

BROMLEY ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP

Minutes of the meeting held at 4.00 pm on 14 January 2014

Present:

Councillor Peter Morgan (Chairman)
Adrian Hollands, Baker Tilly Tax and Accounting Limited (Vice-Chairman)
Robert Goddard, Thackray Williams Solicitors LLP
Mike Lewis, Michael Rogers LLP
Colin Maclean, Community Links Bromley
Sam Parrett, Bromley College of Further and Higher Education
Martin Pinnell, LBB Head of Town Centre Management and Business Support
Suzanne Sharp, NewsQuest
Katy Woolcott, London Biggin Hill Airport

Also Present:

Margaret Carr, LBB Projects and Partnership Manager
Councillor Peter Fookes
Dave Freeborn, George Proctor & Partners
Jackie Goad, LBB Executive Assistant
Mark Henderson, MSE UK
Lesley Holland, Bromley Education Business Partnership

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Carol Arnfield – Bromley Adult Education College, Bek Bekir – National Apprenticeships Service, Jeff East – Acorn Commercial, Mike Ellis, Prospects / South London Business, Hannah Jackson – LBB Community Development Manager, Mary Manuel – Head of Planning Strategy and Projects, Marc Myers – intu Bromley, Steve Nelson – South East London Chamber of Commerce and Jean Norton – Bromley Education Business Partnership

2 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8TH OCTOBER 2013 AND MATTERS ARISING

In considering matters arising from the previous meeting, the Head of Town Centre Management and Business Support confirmed that businesses would be contacted shortly to identify if there was interest in the potential to develop a Business Improvement District or other form of cross-working between businesses based in the area around Worsley Bridge Road. The possibility of introducing a loyalty card scheme for Bromley town centre, similar to that recently launched by the Orpington 1st BID Company for Orpington town centre, was also being explored.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 8th October 2013 be agreed.

3 UPDATES ON MAIN PARTNERSHIP THEMES AND OTHER RELEVANT COUNCIL INITIATIVES:

Members of the Partnership gave an update around progress across the main themes of the Partnership.

A) TOWN CENTRE DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

The Chairman gave an update on Town Centre Development across the Borough.

Progress was continuing across the sites that made up the Bromley Town Centre Area Action Plan. The Council had received the judgement of the High Court following the challenge from Linden Homes/Network Rail to the number of residential units that could be accommodated on Site A: Bromley North. The Council was required to prepare, publish, consult upon and promote a new policy for the site, and it was proposed that this be included in the forthcoming Local Plan. Officers were continuing to work with Transport for London to examine the business case underpinning a potential extension of the Docklands Light Railway to Bromley North following completion of economic and design feasibility and viability assessments of a number of options.

Site B: Tweedy Road was currently being used as a temporary compound to store materials and plant machinery relating to the public realm improvements at Bromley North Village. This would continue for a period of two years. With regard to Site C: the Old Town Hall, contracts had been exchanged with the Cathedral Group based on their proposal to convert the Town Hall to a hotel, conference centre and associated restaurants and bars. Following a review of the options for Site F: Civic Centre, it had been agreed that in the short term, up to 2015, the Council would meet its accommodation needs through more efficient use of the campus site. Ann Springman and Joseph Lancaster buildings had now been vacated, and the short term use of these buildings was being considered.

In considering Site G: West of High Street, Officers continued to work with Muse Developments on agreeing a viable scheme proposal and partnership arrangements for a mixed-use development incorporating residential, retail and community and health facilities. Improvements to Site J: Bromley South continued. A permanent kiss and drop off point on the Waitrose access road had been completed and the further development potential of the station site was being considered as part of the Local Plan review. The redevelopment of Site K: Westmoreland Road Car Park was progressing in accordance with the programme plan. The scheme was due for completion by Autumn 2015.

Planning permission for the redevelopment of Site L: Former DHSS as a mixed-use residential and office scheme had been approved by Development Control Committee on 6th October 2013, subject to a Planning Agreement and GLA referral. The site owners, Telereal Trillium had subsequently sold the site to the Education Funding Agency which proposed to use Site L to house a three form of entry bi-lingual (French) primary school from September 2014.

Work was underway in East Street and Market Square as part of the planned public realm improvements to Bromley North Village which was expected to finish in Winter 2014. A significant issue with a water main in the High Street had caused some early difficulties, and Thames Water had now commenced works to replace the water main, which was expected to take three months.

