

BROMLEY ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP

Minutes of the meeting held at 4.00 pm on 9 July 2013

Present:

Councillor Peter Morgan (Chairman)
Adrian Hollands, Baker Tilly Tax and Accounting Limited (Vice-Chairman)
Robert Innes, Skills Funding Agency
Colin Maclean, Community Links Bromley
Sam Parrett, Bromley College of Further and Higher Education
Martin Pinnell, LBB Head of Town Centre Management and Business Support
Suzanne Sharp, NewsQuest

Also Present:

Carol Arnfield, Bromley Adult Education College
Margaret Carr, LBB Projects and Partnership Manager
Mike Lewis, Michael Rogers LLP
Mary Manuel, LBB Head of Planning Strategy
Kevin Munnely, LBB Head of Town Centre Renewal
Steve Nelson, South East London Chamber of Commerce
Ivan Reffell, Best of Bromley Borough
Katy Woolcott, London Biggin Hill Airport

1 CONFIRMATION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED that Councillor Peter Morgan be confirmed as the Chairman and Adrian Hollands – Baker Tilly Tax and Accounting Limited be confirmed as the Vice-Chairman of the Bromley Economic Partnership for the 2013/14 municipal year.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Bek Bekir – National Apprenticeships Service, Robert Goddard – Thackray Williams Solicitors LLP, Vaughan Leyshon – Bromley College of Further and Higher Education, Jean Norton – Bromley Education Business Partnership, Donna Still – Federation of Small Businesses and Simon Wilson – Barclays Bank PLC.

Apologies for lateness were received from Katy Woolcott – London Biggin Hill Airport.

3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16TH APRIL 2013 AND MATTERS ARISING

The Chairman noted that a number of matters arising from previous meetings would be considered during the meeting.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 16th April 2013 be agreed.

4 REVIEW OF TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIP OF THE BROMLEY ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP

Members of the Partnership considered the Terms of Reference and membership of the Bromley Economic Partnership.

In considering the purpose of the Partnership, Colin Maclean, Community Links Bromley, noted the importance of ensuring that the contribution of the voluntary and community sector was recognised. Following discussion, members of the Partnership agreed that the purpose be amended to state:

“The purpose of the Partnership is to harness the skills, knowledge and experience of the private sector and other key *sectors and* stakeholders to sustain and promote the Borough’s Local Economy.”

In considering the membership of the Bromley Economic Partnership, the Head of Town Centre Management and Business Support highlighted the need to update the membership of the Partnership to recognise a number of organisations that had made a significant contribution to the work of the Partnership, as well as include increased representation from the business community in Bromley. Following discussion, members of the Partnership agreed that the membership be amended to state:

- Bromley Adult Education College (1 representative)
- Bromley College of Further and Higher Education (1)
- Bromley Education Business Partnership (1)
- Community Links Bromley (1)
- Federation of Small Businesses (1)
- Jobcentre Plus (1)
- Local business representatives (up to 9, from a range of industry sectors).
- London Borough of Bromley (2)
- National Apprenticeships Service (1)
- Skills Funding Agency (1)
- South East London Chamber of Commerce (1)
- Prospects (formerly South London Business) (1)

RESOLVED that:

- 1) The revised Terms of Reference of the Bromley Economic Partnership be agreed; and,**
- 2) The revised membership of the Bromley Economic Partnership be agreed.**

5 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) INVEST BROMLEY EVENT: 17TH JULY 2013

The Chairman was pleased to advise members of the Partnership that an Invest Bromley Event would be held at 5.00pm on 17th July 2013 in the Council Chamber at Bromley Civic Centre followed by the launch of the second edition of the Invest Bromley magazine at 6.00pm. This event would bring together developers, property agents and local business leaders for a workshop debate on the Bromley office market and all members of the Partnership were invited to attend. Feedback from the workshop would contribute to the Council's Local Plan review of the Borough's office market.

