

APPENDIX 1: TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT UPDATE REPORT FEBRUARY 2013

Summary of activities in Quarter 4 2012/13

1 Business Improvement District (BID) campaign for Orpington.

The BID ballot is confirmed for 21 February 2013 and officers continue to assist the BID Working Group with:

- Canvassing voters and ensuring correct documentation received
- Continuing a publicity campaign material including a monthly BID newsletter, High Street banners and posters, website updates and news releases
- Demonstration / promotional day in the Walnuts on 26 January
- Liaising with Electoral Services on the Ballot arrangements and putting in place procedures for lost ballots and proxy registrations
- In the event of a 'yes' result, will be putting place necessary arrangements – including legal agreements to set up the BID Company

The Orpington Town Centre Manager, assisted by a locally based consultant, continues to focus much of her time on the campaign which involves direct contact with all 350 business rates payers. Since the last update to members the focus of the campaign has shifted to following up as many voters as possible to ensure they have received the ballot papers and encouraging people to vote. At time of writing (early February) we know that 122 votes have been cast, giving a turnout of just under 35%. Of these votes cast, we know that 34 have voted 'yes' and 30 have voted 'no'. There are 58 votes cast which are as yet unidentified as to whether they are 'yes' or 'no'. Members of the Working Group are making contact with as many as possible of these 'unknown' voters to ascertain voting intention.

As the result of the BID ballot will not be known until after the papers for the 26 February PDS Committee Meeting have been dispatched, Officers will welcome the opportunity to provide Members with a verbal update on the outcome at the meeting.

2 Environmental issues

During Quarter 4 environmental audits have taken place in a number of the towns including Beckenham, Bromley, Orpington and Penge – with issues arising being pursued by the relevant TCMs, mostly involving liaison with colleagues in Environmental Services.

3 Vacant units

TCM are engaging landlords for other vacant units across the borough to press for the installation of shop window vinyls or temporary use for displays / pop up shops. In Bromley Town Centre, the agents for 8 empty units have been approached during January, and the leaseholders for a prominent unit in East Street have agreed for the front windows to be dressed. The former Jessops store on Market Square is also been earmarked 'dressing' (subject to landlord consent) and the TCM is working to see both of these storefronts improved before the end of this financial year, thanks to funding from the Outer London Fund. Although there a number of vacant units in Beckenham High Street, quite a few of these have recently been occupied or are about to be occupied. The Beckenham Business Association is working with an external agency to try to set up a pop up shop in at least one of the more long term vacant units.

4 Beckenham & West Wickham Working Group

Officers are working on implementation of short term improvements to Beckenham Town Centre following the recommendations agreed by the Beckenham & West Wickham PDS Working Group – this includes planning an event to launch the new Beckenham Heritage Trail (expected to take place in May 2013), installation of brackets for lamp column banners, town maps and signs. The team will also be supporting the meetings of the Working Group focussing on West Wickham.

5 Local Parades Improvement Initiative

Work has been ongoing to respond to applications from local areas for funding from the Local Parades Initiative (agreed following the Renewal & Recreation PDS meeting in July 2012). At present work is ongoing to finalise improvements to Sundridge Park Parade – including installation of a village sign and in Keston Village – also a village sign. An application for Anerley Hill has been costed up and officers are looking at feasibility and possible alternative sources of funding. The Local Parades Initiative is the subject of a separate report on the agenda for the R&R PDS Committee Meeting of 26 February 2013.

6 Events

Although most of the Town Centre Event programme for this financial year was complete by end of December 2012, there is one major event still to take place in Bromley on Sunday 24 March 2013. This is the Bromley Arts Festival which will include a performing arts stage showcasing local music, dance and theatre

groups, stalls for local craft groups to provide free interactive 'have-a-go' workshops/activities, stalls for local artisans to promote and sell their wares. There will also be a pop-up art gallery, street theatre, circus skills workshop, community art sculpture, and heritage tours. This event is made possible through funding from the Outer London Fund and support from local business.

7 Business Support Programme

The Bromley Town Business Growth Club will be launched with a workshop focussed on strategic business planning on 20 February at Bromley Central Library from 2.30pm to 6.30pm. The event will be delivered in partnership with ActionCOACH Business Coaching and is supported by the Mayor of London's Outer London Fund.

Under the programme of support agreed with Outer London Fund, the business coaches from ActionCOACH will run a programme of workshops and one-to-one business support over the coming year to help existing businesses realise their growth potential. The workshops will be free for any business based in Bromley town centre or its immediate surrounds. Places are also available at a subsidised rate for businesses located in other areas.

In addition a series of workshops will be offered later in the year, aimed primarily at individuals wishing to start a business, organised in partnership with the Bromley North Village Town Team.

8 Bromley Business Guide and Directory

The official Bromley Business Guide and Directory 2013/14 is in preparation and will include a CD listing of over 3000 businesses based in the borough. This Guide will be published during March and distributed via Council locations, including all Libraries and through partner organisations. Simultaneously an electronic version will be made available via the Council website.