In terms of development across the Borough, Officers were continuing to work with a new consortium that was seeking to implement a comprehensive improvement programme in the Walnuts Shopping Centre, Orpington. Planning permission had been granted for the scheme and authority had been obtained to sell the Local Authority's freehold interest in an area adjoining Crown Buildings which was required for the scheme. Crown buildings had been demolished and the developer was progressing negotiations for the pre-letting of the new units. A developer had expressed an interest in purchasing the Police Station site with a view to developing a mixed-use scheme comprising residential and a health and wellbeing centre, and Officers were advising on how this scheme might be progressed.

The Local Authority had been successful in a first round application to the Heritage Lottery Fund to develop detailed designs for The Priory to support a second round application to the Heritage Lottery Fund, and a consultation event would be held on Thursday 16th January 2014 at The Priory.

In considering public realm improvements in Beckenham town centre, a funding bid to the Transport for London Area Based Programme had been successful and initial design funding had been provided to support the development of a scheme. A full range of short term improvement projects had also been approved by the Beckenham and West Wickham Town Centres Working Party on 7th February 2013, and the Beckenham Town Team continued to work closely with Officers on developing the programme of improvements.

Mark Henderson, MSE UK was concerned at the loss of industrial space in the Borough, particularly for larger businesses and requested that further information on development of former industrial sites in the area around Worsley Bridge Road be provided to the next meeting of the Bromley Economic Partnership.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

B) LOCAL PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The Head of Town Centre Management and Business Support provided an update on the development of planning policy in the Borough.

Development Control Committee considered a report at its meeting on 7th January 2014 regarding draft policies and designations, which would also be considered by the Council's Executive at its meeting on 15th January 2014 with a view to agreeing consultation to start later this month for a period of six weeks. This was the next stage in the preparation of Bromley's Local Plan, and would lead to a Draft Local Plan for consultation later in 2014. Draft policies covered all aspects of the Local Plan, including housing, open space, business areas, town

centres, local parades and community facilities. Members of the Partnership were encouraged to contribute to the consultation where appropriate.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

C) GROWTH AND DELIVERY PLANS

The Head of Town Centre Management and Business Support advised members of the Partnership that work was currently being undertaken to identify the development capacity in Bromley, Biggin Hill and Cray Valley, and that this would be used to inform the Local Plan for Bromley.

The Chairman noted the potential to develop a growth and delivery plan for the area around Worsley Bridge Road, where there was a significant amount of industrial land.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

D) DLR EXTENSION TO BROMLEY

The Chairman advised members of the Partnership that Officers continued to work with Transport for London to examine the business case underpinning a potential extension of the Docklands Light Railway to Bromley North. The projected cost of the extension was very high (over £0.5bn) and therefore it was unlikely that the scheme would be approved. As an alternative, the Local Authority was requesting an improved link which would connect Bromley North station directly to Lewisham station, from which passengers could access the Docklands Light Railway.

The Chairman noted that Officers were also liaising with Transport for London around how key access roads into Bromley Town centre could be improved.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

E) TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT AND BUSINESS SUPPORT

The Head of Town Centre Management and Business Support gave an update on progress across the main Partnership themes of Town Centre Management and Business Support in Quarter 3 2013/14.

In Quarter 3 2013/14, the Town Centre Management and Business Support Service had worked to deliver a number of events in town centres including several Christmas celebration events and Christmas markets.

8.2% of units were currently vacant in Bromley town centre (excluding into Bromley shopping centre), which was lower than the national average of approximately 14%. Orpington and Penge town centres currently had vacancy rates of 12% and 8.5% respectively, and Beckenham town centre had a vacancy rate of just 2.4%. Work was ongoing to respond to applications from local areas for funding from the Local Parades Improvement Initiative Fund and, if all existing

applications for projects were approved and delivered to budget, the fund was expected to be fully committed by the end of the 2013/14 financial year.

The Local Authority continued to maintain direct contact with the Orpington 1st BID Company through the attendance of non-voting members, Councillor William Huntington-Thresher and Martin Pinnell. Following a feasibility study undertaken around additional BIDs (Business Improvement Districts) being established in other town centres across the Borough, a report would be considered by the Council's Executive on 15th January 2014 about whether to focus resources on a potential Bromley town centre BID (Business Improvement District).

The Bromley Town Business Growth Club continued to be delivered in partnership with ActionCOACH Business Coaching and was supported by the Outer London Fund. The programme would end in January 2014 and Officers had been working with ActionCOACH to design a feedback survey to identify the impact of the programme on participating businesses. Officers had also been working with other organisations to organise and host joint support events including a Start Up Loans evening in November 2013, co-hosted with Prospects Business Services, and a networking event in December 2013, co-hosted with Metrobank and the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England & Wales.

