

BROMLEY ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP

Minutes of the meeting held at 4.00 pm on 19 April 2012

Present:

Councillor Peter Morgan (Chairman)
Adrian Hollands, South East London Chamber of Commerce (Vice-Chairman)
Marc Hume, LBB Renewal & Recreation
Colin Maclean, Community Links Bromley
Sam Parrett, Bromley College
Martin Pinnell, LBB Renewal & Recreation
Peter Pledger, South London Business

Also Present:

Councillor Sarah Phillips, Chairman, Renewal and Recreation PDS Committee
Councillor Pauline Tunnicliffe, Vice-Chairman, Renewal and Recreation PDS Committee
Louisa Allen, LBB Community Development Manager
Amanda Grice, Jobcentre Plus
Mike Lewis, Michael Rogers LLP
Kevin Munnelly, LBB Town Centre Renewal
Laurie Taylor, The Glades
Katy Woolcott, London Biggin Hill Airport

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Carol Arnfield – Bromley Adult Education College, Bek Bekir - National Apprenticeships Service, Robert Cundy – Federation of Small Businesses, Jeff East – Acorn Commercial, Robert Goddard – Thackray Williams Solicitors LLP, Robert Innes – Skills Funding Agency, Mary Manuel – LBB Head of Planning Strategy, Jean Norton – Bromley Education Business Partnership and Howard Oldstein – The Glades

2 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10TH JANUARY 2012 AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the meeting held on 10th January 2012 were agreed. There were no matters arising.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 10th January 2012 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

The Head of Town Centre Renewal gave an update around 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 with regard to the challenge from Linden Homes/Network Rail in relation to the number of residential units that could be accommodated on Site A: Bromley North. The Council's Legal Team were currently reviewing the judgement, which would be reconsidered at the High Court on 16th May 2012 to clarify the position regarding the site. The Head of Town Centre Renewal also confirmed that Officers were in discussions with Transport for London to examine a business case for a potential extension of the Docklands Light Railway to Bromley North Station.

Work was being undertaken to investigate the designs and costs associated with creating a temporary parking area at Site B: Tweedy Road which would provide an additional 100 spaces during the refurbishment of The Hill and the redevelopment of Westmoreland Multi-Storey Car Parks. A Variable Message System would also be introduced to Bromley from September 2012 to improve traffic management across the town centre.

The Land Group had been selected as the Council's development partner in relation to Site C: the Old Town Hall, and regular progress meetings had commenced. A meeting had taken place on site with English Heritage and Cathedral Group's consultants on 24th February 2012, and it had been agreed that the scheme's architects would seek to bring forward a scheme which retained the ground floor of the Old Town Hall.

Work was ongoing on the refurbishment of Site E: The Pavilion and the new gymnasium was now open. Contractors would remain on site until May 2012 with a continuous service planned throughout the redevelopment works. With regard to Site F: Civic Centre, a decision had been made by Members' for the Council Offices to remain on the site at the current time.

The Pin Notice and Information Brochure had now been published in relation to Site G, and a series of interviews had taken place with a number of potential development partners. The improvement works at Site J: Bromley South had also commenced, with step free access due to be implemented prior to the start of the London 2012 Olympics.

The planning application for the redevelopment of Site K: Westmoreland Road Car Park had been approved by Development Control Committee on 6th March 2012. This was subject to a S106 agreement and referral to the Greater London Authority, and Cathedral Group anticipated starting the 2 year build in Autumn 2012. A pre-application enquiry for a mixed use, hotel-led development had been submitted by agents in respect of Site L: Former DHSS in November 2011 and Officers were in discussion with the owners around the potential to retain offices on site.

With regard to Site M: Queen's Gardens, a planning application for the development of the terrace had been refused by Development Control Committee on 14th February 2012. Officers were currently working with Capital Shopping Centre around how the proposals might be amended to overcome the reasons for refusal. Sainsbury's were considering future development options for their store based at Site P and, concluding that they were unlikely to be able to meet their future growth requirements from either an extension or on-site redevelopment, were examining alternate redevelopment options within the framework of the Area Action Plan.

Detailed design work had been undertaken in respect of Bromley North Village. The scheme of improvements to the public realm had secured £2m funding from the Outer London Fund Round 2 and would now be expanded through other parts of the town centre when the scheme was implemented in January 2013. Local businesses had been very supportive of the plans and following consultation, additional loading and parking provision had been introduced to the scheme.

In terms of development across the Borough, Officers were working with a new consortium that was seeking to implement a comprehensive improvement programme in the Walnuts Shopping Centre, Orpington. Police had now vacated Orpington Police Station and alternate uses linked to health provision were being considered for the site. The first phase of environmental improvements had been successfully implemented as part of the Penge Renewal Strategy, and the Outer London Fund Round One funded Empire Square public realm enhancement project was progressing with an expected completion date of 31st March 2012. Work was also being undertaken to prepare a concept scheme for Beckenham town centre which would form the basis of a Step 1 Bid to the Transport for London Area Based Programme in September 2012.

