

London Borough of Bromley

Report No.
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number]

PART 1 - PUBLIC

Agenda
Item No.

6

Title: **SOUTH LONDON INNOVATIONS PARTNERSHIP**

Decision Maker: **Local Economy Portfolio Holder** Decision Date: **30 June 2004**

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Non-Executive Non-Key

Budget/Policy Framework: Within policy and budget

Chief Officer: Paul Dale - Director of Resources

Contact Officer: Alfredo Mendes, Head of Local Economy and Regeneration
Tel: 020 8313 4880 E-mail: alfredo.mendes@bromley.gov.uk

Ward: Boroughwide

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides the Portfolio Holder for Local Economy with an update of work that has been undertaken by council officers in developing sub-regional innovations work with local businesses in partnership with other boroughs and South London Business. It seeks approval for further officer time to be used to progress the work.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Local Economy Portfolio Holder is asked to agree:
- (i) That Council Officers continue to commit staff time to developing and supporting the South London Innovations Partnership work in Bromley

3. Background

- 3.1 South London Business (SLB) were commissioned by the London Development Agency to promote and develop innovations work across the whole of South London. SLB tendered the commission and appointed Innovate South London to deliver the work early in last year. The LDA work has, as is common with their commissions specific targets that need to be achieved within certain timescales.
- 3.2 SLB and Innovate South London (ISL) set up a group of key stakeholders called the Innovation South London Partnership Group. This group was formed to try and ensure that there is good representation of all local and sub-regional interests in the work. It is made up of individuals from all seven Boroughs (Richmond, Kingston, Sutton, Merton, Croydon, Bromley and Wandsworth) and Chambers of Commerce with specialist industry partners and other business support groups such as Business Link and Kingston University.
- 3.3 The first meeting of the Innovation South London Partnership Group was held prior to a high profile launch of the initiative in Croydon on February 19th 2004. The meeting was well attended with for example the Executive Member for Local Economy in Croydon in attendance. The Partnership Group is meant to support the innovations work across South London by e.g.:
 - (i) Offering advice to Innovate South London
 - (ii) Reviewing project proposals and bidding opportunities to support the future development of this work
 - (iii) Making business referrals from partner agencies of creative and innovative companies
 - (iv) Disseminating information
 - (v) Recommending practical sites for possible innovation support centres
- 3.4 An important part of the ISL Partnership Group is to contribute to an overarching Innovation Action Plan for South London which reflects the LDA's own priorities as well as those of partners. This is currently being developed.
- 3.5 The launch of the initiative was held to coincide with the launch of the first Innovation Support Centre in the Airport House business complex in Croydon and guest speakers included Sir Robert Young (Permanent Sec at the DTI) and Lord Sainsbury who said amongst other things that 'Innovation is today one of the key drivers of business competitiveness'. The next meeting of this group is scheduled for June 24th.

4. Current Position

- 4.1 Innovate South London (ISL) have been receiving referrals from local partners Business Focus who have passed on companies that have an 'innovatory' aspect to their business for support from ISL. ISL have also contributed to marketing the recently opened Anerley Business Centre to innovative companies in their publicity and through their contacts.
- 4.2 Partners of the ISL Partnership Group were asked to bid for access to Innovate South London's services to develop innovations work in their area (taking into account the importance of sub-regional networking in April 2004).

- 4.3 The invitation was not for access to resources but to support and activity from Innovate South London under the next potential tranche of funding that SLB was seeking from the LDA. Partners were asked to prepare a presentation and ideas for the possibility of developing innovations work within their respective areas for the ISL Partnership Group to consider at their next meeting. Officers have prepared the outline attached as Appendix A to this report. This has been submitted in advance of the deadline and received initial positive comment from SLB especially around the proposal to develop The Studio as a Creative Industries hub in Bromley. The project manager of The Studio has given in principle agreement to submitting this idea.
- 4.4 There are no guarantees that these current proposals will receive agreement at the Partnership Group as other partners have submitted ideas and proposals. However, if it proves successful there are a number of advantages to the Borough. These would include: receiving services from ISL to our local businesses, promoting Bromley as an important innovations hub in South London (a statement that can be supported by our local economy e.g. number of fast growth companies), possible access to further LDA funds as they roll out the innovation work under their commitment to stimulate innovatory activity in the capital. In particular the proposals to develop a Creative Hub in The Studio ties in closely with the established purposes for which it is meant to be used and will be supported by the high level of activity in this industry within the adjoining, relatively deprived, area of the Borough in which it is located.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The proposals outlined in this report will help develop work in a number of key areas of the Local Economy Portfolio Plan especially in relation to Aim 1e which seeks to support and strengthen existing business groups and services in the Borough. In particular it will tie in directly one of the activities under this aim which is to work with SLB to develop awareness of innovative work in and around the Borough and one of the indicators which measures the number of enquiries relating to innovative work/events through South London Innovates.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications to Officers continuing to work up these ideas and maintain involvement in the ISL Partnership Group, although if the proposals contained in this report are agreed by the ISL Partnership Group there may be an increase in the commitment needed from Officers to engage and facilitate the development of these ideas and contribute to their implementation. Agreement for existing and potentially increased Officer commitment to this initiative is sought as part of this report. This will be contained within existing resources.

Non-Applicable Sections:	Personnel and Legal
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	[Title of document and date]