

BROMLEY ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP

Meeting:	Economic Partnership
Date:	9 th July 2013
Subject:	Town Centre Management and Business Support Update
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1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Partnership is asked to:-

- 1.1 Note recent work around Town Centre Management and Business Support in the 1st Quarter 2013/14
- 1.2 Note and endorse the plans for Town Centre Management and Business Support activity during the next quarter.

2. SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES IN FIRST HALF OF 2013

2.1 Business Improvement District (BID) for Orpington.

- 2.2 The BID ballot took place on 21 February 2013 and was in favour of the formation of the BID, by both a majority of votes and a majority of rateable value – with a turnout of 48%.
- 2.3 The Council maintains direct contact with the BID Board – now chaired by Martin Price, Manager of Walnuts Shopping Centre – through the attendance of non-voting members Cllr William Huntingdon-Thresher and Martin Pinnell. In addition, the Council is providing support to the BID Board through both a financial contribution (a grant of £38k, as agreed by the Council Executive in September 2012) and the loan of the former Town Centre Manager for Orpington for 18 hours per week until the end of June 2013.
- 2.4 Town Centre Management has therefore involved in assisting the BID in the following ways:
 - Managing an initial mail out to all BID Levy Payers regarding ballot result, and assisting with preparation and dispatch of further communications (e.g. newsletter) to businesses;
 - Finalising legal agreements between the Council and the BID;
 - Coordinating discussions between the BID, the Council's finance officers and Liberata regarding arrangements for collection of the BID Levy;

- Agreeing debt recovery arrangements for the BID;
 - Establishing an information sharing agreement and Data Protection protocols;
 - Setting up and coordinating theme groups for development of the BID business plan;
 - Drafting an information leaflet to be dispatched with BID levy bills; and,
 - Setting up arrangements to manage promotional and markets space in the town centre.
- 2.5 The BID Board has as one of its first responsibilities to recruit a BID Manager who will be employed by the Board to manage the BID organisation and develop and implement the BID programme of improvements. Recruitment is taking place during June and July and it is hoped that a suitable candidate will be selected and in post by mid-September. From end of June the Town Centre Management team will cease to provide such intensive support to the BID, although the Head of Town Centre Management will remain on the Board in an advisory capacity.
- 2.6 Environmental issues**
- 2.7 During March and April 2013 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.
- 2.8 Vacant units**
- 2.9 Below are the March / April counts of vacant units in the 3 largest towns:
- Beckenham – 11 units empty – 4.9% vacancy rate
 Bromley – 27 units empty – 7.4% vacancy rate
 Orpington – 21 units empty (8 in the Walnuts) – 8% vacancy rate
- NB For comparison, the National vacancy rate is around 14%
- 2.10 TCM are engaging landlords for 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, 2 empty shops have been dressed thank to funding from the Outer London Fund. These are both in East Street – one a large and prominent unit near to the old Post Office.
- 2.11 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 treatment of Orpington vacant shops will now pass into the responsibility of the Orpington 1st BID.
- 2.12 Beckenham & West Wickham Working Group**
- 2.13 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. The May meeting of the Working Group will be the last as many of the approved elements of the

project are now at implementation stage. Following agreement from members of the R&R PDS Committee, a permanent Beckenham Town Team has been established with coordination from the Town Centre Manager. The Town Team will play a key role in developing further proposals for funding by the Beckenham Short Term Improvement Fund. The current Team consists of representatives from the Beckenham Business Association and Copers Cope Residents Association – but additional members, representing a wide range of stakeholders for the town, will be invited. The Beckenham Town Centre Manager will facilitate the Town Team going forward.

2.14 Local Parades Improvement Initiative Fund

2.15 Work has been ongoing to respond to applications from local areas for funding from the Local Parades Improvement Initiative, which now has broadened geographical criteria following agreement by Members at the Renewal & Recreation PDS meeting in February 2012. Various projects have been implemented at Sundridge Park – including installation of a village sign - and a village sign is also on order for Keston Village. Applications to the Fund are in preparation for:

- Anerley Hill
- Biggin Hill
- Chislehurst High Street
- Chislehurst Belmont Parade
- Clock House
- Coney Hall
- Hayes, Station Approach
- Hayes Village
- Penge

In each case, Town Centre Managers are assisting local groups to identify costs and explore feasibility for a variety of projects.

2.16 Events

2.17 The year began with a special event in the Walnuts on 26 January, commissioned by the BID Working Group in partnership with the Town Centre Management. The event was aimed at raising awareness about the proposed Business Improvement District amongst both business owners and shoppers. The day was a great success, with several hundred people passing through the doors of the pop up shop, which contained an exhibition about the proposed BID and the potential benefits to Orpington.