The Director of Renewal and Recreation notified the Partnership that a Council Investment Programme had been developed, and that £10m had been allocated to acquire properties in the Borough to encourage regeneration and renewal. The Chairman requested that members of the Partnership notify Officers of any shopping areas in need of improvement in the Borough.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

B) 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 4 2011/12.

In Quarter 4 2011/12, the main priorities of the Town Centre Management and Business Support Service had been the delivery, monitoring and administration for the Outer London Fund Round 1 projects and developing the Business Improvement District project for Orpington. Outer London Fund Round 1 Bids for Bromley Orpington and Penge had been successful and the projects funded included the creation of 'Are You Bromley' a Bromley Town Centre brand,

installation of graphics to empty shop fronts, support to independent businesses which included a programme of free workshops and a subsidised mentoring programme and the updating of the Heritage Trail for Bromley which had been launched on 31st March 2012.

Work had also been undertaken to prepare a programme of town centre events and activities for 2012/13, including a major event to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in Bromley Town Centre and smaller events on the same theme in other town centres across the Borough. A further edition of the Bromley Business E-Bulletin was being developed and an updated version of the online 'A to Z Guide of Services for Business' had been published and was being promoted in partnership with the News Shopper. The Town Centre Management Team had also maintained regular communications with businesses across the Borough through newsletters and e-mail updates and had contributed to town centre initiatives including the Bromley North Village project.

Future activities for the Town Centre Management and Business Support Service included continued work on the Outer London Fund Round 1 and 2 projects, delivery of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee events and preparation for Olympics and Big Dance linked events in various town centres during Summer 2012. Consultation and feasibility work would continue on the Orpington BID work, working with businesses to develop a business plan and proposal which would be put to a ballot during the 2012/13 financial year. The operation and location of town centre markets would also be reviewed, and Bromley Charter market would shortly be moving to a town centre location. Work would also be undertaken on a programme of improvement for smaller shopping parades.

Peter Pledger, representing South London Business, underlined the value of the practical workshops that had been delivered to SME businesses as part of the Outer London Fund Round 1 funded projects, which had included individual mentoring to businesses and a mystery shopping service. In response to a question from a member of the Partnership, the Head of Town Centre Management and Business Support confirmed that the main role of the Council was to ensure that the Olympic Torch Relay had a safe passage through the Borough on 23rd July 2012. However, Town Centre Managers were in discussions with local businesses around the potential to deliver some events associated with the Torch. Sam Parrett, representing Bromley College, noted that free Olympic tickets had been provided to children and young people across the Borough and that there was an opportunity to engage with children and young people as part of these events. In considering the Bromley Business E-Bulletin, the Vice-Chairman suggested that a link to the E-Bulletin be placed on the South East London Chamber of Commerce website.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) Recent work around Town Centre Management and Business Support in the 4th Quarter of 2011/12 be noted; and**
- 2) The plans for Town Centre Management and Business Support activity for the 1st Quarter of 2012/13 be noted.**

C) OUTER LONDON FUND

The Head of Town Centre Management and Business Support provided an update on bids to the second round of the Outer London Fund. The results of the Round 2 bids had been announced in January 2012, and Bromley had been successful in attracting an additional £2m of investment for Bromley town centre, mainly to extend the design treatment from Bromley North Village to other parts of the town centre, but also to fund a shop front grant scheme and deliver some major events on the 'Are you Bromley' theme. Unfortunately a bid to fund public realm improvements in Beckenham had been unsuccessful, and the Beckenham and West Wickham Town Centres Working Party had been re-constituted to support the development of future bids for external funding for Beckenham town centre.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

D) LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK AND PLANNING POLICY ISSUES

The Head of Town Centre Management and Business Support provided an update on the development of planning policy in the Borough on behalf of the Head of Planning Strategy. The National Planning Policy Framework had been published on 27th March 2012, and further guidance was awaited on the potential to move to developing a Local Plan rather than a Core Strategy. The evidence base and consultation on the draft Core Strategy Issues document undertaken during Summer 2011 would be used for the Local Plan rather than a Core Strategy if Members agreed to take this approach.

There was still a requirement for the Council to be in general conformity with the London Plan and apply the London Plan policies. Key areas of interest for the Economic Partnership in this plan included the provision of employment land, business areas and the town centres, as well as broader quality of life issues which would affect businesses. As options were developed around business and employment land, key stakeholders would be consulted and Members of the Economic Partnership were asked to contribute to this discussion.

It was noted that a progress report around the development of planning policy in the Borough would be provided to the next meeting of the Partnership.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

E) CRYSTAL PALACE PARK PROJECT

The Community Development Manager gave an update on the Crystal Palace Park Project.

The Crystal Palace Park Executive Project Board had met for the first time on 13th February 2012 and had agreed an Action Plan which was structured around six strategic aims. A stakeholder group to represent the community and work with

the Board had also been formed with the support of Community Links Bromley, and a number of community projects were planned for delivery in Autumn 2012.