In considering recently announced proposals to introduce permitted development rights for change of use from commercial to residential, it was noted that whilst there had been a few enquiries regarding change of use for commercial buildings in the Borough, only one application had so far been received. Mike Lewis, Michael Rogers LLP confirmed that full planning permission would also have to be successfully applied for following any change of use, and it was noted that the legislation was only for a three year period and that a building would have to be classed as an office as at May 2013 to qualify for a change of use.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

B) TOWN CENTRE DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

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. Officers were continuing to work with Transport for London to examine the business case underpinning a potential extension of the Docklands Light Railway to Bromley North. The Council were anticipating that Transport for London would agree to fund and promote this business case work and engage in further discussion around the proposed scheme.

The Council was moving towards the procurement of a development partner in relation to Churchill Place (Site G), which would deliver a significant expansion in retail and office space as well as housing. A development proposal had been received from Muse Developments, part of the Morgan Sindall Group PLC, and Officers were currently assessing this proposal with a view to reporting to the Council's Executive in July 2013.

The planning application for the redevelopment of Site K: Westmoreland Road Car Park had been approved by Development Control Committee on 6th March 2012, and work had commenced on the demolition of the car park. The scheme was due for completion by November 2014.

The final consents and funding agreements had now been agreed for the planned public realm improvements to Bromley North Village and the main

material orders for the project had been placed. Due to the complexity of the build programme, the implementation had been divided into seven phases. The first phase, including East Street and High Street North was due to commence in July 2013, with the full programme expected to take 18 months to implement. Events were being planned for both local residents and shoppers, and local businesses to increase awareness of the improvement programme, and a website and Twitter feed had also been established.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

C) GROWTH AND DELIVERY PLANS - BROMLEY, BIGGIN HILL AND CRAY VALLEY

The Head of Town Centre Renewal gave an update on progress on developing growth and delivery plans for Bromley, Biggin Hill and Cray Valley. The growth and delivery plans for these areas would be included as part of the Invest Bromley Event on 17th July 2013, and it was noted that a survey of the Cray Valley area was currently being undertaken to support the promotion of the area for a range of different economic uses.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

D) TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT AND BUSINESS SUPPORT UPDATE

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 1 2013/14.

In Quarter 4 2012/13, the Town Centre Management and Business Support Service had worked to deliver a number of events in town centres including the Bromley Fashion Week, coordinated by the Bromley Town Centre Manager in partnership with intu Bromley Shopping Centre. A local produce market had also been hosted on Beckenham Green on 18th May 2013.

The BID Ballot in Orpington had taken place on 21st February 2013. There had been a 48% turnout of those eligible to vote, of which 54% were in favour, representing 60% of the rateable value. The Orpington 1st BID Company had gone 'live' in April 2013, and the BID Board was chaired by Martin Price, Manager of the Walnuts Shopping Centre. The Local Authority maintained direct contact with the BID Board through the attendance of non-voting members, Councillor William Huntington-Thresher and Martin Pinnell. The Council had provided support to the BID Board through a grant of £38K, agreed at the Council's 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. Recruitment of a BID Manager who would be employed by the BID Board would take place in July 2013 and it was hoped that a suitable candidate would be in post by mid-September 2013.

The Bromley Town Business GrowthCLUB was launched with a workshop on strategic business planning on 20th February 2013 at Bromley Central Library. The programme included delivery of a range of workshops webinars and one-to-one business support in partnership with ActionCoach and would run to January 2014. The Bromley Business Guide and Directory 2013/14 had been published in April 2013 and included a CD listing over 3000 businesses based in the Borough. An electronic version of the guide was available on the internet at www.burrows.co.uk/bromley. The Big Local App Bromley had also recently been launched and provided businesses with a direct marketing tool with which to promote their businesses.

Future activities for the Town Centre Management and Business Support Service included initial consultation and feasibility work for possible BID proposals in both Bromley and Beckenham Town Centres, and the development of a strategy to implement further BIDs across the Borough. Work would also be undertaken to engage more with local businesses and town centre stakeholders, including a focus on developing Town Teams or similar partnership bodies in larger towns across the Borough. A number of events were planned across the Borough during the quarter, including an event in Bromley Town Centre in September 2013 and further local produce markets for Beckenham. The Team would also be working with the Town Centre Development Team to 'activate' the space between Church House Gardens and Bromley High Street over the summer period to create linkages into the town's 'hidden' green spaces. Other activities would include work to continue to guide and promote the Bromley Business GrowthCLUB programme and to work with colleagues in Town Centre Development Team on a joint campaign to promote Bromley as a location for commercial space.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) Recent work around Town Centre Management and Business Support in the 1st Quarter of 2013/14 be noted; and**
- 2) The plans for Town Centre Management and Business Support activity for the 2nd Quarter of 2013/14 be noted.**

E) OUTER LONDON FUND

The Head of Town Centre Renewal confirmed that work was ongoing to deliver Round 2 projects funded by successful bids to the Outer London Fund.

