

BROMLEY ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP

Minutes of the meeting held at 4.00 pm on 12 April 2016

Present:

Councillor Peter Morgan (Chairman)
Katy Woolcott, London Biggin Hill Airport (Vice-Chairman)
Dave Freeborn, Proctors
Michael Humphries, Handelsbanken
Kate Miller, intu Bromley
Steve Nelson, South East London Chamber of Commerce
Martin Pinnell, LBB Head of Town Centre Management and Business Support
Chandra Sharma, Federation of Small Businesses
Adam Smith, Mytime Active
Lee Thomas, Fairlight Group
Liz Waghorn, Jobcentre Plus

Also Present:

Councillor Julian Benington
Keith Casson, Enterprise Europe Network
Jane Knight, The Successful Mums Project
Kevin Munnelly, LBB Head of Town Centre Renewal
David Warnes, Bromley College of Further and Higher Education
Madeleine Williams, Access Europe Network

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Councillor Ian F. Payne, Mark Henderson – MSE UK, Lesley Holland – LBB Operations Manager, Bromley Education Business Partnership, Mike Lewis – Michael Rogers LLP, Colin Maclean – Community Links Bromley and Mary Manuel – LBB Head of Planning Strategy and Projects.

2 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12TH JANUARY 2016 AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th January 2016 were agreed, and signed as a correct record. There were no matters arising.

3 EU FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES (PRESENTATION BY MADELEINE WILLIAMS, ACCESS EUROPE NETWORK)

Ms Madeleine Williams, Director, Access Europe Network gave a presentation on EU Funding Opportunities. Access Europe Network was established two years ago, with the aim of helping London businesses win European funding. European funding was extremely competitive and Access Europe Network

worked with businesses to improve the quality of their applications, and had a contact list of just under 2,000 EU partners.

Ms Williams informed the Partnership of the current large funding allocations that were available for London. The first of these was the European Social Fund of £450m, grants from which required 50% match funding. Further programmes within the fund were soon to be published and included the Troubled Families programme and sector-specific skills programmes. The second allocation was the European Regional Development Fund of £175m, which also required 50% match funding, for which decisions were expected towards the end of April 2016.

Members were advised that to avoid missing out on funding opportunities, they could subscribe to the Access Europe Network briefing and email alerts. Further support was also offered in the form of programme seminars and application workshops, which were useful for knowing what to write when applying, and support with the development of proposals.

A discussion took place regarding examples of bids that had been made. Members enquired as to whether the London Borough of Bromley had applied for any of the funding previously mentioned. Mr David Warnes, Bromley College of Further and Higher Education confirmed that the College had recently made three European Social Fund bids in collaboration with the London Borough of Bromley, and they were currently awaiting the outcome. Mr Martin Pinnell, LBB Head of Town Centre Management and Business Support informed the group that a bid to the European Regional Development Fund had also been made by the London Borough of Bromley in partnership with the College and the London Borough of Croydon. Ms Williams agreed to provide Mr Pinnell with a contact list of Local Authority officers that subscribed to Access Europe Network email alerts in order coordinate a more cohesive approach when applying for funding.

Councillor Benington enquired as to whether there was a fund suitable to support the development of the Biggin Hill Memorial Museum. Ms Williams recommended it could possibly fall into a category within the Europe for Citizens initiative which included the commemorations of major historical turning points in recent European history as a priority. The Chairman asked if there had been any successful London bids. Ms Williams responded that several London volunteer centres, the Law Centres Network and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea had recently won funding. Access Europe Network had also helped seven London boroughs write European Regional Development Fund bids, with a potential total of £10m-£11m. Ms Williams could be contacted at madeleine.w@accesseurope.org.uk if members of the Partnership had specific queries regarding European funding.

4 INNOVATE TO SUCCEED (PRESENTATION BY KEITH CASSON, ENTERPRISE EUROPE NETWORK)

Mr Keith Casson, Innovation Adviser, Enterprise Europe Network gave a presentation on the Innovate to Succeed project. The project aimed to help

support companies with the development and introduction of new products, services or processes to the market in a more streamlined manner. Suitable companies for the project were small and medium-sized enterprises, with less than 250 employees and a turnover of less than €50m. The project was open to all sectors, but needed to be a viable business wanting to drive forward and have ambitions to become global. The project offered seven days of support for each business and along with their specialist delivery, they could act as a brokerage service for areas they were unable to cover.

