copy of the Portfolio Plan for consideration. A revised version was circulated at the meeting incorporating the issues raised by the Local Economy PDS Committee at its meeting last week and further Officer comments. The Head of Local Economy and Regeneration explained the various changes that had been made. He advised that where possible specific resource funding had been identified and performance indicators clarified. Note had also been taken of the comments about 'Health Checks' and these had been identified separately within the Plan.

The Portfolio Plan for 2004/05 built on the work already undertaken this year and incorporated the objectives in the Council's Best Value Performance Plan management process for local economy and included the following outcomes:

- Growth of existing business supported;
- An enterprise culture encouraged;
- Inward investment encouraged;
- The skills level of residents and the workforce improved; and
- A Borough attractive to business, residents, investors and visitors.

The Portfolio Holder spoke in support of the Plan and highlighted cross portfolio working. He went on to draw attention to the following matters. Concerning the Anerley Business Centre (former Anerley Town Hall), he was pleased to note that the Business Units were now available for letting and the first agreement had been signed. It was expected that there would be a good take up of the units and reference was made to the history of the building and its importance to the area. Councillor Arthur made reference to the Further Education Colleges and a nationwide review being undertaken by the Skills Council, which could bring benefits in due course. Bromley had already commissioned its own review, which was more in depth, and this would inform the national review. A report on the outcomes would be submitted later in the year. The last aspect was tourism about which he felt the Borough did not exploit what it had to offer. Councillor Reddin reported that he was attending a seminar on this subject the following week and would report back on the outcome.

RESOLVED that the amended version of the Portfolio Plan 2004/05 be endorsed.

38 RESPONSE TO THE LONDON DEVELOPMENT AGENCY'S DRAFT REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY REPORT DR04050

The Portfolio Holder considered a suggested response to the draft Regional Economic Strategy for this Region, published by the London Development Agency (LDA). The LDA had invited responses to the draft Strategy from partners and stakeholders by the 29th April 2004. The background to the process was outlined and it was noted that other London regions would also be consulted on their areas with the whole process taking about six months, before a final strategy was available in the autumn.

It was proposed that Bromley's response should welcome the opportunity to be involved in the consultations, indicate support for the key themes and emphasise that the Council was keen to work with the LDA in delivering the objectives, building on the Borough's track record (SRB schemes, LDA2, innovation theme) and developing further engagement. Specific comments were suggested on the following areas - the LDA corporate plan, Crystal Palace SRB and the uniqueness of the Town, Town Centre Management, Transport, the visitor economy and London's Action Plan and local business

The Portfolio Holder reported that he had received comments from Councillor Gaster registering his concerns at the ceasing of SRB finance for Town Centre Management in Crystal Palace and the Crystal Palace Community Association had raised a number of separate issues. Councillor Gostt had also requested that reference be made to Biggin Hill Airport as a regional transport business. A letter had also been received from the Airport Director in respect of this issue. In response the Portfolio Holder acknowledged Biggin Hill Airport's importance to the Borough, but reported that the Airport Authority was producing their own Strategic Development Strategy later in the year and it would be appropriate to wait until that was available for discussion. So far as the comments submitted by the Crystal Palace Association these were noted but as the Council was responding to consultations he suggested the Association make their own separate views known direct to the LDA. Concerning Town Centre Management,

the Portfolio Holder considered there was a need for an in depth review to be carried out as there were several examples of different types of TC Management and cited the success of West Wickham. The Director of Resources agreed that a report reviewing Town Centre Management be submitted to the Portfolio Holder later in the year.

The Chairman of the PDS Committee drew attention to the need to look at transport links from East to West across the Borough and suggested that when consideration was given to across London orbital routes (especially bus routes) the possibility be looked at of these operating further south of London nearer to Purley/Orpington for example.

RESOLVED that

1) the draft response be approved, taking into consideration the above comments, and submitted as the Council's formal reply to the London Development Agency; and

2) the Director of Resources be requested to write to the Crystal Palace Community Association addressing the various issues they have raised and also to Councillors Gaster and Gostt.

39 BUSINESS FOCUS PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT 2004/05 Report DR04048

Consideration was given to a proposed Partnership Agreement between the Council and Business Focus, which set out the areas of joint working. Business Focus provided a voice for all local businesses as well as acting as the Chamber of Commerce for the Borough. Amongst the services it provided were:

- Pre start advice to new businesses and entrepreneurs;
- Business Mentoring for businesses up to 2 years old;
- Business advice and consultation to established and growing businesses; and
- An events programme and development for members of the Chamber.

Reference was made to a number of the joint schemes developed by Officers and Business Focus during the past year. The Partnership Agreement clarified these working areas so that both parties knew what was expected from each side. It continued to reflect the areas of work where there would be mutual benefit to both organisations in the interests of maintaining a positive working relationship. Under the Agreement the Council would provide financial support for Business Focus to enable it to undertake the joint working initiatives.

The Portfolio Holder spoke in support of the proposed Agreement and the continued working relationship with Business Focus and referred to some of the useful joint working initiatives he had been involved in.

RESOLVED that

1) the attached Partnership Agreement with Business Focus be endorsed;

2) a total of £50,000 be made available to Business Focus in four equal quarterly payments during 2004/05; and

3) a report on the performance and success of Business Focus be submitted to the Local Economy Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee on 24th June 2004.

Councillor Graham Arthur
Local Economy Executive Portfolio Holder

The meeting ended at 7.05pm.