Work was now being undertaken with design teams to extend public realm improvements in Bromley North Village throughout Bromley Town Centre which would include the introduction of 'Legible London' wayfinding signs as well as supporting businesses in Bromley North Village to improve their premises. The installation of the High Street Garden aimed to set the tone for the forthcoming development of the pedestrianised area of the High Street and draw visitors to the Churchill Piazza and Gardens.

Officers had contacted the owners of 2-22 High Street, which was sited opposite the entrance to Bromley South Station, around the potential to renew the frontage of these buildings and it was proposed to erect a large 'Bromley' display in this location to welcome visitors to the town.

The Chairman advised members of the Partnership that architects had also been appointed to consider how the pedestrianised area in Bromley Town Centre could be improved to benefit local residents, visitors to the town centre and local businesses.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

F) LOCAL PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The Head of Planning Strategy and Projects provided an update on the development of planning policy in the Borough.

Consultation on the Options and Preferred Strategy' stage of the Local Plan had closed on 15th April 2013. The next stage was to prepare policies in line with the strategy (taking the consultation responses into account) and site allocations. There would be a further consultation later in 2013 regarding draft development policies and site allocations within the emerging Local Plan, and members of the Partnership were asked to contribute to these consultations where appropriate. It was expected that the draft Local Plan would be published in early 2014, and that the final Local Plan would be agreed by Autumn 2014.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

G) EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS INITIATIVES

Margaret Carr, LBB Projects and Partnership Manager outlined a range of programmes being delivered across the Borough that were helping to support Bromley residents into employment.

The Mottingham Community and Learning Shop and Cotmandene Centre provided a wide range of support to Bromley residents. This included a weekly work club, and recruitment and support sessions by local employers and a range of partners including the National Careers Service. The Centres also offered volunteering opportunities, tailored one-to-one support and IT skills courses.

The Bromley Employment and Skills Group continued to meet on a quarterly basis, bringing together a range of stakeholders to share best practice on support into employment as well as details of current and forthcoming programmes.

Employment support was offered by a wide range of stakeholders including the Bromley Adult Education Centre who supported the Work Club at the Kentwood Centre and the Tackling Troubled Families Programme which

aimed to help people into work. The Star Project at Bromley College was working to delivery 198 internship and apprenticeship opportunities for unemployed Bromley residents between the age of 18 and 24 years over a three year period. Sam Parrett, Bromley College of Further and Higher Education confirmed that the Star Project was working well, and that the College was keen to attract more businesses to participate in the Project. Robert Innes, Skills Funding Agency advised members of the Partnership that a further scheme was available that supported employers to offer unpaid traineeships for a period of up to 6 months to young people who were not yet ready for an apprenticeship or internship opportunity.

The Chairman noted the wide range of initiatives available to support people into work and highlighted the need to provide a step by step programme for employers around employing a young person in the Borough and the current initiatives and organisations that supported this.

Margaret Carr, LBB Projects and Partnership Manager advised members of the Partnership that forthcoming changes to the benefits system would impact businesses as all benefits, including those for working families, would be paid through the Universal Credit, which relied on employers submitting real time information on their employees.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

6 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

Information on current unemployment and employment trends in the Borough would be circulated to members of the Partnership following the meeting.

B) BIGGIN HILL AIRPORT DEVELOPMENTS

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 bought together a cluster of modern aviation-related businesses at and around London Biggin Hill Airport to support continued economic development in the area. The LoCATE Team had completed both a property report and an analysis of the economic value of the airport to the local economic community, and was now undertaking commercial testing of the West Camp area of the site.