Work was also being undertaken around a proposal to host a London Garden Festival in the park. This London-wide event was proposed to take place in green spaces across London every four years, and would provide an excellent opportunity for development and community involvement.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

F) BROMLEY EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVE

The Community Development Manager gave an update on the Bromley Employment Initiative which aimed to support young people aged 16-24 years into employment. The way the scheme would work was currently being developed but would likely include a programme of support to local businesses to provide apprenticeship and internship opportunities to young people.

Colin Maclean, Community Links Bromley, highlighted the opportunities available in the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector workforce for young people and offered to lead a pilot project to facilitate opportunities for young people in the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector. He also announced that Community Links Bromley would shortly be recruiting an apprentice and making two internship opportunities available. Sam Parrett, Bromley College highlighted a similar national scheme in which the Government was making £250m available to businesses to run apprenticeship schemes. It was important to ensure that the Bromley scheme benefitted local businesses and young people.

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) UNEMPLOYMENT AND EMPLOYMENT TRENDS IN THE BOROUGH

Mandi Grice of Jobcentre Plus provided an update on unemployment and employment trends in the Borough as at March 2012, and noted there had been a decrease of 70 people appearing in the unemployment figures for the Borough.

New benefit rates would be introduced from 9th April 2012. Household benefit payments would also be limited to no more than average household earnings from April 2013. This would impact approximately 350-400 families in the Borough and work was underway to notify and support those affected. Changes had also been made to Employment Support Allowance, and claimants within the Work Related Activity Group would be supported to move back into employment.

Jobcentre Plus was working to deliver a new national programme to support young people aged 16-24 years into employment. The Youth Contract would provide young people with training and apprenticeships that would lead to real employment opportunities.

B) BIGGIN HILL AIRPORT DEVELOPMENTS

Katy Woolcott 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.

The LoCATE Team had recently completed an analysis of the economic value of the airport to the local economic community which would feed into the development of Bromley's Core Strategy. London Biggin Hill Airport offered flights to 747 destinations, and Katy Woolcott was pleased to announce that seven young people had recently been recruited to a range of career opportunities at the airport.

In response to a question from the Chairman, Katy Woolcott confirmed that there was some land available for development at London Biggin Hill Airport but that other vacant land was restricted for safeguarding purposes.

C) COMMERCIAL PROPERTY UPDATE AND PROPOSED WORKSHOP

Mike Lewis of Michael Rogers LLP gave an update on the commercial property market in the Borough. Demand for commercial property had recently increased, however the majority of offices in Bromley tended to be of older stock and space was fragmented with no capacity to accommodate larger businesses. The Chairman agreed that the quality of space available was important in attracting businesses to the Borough, however Bromley had a number of other advantages including its excellent transport links and close proximity to London.

Peter Pledger, representing South London Business, highlighted the need to consider how to accommodate the changing requirements for office space in the Borough, including the need to meet higher demand from SME businesses. The Head of Town Centre Management and Business Support confirmed that a half-day commercial property workshop was currently being developed to promote the benefits of locating in Bromley to both major occupiers and SME businesses.

D) GENERAL NEWS ROUND

Sam Parrett confirmed that Bromley College of Further and Higher Education had secured an additional 100 places for full-time Higher Education students and 300-400 places for part-time Higher Education students. Work was also being undertaken to attract more international students to the College and provide an increased offer to people and young people with learning disabilities. The growth in student numbers would necessitate further development on the Bromley campus and there was potential to submit a bid to the Government to secure

capital funds There were also more opportunities for the local community to become involved in the college, including the establishment of a weekend college provision and the delivery of Bromley Adult Education College courses from the Bromley campus, and the identification of space on the Orpington campus for small businesses.

Peter Pledger was pleased to announce that South London Business would be delivering the South London Business Awards in 2012.

Colin Maclean noted work undertaken by an informal group of Bromley organisations focusing on skills and employment issues which was currently undertaking a mapping exercise. He requested that this subject be included as a standing item under 'Partner Updates' in future.

Adrian Hollands announced that the South East London Chamber of Commerce was considering the introduction of open membership across South East London. He also noted an opportunity announced in the Chancellor's Budget 2012 which provided a tax incentive for higher rate taxpayers for investing in a qualifying small business. This opportunity was similar to work undertaken by the Business Angels and other networks, and there was potential to secure support for local qualifying small businesses.

Laurie Taylor was pleased to note that the Glades would be undertaking a programme of 21 good deeds as part of its 21st anniversary celebrations. Capital Shopping Centres would also be pioneering the introduction of LED lights in 10 shopping centres across the country from June 2012, and members of the Partnership were invited to come into The Glades to view the new lighting.

RESOLVED that the updates be noted.

5 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Head of Town Centre Management and Business Support announced that a 'Money on the Table' Business Seminar for small businesses was being delivered in association with Baker Tilly at 6.00pm on 23rd May 2012.

RESOLVED that the issues raised be noted.

6 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The date of the next meeting of the Bromley Economic Partnership would be provided to Members shortly.

The Meeting ended at 5.42 pm

Chairman