Future activities for the Town Centre Management and Business Support Service included presentation of the options and issues for the development of a Bromley town centre BID to the Council's Executive. Work would also be undertaken to engage more with local businesses and town centre stakeholders, including continuing to support the Orpington 1st BID Company and Beckenham Town Team, as well as working to establish the Bromley Stakeholder Group with a focus on a possible Bromley town centre BID. An events and activities programme for the managed town centres during 2014/15 would also be developed. A report on options and recommendations for a Christmas lights policy and procurement of Christmas lights services would be presented to Councillors in April 2014.

Other activities would include work to promote the remaining Bromley Business Growth CLUB programme events and evaluate the effectiveness of the programme as part of the Outer London Fund evaluation, as well as consider whether there was potential to extend the programme.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) Recent work around Town Centre Management and Business Support in the 3rd Quarter of 2013/14 be noted; and**
- 2) The plans for Town Centre Management and Business Support activity for the 4th Quarter of 2013/14 be noted.**

F) OUTER LONDON FUND

The Chairman confirmed that work was being undertaken with design teams to extend public realm improvements in Bromley North Village throughout Bromley town centre which would include the introduction of 'Legible London' wayfinding

signs and work to upgrade bus shelters, as well as supporting businesses in Bromley North Village to improve their premises.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

G) EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS INITIATIVES

Margaret Carr, LBB Projects and Partnership Manager gave an update on employment and skills initiatives across the Borough.

The Government's Work Programme continued to support people into work. A further programme was now being developed to target people who were long term unemployed which would include the provision of community work placements as well as information, advice and guidance on moving into employment. A number of other programmes were delivered across the Borough by a range of stakeholders, including the Bromley Youth Employment Project (also known as the Star Project), work clubs at the Mottingham Community and Learning Shop, Cotmandene Community Resource Centre, and Kentwood Centre, and the Tackling Troubled Families Programme.

The Thyme Out Too project, funded by the Big Lottery, offered free horticultural training to people with learning disabilities. A significant number of the participants in the scheme obtained City and Guilds or entry level qualifications, and three participants had been supported into work. The Chairman advised members of the Partnership that the Body Shop had recently held a corporate day with the Thyme Out Too project to plant a scented spring garden in Bromley town centre and underlined the benefits that similar events offered local businesses.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

4 PARTNER UPDATES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR JOINT WORKING TO INCLUDE:

Members of the Partnership had undertaken a range of activities since the last meeting.

A) BOROUGH OFFICERS GROUP AND DISCUSSION OF POTENTIAL JOINT PROJECTS FOR 2014/15

Jackie Goad, Executive Assistant outlined the work of the Borough Officer Group which brought together representatives from the public and voluntary sector in Bromley to support collaborative working across a range of areas.

The Borough Officers Group had developed six main priorities which comprised the integration of health and social care, asset management, strengthening the community and voluntary enterprise sector, the local economy, pooling resources and early intervention, prevention and safeguarding. It was aimed to deliver a range of neighbourhood projects targeting these priorities, with Government funding made available through the neighbourhood budgets programme. The

Executive Assistant asked members of the Partnership to consider any potential projects which support the achievement of these priorities.

Mike Lewis, Michael Rogers LLP underlined the recent presentation to the Bromley Economic Partnership by the Bromley Arts and Community Initiative and noted the potential to support the work of this Bromley-based community group as part of the programme.

B) EMPLOYMENT/UNEMPLOYMENT TRENDS IN THE BOROUGH

The Head of Town Centre Management and Business Support reported labour market information provided by Jobcentre Plus. The November 2013 Jobseeker Allowance Count had totalled 4130 claimants. This was a decrease of 130 claimants from the previous month and of 1455 claimants from November 2012. The number of people moving onto Jobseekers Allowance in November 2013 was 1010 claimants which was 3.8% lower than in November 2012. As at November 2013, 940 18-24 year olds were claiming Jobseekers Allowance, which was a decrease of 15 claimants on October 2013 and of 330 claimants from November 2012.

C) BIGGIN HILL AIRPORT

Katy Woolcott, London Biggin Hill Airport provided an update on developments at London Biggin Hill Airport following its identification as a Strategic Outer London Development Centre in the London Plan, and as part of the LoCATE (London Centre for Aviation Technology and Enterprise) project which brought together a cluster of modern aviation-related businesses at and around London Biggin Hill Airport to support continued economic development in the area. Work would be undertaken to ensure that the economic development potential of London Biggin Hill Airport as a Strategic Outer London Development Centre was reflected fully in the Local Plan for Bromley and support the airport in its aim to realise a further 2300 jobs in and around the airport by 2031.