The benefits of using London Biggin Hill Airport continued to be promoted to a wide range of businesses, and work was currently being undertaken towards

securing a business deal which could realise significant investment in the airport and create a number of employment opportunities.

C) COMMERCIAL PROPERTY MARKET

Mike Lewis, Michael Rogers LLP gave an update on the commercial property market in the Borough. The level of enquiries for commercial property in the Borough were approximately 50% lower than the same time in 2012, however enquiries were now of a better quality. The market for industrial space had improved significantly, although the demand for prime retail and office space was less strong. There continued to be an issue around the availability of quality office space across the Borough. It was noted that RBS Insurance had announced the closure of its Croydon office but this was not expected to affect Bromley significantly.

D) GENERAL NEWS ROUND

Colin Maclean, Community Links Bromley was pleased to advise members of the Partnership that Community Links Bromley currently had one apprentice and two intern positions and that there were significant opportunities for young people in building a career in the voluntary and community sector. Community Links Bromley was also working with Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust to provide volunteering opportunities for people who had experienced mental health issues to help support them back into work. Colin Maclean noted that Healthwatch Bromley would shortly be interviewing candidates for the position of Chair to drive forward improvements to local health and social care services.

Ivan Reffell, Best of Bromley Borough confirmed that the Best of Bromley Borough website had been launched to support and promote independent businesses in the Borough and encourage residents to shop locally. Work was being undertaken to raise public awareness around the local offer and other methods of communication were also being explored. Monthly networking meetings for local businesses were also being held.

Sam Parrett, Bromley College of Further and Higher Education confirmed that the new centre for young people with special educational needs and disabilities on the Bromley campus had now been completed and that these students would be supported towards work where appropriate. The College was now planning the construction of a £5m Sports Hall on the Bromley campus, of which £1.3m funding would be provided by the Skills Funding Agency. The Sports Hall would include a gym and lecture hall facilities and was expected to be in place by September 2014 to support the introduction of a range of sports science courses at the College, as well as increased community use of the campus facilities. Sam Parrett was pleased to note that the College had established a partnership with Canterbury Christ Church University which would expand the Higher Education offer of the College. The College was also working to establish a University Technical College and hoped to develop this in the area of Health and Life Sciences.

Steve Nelson, South East London Chamber of Commerce reported that the Chamber of Commerce was introducing an Executives' Club which would be launched later in 2013. The Chamber's website would shortly be updated to include more business advice and make it easier for local businesses to access procurement opportunities with Local Authorities.

Suzanne Sharp, NewsQuest noted that the number of recruitment opportunities advertised through the recruitment service was equal to the same period in 2012. The News Shopper had a dedicated platform for Education and Training and a wide ranging readership which could support public awareness of partner initiatives and business opportunities.

Adrian Hollands, Baker Tilly Tax and Accounting Limited confirmed that a refurbishment of his offices had recently been completed. Clients of the firm continued to report difficulty in obtaining loans from banks, which was a major barrier to business investment and growth.

Robert Innes, Skills Funding Agency noted the need to raise awareness of the London Enterprise Panel, which was the Local Enterprise Partnership for London.

Carol Arnfield, Bromley Adult Education College confirmed that the Bromley Adult Education College continued to work closely with Jobcentre Plus to deliver qualifications to local people who were unemployed. In the Summer Term 2013, 44 courses were offered to jobseekers. This had resulted in 352 enrolments, 80% of which were by Bromley residents. Key areas for training included IT, office skills, adult social care, retail and CV writing. A short course was also being offered to support people to use the Jobcentre Plus universal job match website which had resulted in over 100 enrolments. The work club at the Kentwood Centre ran two mornings per week and would continue throughout the summer break.

RESOLVED that the updates be noted.

7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Head of Town Centre Management and Business Support advised members of the Partnership that a new National start up loan scheme was available to young people aged 18-30 years to support them to start their own businesses.

RESOLVED that the issue raised be noted.

8 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

4.00pm, Tuesday 8th October 2013
4.00pm, Tuesday 14th January 2014
4.00pm, Thursday 10th April 2014

The Meeting ended at 5.39 pm

Chairman