

BROMLEY ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP

Minutes of the meeting held on 21 April 2010

Present:

Councillor Julian Benington (Chairman)
Adrian Hollands, Chamber of Commerce (Vice-Chairman)
Kevin Dewick, Local Businessman
Neil Hawkins, LBB Renewal and Recreation
Marc Hume, LBB Renewal & Recreation
Peter Jones, Bromley College
Mary Manuel, LBB Renewal & Recreation
Liz McNaughton, Treval Engineering
Howard Oldstein, The Glades

Also Present:

Diane Diamond, Community Links Bromley
Francis McAuley, Community Links Bromley
Eithne Rynne, Community Links Bromley

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Malcolm Brabon – Business Link London, Robert Goddard – Thackray Williams, Tony Petim – Federation of Small Businesses and Fergus Grant – Jobcentre Plus.

2 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7th DECEMBER 2009 AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the meeting were agreed.

Matters Arising

1. The Chairman was pleased to note that Adrian Hollands would be acting as Vice-Chairman for the Partnership.
2. With regards to Item 3: Update from Sub-Groups, Councillor Benington confirmed that the proposed survey around how the opening of Tesco's in Orpington had affected local businesses would now go forward when the public realm works in Orpington High Street had been completed.
3. In relation to Item 5: Local Area Agreement: Progress Towards Worklessness Target, Mary Manuel gave an update on progress towards achieving the worklessness target in the Local Area Agreement. It was likely that approximately 80 clients would complete

13 weeks of sustained employment of more than 16 hours per week against a target of 100.

4. With regards to Item 10: Partnership Risk Management, Mary Manuel provided members of the Partnership with notes from a workshop around risk management held in July 2009. A draft risk register for the Partnership was circulated and it was agreed that this risk register would be adopted by the Partnership, and that sub groups would be asked to contribute to the register.

RESOLVED that the minutes be agreed.

3 THE ROLE OF THE VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR IN THE BROMLEY ECONOMY

Eithne Rynne, Director, Diane Diamond, Volunteer Centre Manager and Francis McAuley, Interim Capacity Building Manager of Community Links Bromley gave a presentation around the role of the voluntary and community sector in the Bromley economy.

It was highlighted that Bromley has a diverse voluntary and community sector, with 900 voluntary and community organisations and 400 active registered charities. The Volunteer Centre currently worked with 408 Volunteer Involving Organisations that delivered services throughout the borough, including charities, community groups, social enterprises and key public sector organisations, and acted as a brokerage service to members of the public seeking volunteering opportunities.

In terms of supporting the local economy, volunteering increased an organisation's capacity to deliver projects and services, added expertise and knowledge and played a crucial role in supporting social enterprises. In the Place Survey (2009), 60,000 people across Bromley had indicated they provided some kind of unpaid help, which was approximately 25% of the adult population of the borough. This provided an estimated benefit of £124,512,768 work per annum delivered by volunteers across the borough.

2212 people had registered an interest in volunteering during 2009, which was an increase of 73% on 2008, and had included a higher proportion of workers from the financial sector following the economic downturn. Of these people, 584 had indicated they were unemployed, which was an increase of 82% on 2008. There were a range of benefits to volunteering for jobseekers, these included increasing employability, learning new skills and reducing social isolation, but it was important to manage the expectations of volunteers around the kinds of opportunities available. Community Links was currently offering incentives to organisations to track the progress of jobseekers who were volunteering as they moved towards employment.

Peter Jones noted that Bromley College had worked with Community Links on a range of projects, including the 'Personal Best' programme around event volunteering. Bromley College also delivered the Redundancy Response

programme, which might offer an opportunity for Community Links to promote the benefits of volunteering to jobseekers.

The current emphasis was on building capacity within the volunteering sector to ensure more people could be brought into formalised volunteering. A recent social enterprise training day had provided a range of guidance to organisations on areas such as financial planning and fund raising. Mentoring schemes were also being run for small and medium sized enterprises to help these organisations tackle a range of issues, such as developing a business plan. Community Links currently had a bid into London Borough of Bromley to fund a capacity building programme to deliver more services to Bromley residents.

The Chairman thanked Eithne Rynne, Diane Diamond and Francis McAuley for their presentation, and noted the importance of the role of the voluntary and community sector in the Bromley economy.

RESOLVED that the presentation be noted.

4 UPDATE FROM SUB GROUPS

4.1 SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT SUB-GROUP

The Chairman, Peter Jones, reported that the Sub-group had not had a further meeting since the last meeting of the Economic Partnership, but that closer working with Jobcentre Plus continued to be a key priority.

Howard Oldstein highlighted the potential to utilise Jobcentre Plus as a broker for job vacancies at The Glades Shopping Centre and other retailers in Bromley town centre. The Director of Renewal and Recreation confirmed that Bromley Council was seeking to develop a similar brokerage scheme for appropriate vacancies within the Council.

In response to a question about how the economic downturn had impacted on the provision of Bromley College, Peter Jones confirmed that there had been a general increase in demand for college courses, but that funding for adult courses had been reduced for the 2010/11 academic year. He noted that the process of approving a course was relatively complicated and planned at a regional level.

The Director highlighted similar funding pressures had been identified across Bromley Adult Education College provision, and noted the potential to deliver shared services across providers of further education to mitigate the impact of any future funding reductions.