Members enquired as to how the project was funded, and how it differed from the Growth Accelerator project. Mr Casson responded that Enterprise Europe Network was established by the Mayor's Office, with money coming from European funding. The Innovate to Succeed project differed from the Growth Accelerator project, which had ended in October 2015, as it focussed more on the technical side. It was aimed at improving the product or service idea, and showing the business the best way forward. Mr Casson could be contacted at Keith.C@gle.co.uk if members of the Partnership were interested in learning more about the Enterprise Europe Network.

5 THE SUCCESSFUL MUMS PROJECT (PRESENTATION BY JANE KNIGHT)

Ms Jane Knight, Successful Mums gave a presentation on The Successful Mums Project, which had been established in 2013 in response to the demand to support skilled parents back into the workplace and recognising that the skills gained from being a parent could be transferred into the world of work.

Successful Mums was a training provider helping mums find flexible and part time work or the support, focus and direction they need to start up their own business. Successful Mums ran three courses which were scheduled for school friendly hours and inspiring guest speakers were invited along to present to the attendees, including previous clients of the project who shared their success stories. Successful Mums also provided a link between the mums and local employers attending these courses and a number of phone calls were received each week from employers wanting to access the Successful Mums database of contacts looking for flexible work. A free two hour taster session had been held with the London Borough of Bromley in February 2016, and had proved a great success. An online motivational forum had been established for all clients which had worked extremely well, and also enabled Ms Knight to monitor the progress of previous clients.

Members enquired as to whether or not mums paid to attend the courses. Ms Knight confirmed that she had a number of private clients that paid to attend the Successful Mums courses, although some had also been funded externally, including a course held on behalf of Orpington 1st. Any employers looking for flexible staff could contact Ms Knight directly, and attend the Successful Mums courses in order to speak to her clients about the role they were looking to recruit to. Ms Knight could be contacted at

jane@successfulmums.co.uk if members of the Partnership were interested in learning more about the Successful Mums Project.

The Chairman thanked Ms Williams, Mr Casson and Ms Knight for their interesting presentations.

6 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 CENTRES DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME UPDATE (VERBAL UPDATE)

Kevin Munnely, LBB Head of Town Centre Renewal attended to provide 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.

Opportunity Site G: West of the High Street would go out to market at the end of April 2016, with recommendations to Members being made for the procurement of a development partner by September / October 2016.

Opportunity Site A: Bromley North Station would bring a commercial element in the form of new office space to part of the site that had been vacant for a number of years.

Consultation would take place by July 2016 for the Bromley Town Central High Street Public Realm Improvements to be extended further down the pedestrianised area of the High Street.

With regard to other projects in Orpington and Penge town centres, stakeholder workshops had taken place and designs were being revised. The new designs would be brought back to the stakeholders shortly for further consultation and it was planned for these improvements to be implemented from September 2016.

It was noted that an update on the Bromley South development would be provided at the next Partnership meeting.

Work was also being undertaken to negotiate with the owners of the West Camp of London Biggin Hill Airport for a managed workspace within the listed building. An outcome was expected in May / June 2016 for the proposals of an Aviation Training and Enterprise Centre.

RESOLVED that the update on the town centres development programme be noted.

B) LOCAL PLAN DEVELOPMENT UPDATE (VERBAL UPDATE)

Mary Manuel (LBB Head of Planning Strategy and Projects) was not present at the meeting but provided an update to the Partnership as follows:

Work was currently being carried out to prepare the draft Local Plan and site allocations. Two consultations had recently been completed, the Statement of Community Involvement and Green Spaces.

The Chairman informed members of the Partnership that the Local Plan would shortly be ready for the next stage of consultation with the Examination in Public taking place in October 2016, and implementation of the Local Plan in June 2017.

RESOLVED that the update on the Local Plan be noted.

C) TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT AND BUSINESS SUPPORT UPDATE (VERBAL UPDATE)

Mr Martin Pinnell, LBB 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 4, 2015/16.

