

BROMLEY ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP

Minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2010

Present:

Councillor Julian Benington (Chairman)
Adrian Hollands, Chamber of Commerce (Vice-Chairman)
Robert Goddard, Thackray Williams Solicitors LLP
Marc Hume, LBB Renewal & Recreation
Mary Manuel, LBB Renewal & Recreation
Liz McNaughton, Treval Engineering
Kevin Munnely, Town Centre Development
Howard Oldstein, The Glades
Sam Parrett, Bromley College
Prathiba Ramsingh, Jobcentre Plus
Chandra Sharma, Federation of Small Businesses

Also Present:

Councillor Sarah Phillips, Chairman, Renewal and Recreation
PDS Committee
Michael Wheeler, Bromley Adult Education College

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Martin Pinnell – Head of Town Centre Management and Business Support.

Apologies for lateness had been received from Chandra Sharma – Federation of Small Businesses and Liz McNaughton – Treval Engineering.

2 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 6TH JULY 2010 AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the meeting were agreed.

Matters Arising:

1. With regard to Item 7: Update from Director of Renewal and Recreation from the meeting of 6th July 2010, the Chairman confirmed that the application for Darwin to be granted UNESCO status as a World Heritage Centre had not been successful, as there was no provision for a 'living landscape' to be a World Heritage Site. The application would be reconsidered in due course if appropriate.

RESOLVED that the minutes be agreed.

3 NATIONAL AND REGIONAL CHANGES: UPDATE

The Chairman led a discussion updating partners on key updates in national and regional changes in relation to the work of the Economic Partnership.

The forthcoming Decentralisation and Localism Bill was due to be published in November 2010 and would provide details on how power would be returned to local authorities and communities through a number of measures including control of housing and planning decisions. It had also been announced that England's Regional Development Agencies would be abolished, signalling the end of the regional tier of government and the emergence of a renewed local approach, although London would retain a form of development agency.

In June 2010, the Government wrote to all English local authorities inviting them to submit proposals around the development of Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). These would be grouped around functional economic areas and would be private-sector led. It was likely that a pan-London LEP would be developed, however South London Partnership had also submitted an Expression of Interest proposal for an LEP covering the South London region and comprising of LB Bromley, Croydon, Kingston, Merton, Richmond, Sutton and Wandsworth.

Other new developments included the requirement for unitary authorities, including London Boroughs, to undertake a Local Economic Assessment, and the publication of the Mayor of London's Economic Development Strategy. The Comprehensive Spending Review would have a significant impact on the resources available at a local level in the future. Regional Growth Funding would be made available to areas of very high unemployment but it was unlikely that London boroughs would be allocated any of this funding.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

4 PARTNER UPDATES

Members of the Partnership had undertaken a range of activities since the last meeting. The Inward Investment Brochure was currently being redesigned and would be launched in due course. The Chairman highlighted that the Bromley Local Strategic Partnership would continue to meet on a more informal basis following recent Government advice that there was no requirement that they continue to meet. Subject to partners' continuing involvement, sub-groups of the LSP, including the Safer Bromley Partnership and the Bromley Economic Partnership would continue to drive forward partner-led innovation across the borough.

The Chairman noted that Chandra Sharma had taken a broader role for the South East London region of the Federation of Small Businesses and that Rob Cundy would be representing the Federation in Bromley in future. Sam Parrett informed partners that Bromley College of Further and Higher Education and Orpington College were again considering taking forward a merger of their provision.

RESOLVED that the update 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.

With regard to the Comprehensive Spending Review, the Director confirmed that options to reduce costs and increase efficiency across the Renewal and Recreation Department would be considered by Councillors in early 2011, but that efforts would be made to protect front line services. Any reductions in funding by Government would not directly impact the development across Bromley Town Centre as this would be funded externally by private sector investment.

In terms of development across the borough, Biggin Hill had been identified as a potential Strategic Development Centre for Outer London in the Mayor's London plan and would be a key location in the borough to attract new investment. Work to support the development of the proposed Biggin Hill Heritage Centre and the West Camp site was continuing. The Orpington Public Realm scheme had been officially opened by the London Mayor and work on the new Orpington library had begun. The Council was currently in discussions with English Heritage around how to develop the museum offer in the borough. The Master Plan for Crystal Palace Park had been approved by Government and Bromley Council was seeking a prestige partner to help drive forward the development. The former Glaxo Wellcome site had now been sold and discussions would shortly begin with the developers around the potential of the site, particularly in supporting future employment.

The Bromley Area Action Plan had been approved by the Government and investment was being sought across the different sites with a promotional event planned for Spring 2011 to highlight the investment opportunities in the borough. Work with the developer of the Westmoreland Road Car Park site was progressing well and planning permission was now being sought for the site. Bromley North Village had been selected for inclusion in the Mayor's Great Spaces Initiative and work had begun on the improvement programme with a bid to Transport for London for £3m. The tendering process for the Old Town Hall site was currently being undertaken with an aim of establishing a high quality conference centre or hotel.

Network Rail had agreed to fund improved disability access to Bromley South Station. The Council was working with Network Rail in the hope of extending this development to deliver an improved station offer. The Council was currently considering investment options for Site G, including a potential relocation of Bromley Civic Centre to the new development, and was also in the process of appointing a Development Advisor to support the Council in procuring development partners.