There continued to be a high demand for apprenticeship schemes, which were available across a wide range of industries including IT, hairdressing and motor vehicle maintenance. It was important to increase awareness of these schemes, working with the National Apprenticeship Service and local

employers to build on the number of job placements available across Bromley.

4.2 BUSINESS COMPETITIVENESS AND INVESTMENT SUB-GROUP

The Chairman, Howard Oldstein confirmed that the Business Competitiveness and Inward Investment and Marketing Sub-groups had now been merged and that key areas of consideration included identifying ways to engage with larger businesses and highlighting examples of good practice.

Recent measures to improve the marketability of Bromley Town Centre included a cleaning programme and a potential welcome pack to attract new businesses. The Bromley Business Forum had recently been established and would give local businesses a voice in the future development of Bromley Town Centre.

The survey around Bromley North had been completed and the results would be available shortly. The Inward Investment brochure was due to be published in May 2010. Consideration was also given to how to better market our town centres through local newspapers and other media.

RESOLVED that progress be noted.

5 UPDATE FROM DIRECTOR OF RENEWAL AND RECREATION

The Director of Renewal and Recreation gave an update on economic activity across the Council.

The public examination process for the Bromley Town Centre Area Action Plan had been completed. The Inspector's report is due in the week commencing 16th July 2010. It was hoped that Member approval would shortly be secured to re-market the Old Town Hall site as a potential hotel and conference centre/offices. Consultants had been approached regarding the development plans for Bromley North Village, which would provide a mix of residential, commercial, retail and office space as well as transport improvements. Officers were also in discussion with Network Rail regarding a £6 million investment in improvements to Bromley South Station. Bromley Council and Bromley Mytime are finalising Heads of Terms for a £5.5 million redevelopment of the Pavillion Leisure Centre.

A wide range of events were planned for Bromley Town Centre during Summer 2010, including a Battle of Britain event to be held prior to the Biggin Hill Air Show. £100,000 had been invested in the cleaning of Bromley Town Centre during early 2010, and this would be.

There would shortly be a reorganisation within Renewal and Recreation Department, bringing the Town Centre Management team and Business Support Services team together. It was hoped that the senior Town Centre Manager would be appointed shortly. The issue of town centre lights for

Christmas 2010 was already under consideration, with a view to delivering an improved offer.

The Orpington Public Realm improvements were ongoing and were expected to be completed in July 2010. The relocation of Orpington library was also in progress, and proposed improvements to the new library site had now been approved. Options for the former library site and museum are being reviewed and will be considered by Members in May/June.

The new Biggin Hill leisure facility was nearing completion. The library would open on 30th April 2010, with the swimming pool opening on 17th May 2010. Work was also being undertaken to encourage the development of the West Camp site as a business park. Other sites of business interest across the borough included the Dylon International Ltd site, which had now been granted planning permission for residential and office development. Officers were also working to ensure the former Glaxo-Wellcome site would be marketed effectively.

Recent activities by the Business Support Services team included a highly successful Boost your Business event and a number of lunch events for local businesses hosted by the Mayor.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

6 BROMLEY'S ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK

A report on the draft Economic Framework and an indicative template for 3 year rolling Action Plans for each of the three strategic priorities was considered by the Economic Partnership.

The three strategic priorities were:

- Sustaining and growing business and investment
- Vibrant and thriving town centres
- Improving employment opportunities for residents

It was requested that the Businesses Competitiveness and Investment Sub-group lead on developing the action plan for Strategic Priority 1 and the Skills and Employment Sub-group lead on developing the plan for Strategic Priority 3, as these priorities were in line with the aims of the Sub-groups.

With regard to Strategic Priority 2, the Director of Renewal and Recreation suggested that the Bromley and Orpington Business Forums might be best placed to develop a relevant and practical action plan in partnership with other business groups from across the borough, reporting progress back to the Bromley Economic Partnership.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the three strategy priorities for 2010-13 within the draft Economic Framework be noted;
- 2) the Business Competitiveness and Investment Sub Group develop, manage and monitor an Action Plan for Strategic Priority 1;
- 3) the Skills and Employment Sub Group develop, manage and monitor an Action Plan for Strategic Priority 3;
- 4) consideration be given to the mechanism to develop, manage and monitor Strategic Priority 2;
- 5) that that an updated version of the Economic Framework and the completed action plans for Strategic Priority 1 and 3 be provided to the next meeting of the Partnership.

7 SCRUTINY OF PARTNERSHIP BY COUNCIL PDS COMMITTEES

The Chairman explained that from the new municipal year, the meetings of the Bromley Economic Partnership would be scheduled shortly after the meetings of the Renewal and Recreation Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee to enable the Committee to consider the agendas of the Bromley Economic Partnership as part of its scrutiny role.

Future meetings of the Bromley Economic Partnership would also be open to the public and its reports made available on the Bromley website. Measures would be implemented to ensure sensitive information or that which related to specific businesses remained confidential

RESOLVED that future scrutiny arrangements be noted.

8 DATES OF MEETINGS FOR 2010/11

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Bromley Economic Partnership would be held at 4.00pm on Tuesday 6th July 2010.

9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mary Manuel directed members of the Partnership to www.bromleypartnerships.org/. This website included a range of information around the different partnership groups that were working to build a better Bromley for residents, workers and businesses across the borough.

Peter Jones informed the Partnership that the capital building programme at Bromley College was nearing conclusion, with the Technology Centre now in use. The official opening would be held on 22nd June 2010.

RESOLVED that other business be noted.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending.

The Meeting ended at 5.55 pm

Chairman