Local Authority officers had supported the establishment of the Bromley Business Improvement District (BID) following the successful ballot in November 2015, and it was officially launched on the 1st April 2016. A feasibility study had been commissioned regarding a BID for Beckenham and Penge which was scheduled to be completed by the end of May 2016.

At the last Partnership meeting members were informed that Beckenham town centre had been given Purple Flag status which was an accreditation process awarded for a high standard of excellence in managing the evening and night time economy. The Town Centre team would be working with the local businesses to maintain this status.

The LBB Head of Town Centre Management and Business Support advised the group that with effect from 1st April the new role of Town Centres and BID Development Manager had been filled by Lorraine McQuillan, formerly the Town Centre Manager for Bromley. Ms McQuillan would be working with the Town Centre teams for Beckenham and Penge to develop work programmes for the year and support the development of potential BIDs in those towns. A number of joint business support workshops have been held during the past quarter – which have been well received.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) Recent work around Town Centre Management and Business Support in the 4th Quarter of 2015/16 be noted; and**
- 2) The proposals for the future of Town Centre Management and Business Support be noted.**

**D) BROMLEY YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROJECT ROUND 2
UPDATE (VERBAL UPDATE)**

Lesley Holland (Bromley Education Business Partnership) was not present at the meeting, but Mr Pinnell had attended a recent board meeting and gave an update on the Bromley Youth Employment Project (Round 2) as follows:

The project, which had been developed by the Local Authority to support sustainable employment opportunities for young people who were unemployed, was due to be completed in July 2016 and they were close to meeting their targets. Work was now being undertaken to focus on the project's legacy which would involve collaboration with Jobcentre Plus and other partners.

Further work was being commenced on apprenticeships and it was suggested that an update could be provided at the next meeting of the Partnership regarding the new apprenticeship levy and how apprenticeships were changing.

RESOLVED that the update on the Bromley Youth Employment Project be noted.

**7 PARTNER UPDATES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR JOINT
WORKING TO INCLUDE:**

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

A) BIGGIN HILL AIRPORT (VERBAL UPDATE)

Ms 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.

Ms Woolcott was pleased to inform the group that London Biggin Hill Airport would soon be appointing a Project Manager for the development of a 50 bed hotel. A financial feasibility study was currently being carried out. Once completed, London Biggin Hill Airport would operate the hotel itself. The café, which was next to the planned hotel site, was doing well and was looking to recruit more staff.

A planning application for approach lights would be submitted shortly, to install the same operating system that was in place at the opposite end of the runway. This would see a reduction in noise and nuisance for the local community if approved and implemented.

B) COMMERCIAL PROPERTY (VERBAL UPDATE)

Mr Mike Lewis (Michael Rogers LLP) was not present at the meeting but provided a written update to the Partnership as follows:

Since Mr Lewis' last update Michael Rogers LLP had received instructions to market a headquarters office building extending to just under 25,000 sq. ft. in Elmfield Road. This was good news for the market and as an indication of the strength of demand. Interest had already been received from a number of potential occupiers. However, it was early days as Mr Lewis' clients would not obtain vacant possession until the summer, after which a comprehensive programme of refurbishment to a grade A standard would commence. The finished product would likely be available for occupation in early 2017 and the asking rent had been set at £29.50 per sq. ft.

All of the lettings referred to in the update provided at the last meeting of the Partnership had now completed, setting a new level of office rents in the town at £25 per sq. ft. Furthermore, there were now other potential deals in the region taking place at £27 per sq. ft. and with the continuing shortage of decent quality investments thereby driving down yields, maybe there would start to be speculative development taking place again.

C) COMMUNITY LINKS BROMLEY (VERBAL UPDATE)

Mr Colin Maclean (Community Links Bromley) was not present at the meeting but provided a written update to the Partnership as follows:

Community Links Bromley had helped support the development of an ESF bid covering seven boroughs and with a value of £1.48m. The focus was on employment support for people with common mental health problems. The outcome was due to be announced at the end of April 2016.

They had also started working with the Council on the recruitment to the new Crystal Palace Park Shadow Board. These new leadership positions would be advertised widely during May.

Community Links Bromley had been awarded 'preferred bidder status' for the management of six Community Managed Libraries. Their vision was that these assets would be developed as 'Community Hubs' with the support of local people, whilst still operating a library service. Subject to receipt of the specification for the next phase, they would develop detailed business plans which would involve community and partner consultation. The final submission would then be subject to formal Community Links Bromley and Council decision-making processes.