Town centre events across the borough had proved popular and a programme of events for the next 12 months was currently being developed. Councillors were also spearheading a 'tidy-up' programme in Bromley Town

Centre to identify ways to improve the attractiveness of the town to Bromley residents and visitors.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

6 LOCAL ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT

Members of the Partnership considered the requirement for unitary authorities, including London Boroughs, to undertake a Local Economic Assessment.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the requirement for the Council to undertake a Local Economic Assessment be noted;**
- 2) information identified by partners as contributing to the Local Economic Assessment be provided to Council Officers.**

7 BROMLEY'S ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK

Members of the Partnership considered an update on the implementation of Bromley's Economic Framework.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the changes to the objectives under each of the Strategic Priorities proposed by the Sub-Groups as part of the Economic Framework for 2010-12 be considered;**
- 2) partners consider how to incorporate the objectives of the Economic Framework in their organisation's forward plan.**

8 BUSINESS COMPETITIVENESS AND INVESTMENT AND TOWN CENTRES SUB GROUPS - UPDATE AND PROGRESS AGAINST DELIVERY PLANS

The Chairman, Howard Oldstein gave an update on the progress of the Business Competitiveness and Investment Sub Group. A key issue identified by the Sub Group was the need to ensure a strong communications strategy was in place. Initiatives such as the Boost your Business events had proved popular, and Chandra Sharma highlighted that the Federation of Small Businesses planned to deliver a high profile trade event in Bromley in Spring 2011.

In supporting Strategic Priority 1: Sustaining and Growing Business and Investment, the Sub Group had been considering proposals for inclusion in the Council's Business Support Programme.

The Town Centres Sub Group had initially had responsibility for the delivery of the action plan for Strategic Priority 2. Howard Oldstein confirmed that following changes to the Town Centres Sub Group, Strategic Priority 2: Vibrant and Thriving Town Centres would now come under the Business Competitiveness and Investment Group. It was important to ensure town centres continued to work together and Chandra Sharma suggested that the membership of the Town Centres Sub Group be refocused to the leads of the local business forums across the borough.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the recent work of the Business Competitiveness and Investment and Town Centres Sub-Groups and future proposed work be noted;**
- 2) Changes to the Business Competitiveness and Investment and Town Centres Sub-Groups be agreed;**
- 3) Progress to date and planned activities under the Economic Framework's Strategic Priorities 1 and 2 be noted.**

9 SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT SUB GROUP - UPDATE AND PROGRESS AGAINST DELIVERY PLAN

Michael Wheeler, Principal of Bromley Adult Education Centre gave an update on the progress of the Skills and Employment Sub Group and noted that the membership of the Sub Group had been widened to include representatives of the voluntary and community sector.

Funding remained an issue in the area of adult skills training, although adult apprenticeships were a potential growth area with additional funding identified in the Comprehensive Spending Review. It was important to ensure training was tailored to the needs of employers and the Sub Group had been working with Jobcentre Plus to identify the needs of employers and of those seeking employment. Prathiba Ramsingh confirmed that people who had experienced long term unemployment remained a priority for Jobcentre Plus and often faced multiple barriers into employment.

The Economic Partnership considered the Action Plan for Strategic Priority 3: Improving Employment Opportunities for Residents. Sam Parrett noted that funding for adults to attain Level 3 qualifications had been reduced, which might impact the action plan. The planned merger of Bromley College of Further and Higher Education and Orpington College would support more effective working. Bromley College had also strengthened its links with University of Greenwich, which provided a cost effective way for local students to access degree level courses. Current skills gaps that had been identified included engineering, manufacturing and aeronautical engineering, and the Colleges would seek to meet these skills needs. The development of Bromley Town Centre would also provide more employment opportunities in

the hospitality and catering industry and there was potential to establish a training restaurant in the borough.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the recent work of the Skills and Employment Sub Group and future proposed work be noted;**
- 2) Progress to date and planned activities under the Economic Framework's Strategic Priority 3 be noted.**

10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman led a discussion around the format of Bromley Economic Partnership meetings. It was proposed that the meetings become more practical, with one or two major issues impacting the borough economy to be discussed by partners at each meeting. These issues might include communications, including the redesign of the Business Support pages on the Bromley Council website and better communication between the members of the Partnership. The Director of Renewal and Recreation Department confirmed that a Communications and Public Relations Officer would shortly be recruited by the Renewal and Recreation Department and would report to the next meeting of the Bromley Economic Partnership.

A proposal to introduce a Business Improvement District (BID) to an area of the borough, such as Orpington, was also highlighted as a potential area for discussion. The Chairman underlined the success of the BIDs scheme across the country and noted that a small increase in business rates within an area could support sustained improvement in the local economy and encourage inward investment. It was suggested that a speaker should be invited to the next meeting of the Partnership to explain the BIDs process in more detail.

RESOLVED that the issues raised be noted.

11 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

4.00pm, Monday 17th January 2011
4.00pm, Monday 18th April 2011

The Meeting ended at 5.41 pm

Chairman