2.18 The TCM team assisted with the coordination of the Hayes Clock Unveiling on 24 February. After months in the planning, fundraising and making, the diamond jubilee clock was unveiled in Station Approach by the Lord-Lieutenant of London Sir David Brewer. Around 150 attended the unveiling before a reception was held at the New Inn nearby. The clock cost around £9,000, with the money coming mainly from fundraisers and donations by Hayes residents, businesses, schools and associations.

- 2.19 The Bromley Arts Festival took place on 24 March in Bromley Town Centre. This was a multifaceted event which provided opportunities for visitors to participate in a wide range of arts and craft activities, story telling sessions, circus skills and music making. There was also an entertainment programme, a pop up art gallery (using a shipping container) and guided historic tours. The event was funded by the Mayor of London's Outer London Fund. Despite poor weather the footfall in the town centre was up 11.9% compared to the Sunday the week before.
- 2.20 Beckenham hosted its first ever Local Produce Market at Beckenham Green on 18 May – which was combined with a mini-fun fair and a programme of entertainment and music. The event was very well attended with an estimated 3000 people visiting during the day, and some stall holders selling out of produce by early afternoon, suggesting an enthusiastic response to the market by residents and visitors. The event was supported by Town Centre Management, but the lead on the project was taken by Copers Cope Residents Association and the newly formed Town Team.
- 2.21 Another major Bromley town centre event part-funded by the Outer London Fund was the Bromley Fashion Week – which has been coordinated by the Bromley Town Centre Manager in partnership with Intu Bromley Shopping Centre (formerly the Glades Shopping Centre). This high profile event ran from 20 to 26 May and included catwalk events in the Shopping Centre and on the pedestrianised area of the High Street.

2.22 Business Support Programme

- 2.23 The Bromley Town Business Growth Club was launched with a workshop focussed on strategic business planning on 20 February at Bromley Central Library. The programme is being delivered in partnership with ActionCOACH Business Coaching and is supported by the Mayor of London's Outer London Fund. Business coaches from ActionCOACH are running a programme of workshops, webinars and one-to-one business support until December 2013 to help existing businesses realise their growth potential.
- 2.24 The Bromley TCM continues to work closely with the Bromley North Town Team and thanks to OLF funding has commissioned the design of a special map to promote the Bromley North area which will be used on leaflets and promotional goods during the coming year.
- 2.25 The team led on the Council's representation at the 2013 Bromley Business Expo event at the Warren in June – and will continue to engage with business networking opportunities through attendance at other events.

2.26 Bromley Business Guide and Directory

- 2.27 The official Bromley Business Guide and Directory 2013/14 was published in April 2013. The Guide includes a CD listing of over 3000 businesses based in the borough – and an electronic version of the Guide and the database is available on the web (www.burrows.co.uk/bromley). This Guide is being distributed via Council locations, including all Libraries and through partner organisations.

3. PRIORITIES FOR QUARTER 2 2013/14

3.1 The Town Centre Management & Business Support team's main priorities for Quarter 2 of 2013/14 are as follows:

- Assisting with the set up of the Orpington 1st BID Company – including concluding all required legal agreements and arrangements for BID levy collection.
- Engaging with and strengthening partnerships with local businesses and other town centre stakeholders. There will be a focus on developing Town Teams or similar partnership bodies for Bromley and Beckenham.
- Undertaking initial consultation and feasibility work for possible BID proposal in both Bromley and Beckenham town centre, and formulating a strategy for implementation of further BIDs across the borough – for presentation of options and issues to Members of the R&R PDS in September 2013.
- Leading on business liaison and communications in respect of the major improvement works for Bromley North Village which are due to commence in the summer – including coordination of both public and business information events.
- Leading on Town Centre Management elements of the short term improvements programme for Beckenham, working with Town Centre Development on capital projects. Facilitating the work of the Beckenham Town Team in developing new improvement proposals for potential funding from the scheme.
- Continue delivery of the events programme across the borough including an event in September in Bromley town centre (funded by the Mayor of London) and further local produce markets for Beckenham. The team will also be working with the Town Centre Development Team on activation of the space between Church House Gardens and the High Street over the summer period, to create linkages into the town's 'hidden' green spaces.
- Continue to guide and promote the Bromley Business GrowthCLUB programme.
- Maintain regular business communication channels and publications – including the business e-bulletin, distribution and promotion of the Bromley Business Guide and Directory (2013/14 edition) and coordinate a 2013 update of the 'A to Z Guide to Services for Business'.
- Continue to liaise with local commercial property agents through the Agents Forum and work with colleagues in Town Centre Development to develop a joint campaign to promote Bromley as a location for commercial space occupiers, including the office sector workshop and Invest Bromley 2013 brochure launch on 17 July.