D) GENERAL NEWS ROUND (VERBAL UPDATE)

Ms Kate Miller, General Manager, intu Bromley, reported that it had been a hard quarter for the shopping centre with footfall down 3% on the same period last year, although there was a similar pattern across the South East. Despite this, new tenants had been reporting good sales figures. Additional new

tenants Sole Trader, Sketch, Kuoni and DFS would be opening soon. The Queens Garden Restaurant Terrace was due to open at the start of July 2016, and would start recruitment shortly.

The Partnership was advised that Frances Forrest had been appointed as the Bromley BID Manager. The BID advisory group would be meeting on a quarterly basis. There was still capacity for a couple of smaller businesses to join and Members of the Partnership were asked to register their interest via Ms Miller.

Mr Adam Smith, Mytime Active, informed the group that they had experienced a mixed quarter with soft play admissions up by 10%-11% and memberships increasing, but swimming admissions were down by 5%-6%. Over the next six months there would be a delivery phase of the planned improvements, and a feasibility study of the Orpington Golf Centre site and potential opportunities would be carried out.

Ms Liz Waghorn, Jobcentre Plus, reported the latest figures to the end of February 2016. There had been a decrease in the number of people claiming Job Seekers Allowance to 2,075 creating a 20% reduction in unemployment on the same time last year. The 18-24 year old category had also seen a decrease of 38.9%, which was encouraging. The main focus was continuing to be the 50+ category, which filled 29.2% of the total register.

Another area of focus was Employment Support Allowance with 8,400 claimants. A Disability Confident Event had taken place in February 2016, and as a result 34 businesses had made pledges which were being followed up. A job fair had also been held in partnership with the London Borough of Bromley, with 20 businesses and 100 people attending. A number of attendees had been offered work experience and jobs following the event.

Mr Steve Nelson, South East London Chamber of Commerce, advised the Partnership that the Chamber was planning breakfast meetings for the year ahead. The Talent Bank was progressing well, with the main partner announced as Peabody, and was due to launch in September 2016.

Mr Dave Freeborn, Proctors, informed the group that rents and house prices were at an all time high, although there were signs of these slowing down. They had also seen an increase in the number of people registering land interest.

Mr Lee Thomas, Fairlight Group, agreed with the statements made by Mr Freeborn, however the commercial market had taken a slight step back with regards to short term lets and serviced office space.

Mr Michael Humphries, Handelsbanken, reported that the company was currently doing well, although confidence was fragile and political issues meant a lot was being put on hold. There had been a burst of activity in the first quarter of 2016, before implications of the 1st April 2016.

Mr Chandra Sharma attended the meeting representing the Federation of Small Business, and was pleased to inform the group that they had seen a rise in memberships. Currently they were working in town centre on cyber security issues, and campaigning against the proposed closure of the Post Office in Beckenham.

Mr David Warnes, Bromley College of Further and Higher Education, advised the Partnership that the College would complete the Government's Area Review process on 27th April 2016. Having already merged with Greenwich Community College, a further merge with Bexley College was to take place on 1st August 2016, which would allow the College to become a specialist in specific areas.

The Chairman offered his thanks to Mr Warnes for hosting the Partnership meeting at the Bromley College Innovation Centre.

RESOLVED that the updates be noted.

**8 BROMLEY ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP WORK PROGRAMME
2016/17 (VERBAL UPDATE)**

Members of the Partnership considered the forward rolling work programme for the Bromley Economic Partnership for 2016/17.

In considering the next meeting of the Partnership, the Chairman requested that Mr David Warnes (Bromley College of Further and Higher Education) and Ms Lesley Holland (Bromley Education Partnership) provide an update on the new apprenticeships levy. It was also noted that representatives from U+I Group were scheduled to attend the July meeting to present on the St Mark's Square development.

RESOLVED that the update on the Work Programme be noted.

9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was brought to the meeting.

10 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

4.00pm, Tuesday 12th July 2016
4.00pm, Tuesday 11th October 2016
4.00pm, Tuesday 10th January 2017
4.00pm, Tuesday 11th April 2017

The Meeting ended at 6.15 pm

Chairman