

## **London Borough of Bromley**

### **Members' Strategic Asset Management Group**

- Title:** Introduction to 'Stimulating the Economy' Study (G.L.Hearn Ltd)
- Date:** 13<sup>th</sup> December 2012
- Contact Officer:** Jim Kehoe, Deputy Chief Planner
- Purpose of report:** To introduce Members to the findings of this Study and draw initial conclusions
- Recommendation:** To consider in more depth the G L Hearn findings, in particular by using the Council's Strategic Assets.

#### **Commentary.**

On 6<sup>th</sup> September 2012, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government made an important announcement on a package of planning and housing measures aimed at stimulating economic growth.

In response to this, one initiative by Bromley Council was to commission a study by G L Hearn Ltd (GLH) into the ways into the potential for stimulating the economy in Bromley Borough. This was aimed both at creating employment and economic growth and with increasing business rates through commercial development.

GLH's work is nearly complete and the main findings are now available. GLH have considered the 6<sup>th</sup> September measures, Planning Policy, Business Rates Reforms, and have previous evidence that is relevant. They also used economic forecasts of November 2012. They bring their knowledge in particular of the property market.

GLH have assessed the potential for a hierarchy of employment sites, from a Premier Business Park through to a Local Industrial Estate. In their assessment they have taken into account the office market, factors influencing the locational decision of possible occupiers and competing sites.

Their main conclusions are that:-

- There is not the evident market demand to support a further major business park scheme in the Borough. This is principally due to :- established sites at Crossways, Dartford and Kings Hall, West Malling;

further schemes already in the pipeline at The Bridge, Dartford and Ebbsfleet Valley with excellent transport accessibility; the lack of a 'optimum' site in the Borough that could compete with these and attract developer and occupier interest; and policy constraints, in particular Green Belt designation.

- They consider that a targeted but multi-pronged strategy which seeks to develop the economy and business base of the Borough over the period to 2031 but avoids over-reliance on development on a single location has the greatest chance of success. This would mean a comprehensive approach to fostering economic growth including:
  - Proactive activity to nurture growth of the office market in Bromley Town Centre over the short, medium and long-term;
  - Progressive upgrading of employment land at Crays Avenue in line with the SIL status (principally to provide modern industrial premises);
  - Upgrading, intensification and potentially extending the concentration of employment use along Main Road, Ruxley (to provide commercial floorspace with suitable parking provision);
  - Supporting the growth of employment activities at Biggin Hill Airport focusing on aviation-related activities, with provision of associated business infrastructure and amenities.