The recent report following the Airports Commission independent review had recognised the important role of local airports in supporting general and business aviation into the future.

D) COMMERCIAL PROPERTY MARKET

Mike Lewis, Michael Rogers LLP gave an update on the commercial property market in the Borough. The market for office, industrial and retail space had recovered, however there was currently no Grade A office space available to let in Bromley and there was a general need for more high quality commercial property to be developed across the Borough with sufficient space for parking.

RESOLVED that the updates be noted.

5 BROMLEY ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP WORK PROGRAMME 2014/15

Members of the Partnership considered the forward rolling work programme for

the Bromley Economic Partnership for 2014/15.

A number of themes that might be explored at future meetings were suggested. These comprised:

- London Enterprise Partnership – the agenda for London
- Transport for London – major transport schemes affecting the Borough
- LBB Environment & Community Services and private providers – recycling business waste
- Jobcentre Plus – employment and unemployment trends in the Borough
- Crystal Palace Park Development – engagement with the Bromley Economic Partnership

RESOLVED that the work programme for the Bromley Economic Partnership for 2014/15 be noted.

6 GENERAL NEWS ROUND

Sam Parrett, Bromley College of Further and Higher Education was pleased to confirm that Bromley College of Further and Higher Education would shortly launch a career college specialising in food and enterprise. This provision would be based at the College's Orpington Campus from September 2014, and would prepare students for employment in the catering and hospitality industry. An Options Event open day would be held on Saturday 1st February 2014, and members of the Partnership were requested to consider how they might assist the College in linking with local restaurateurs. A unit in the Walnut's Shopping Centre would also be converted to a hairdressing training centre shortly. A member of the College staff had been seconded to work for the London Enterprise Partnership which would enable closer working around employment and skills. Bromley College of Further and Higher Education was also seeking Bromley employers to act as Governors.

Suzanne Sharp, NewsQuest reported that an edition of the News Shopper Lifestyle Magazine would be published in March 2014. This high end publication was targeted to local business owners and members of the Partnership were requested to contribute news items around the local economy, voluntary and education and skills sectors. New functionality was now available on the News Shopper website to allow members of the public to directly submit their news stories, videos and photographs.

Adrian Hollands, Baker Tilly Tax and Accounting Limited (Vice-Chairman) was pleased to announce that he would be retiring at the end of March 2014. His colleague, Karen Hine would be attending future meetings of the Partnership as a representative of Baker Tilly Tax and Accounting Limited.

Robert Goddard, Thackray Williams Solicitors LLP reported that there had been considerable growth in demand for legal services in recent months, and that Thackray Williams Solicitors LLP had been recruiting new staff to meet this demand.

Mark Henderson, MSE UK advised members of the Partnership that MSE UK, a long established family firm which manufactured hospital and centrifuge equipment, continued to increase its export markets. The company currently exported 35% of its products. Increased investment was currently being made to develop new products for the British transfusion market.

Dave Freeborn, George Proctor & Partners, noted that residential property prices had increased approximately 10-15% over the past year in parts of the Borough. There was also increased interest in the purchase of land for development.

The Chairman advised Members of the Partnership that an international competition had been launched to find an architect to rebuild the Crystal Palace which would be open to expressions of interest until 20th January 2014, after which three architect teams would be shortlisted to prepare a detailed submission including initial concept designs. The contest was backed by the Chinese Zhang Rong Group which planned to spend £500 million resurrecting the Bromley landmark for use as a hotel and conference centre, and for other commercial space.

RESOLVED that the updates be noted.

7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Colin Maclean, Community Links Bromley, announced that Bromley's Corporate Social Responsibility Expo would be held at 5.30pm on Thursday 13th March 2014 at Bromley Civic Centre and invited all members of the Partnership to attend. This event would showcase the voluntary sector in the Borough and support the development of links between local businesses and third sector organisations.

The Chairman noted that Adrian Hollands, Baker Tilly Tax and Accounting Limited would soon be retiring and thanked him on behalf of the members of the Economic Partnership for the excellent and long-standing contribution he had made to the London Borough of Bromley during his time as a member and Vice-Chairman of the Bromley Economic Partnership.

RESOLVED that the issues raised be noted.

8 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

4.00pm, Thursday 10th April 2014

The Meeting ended at 5.42 pm

Chairman