

**Decision Maker:** PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR RENEWAL AND RECREATION  
WITH PRE-SCRUTINY BY THE RENEWAL AND RECREATION  
POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**Date:** Tuesday 1 April 2014

**Decision Type:** Non-Urgent Executive Non-Key

**Title:** TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE FUND 2014-15

**Contact Officer:** Martin Pinnell, Head of Town Centre Management and Business Support  
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**Chief Officer:** Nigel Davies, Executive Director of Environment & Community Services

**Ward:** (All Wards);

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1. Reason for report

This report combines the regular update for Members on the activities of the Town Centre Management and Business Support Team, with an outline of the proposed Town Centre Management events and activities which are planned for the 2014/15 financial year. The report provides the outcome of a review of the Council's Christmas lights policy and seeks approval to utilise the Town Centre Management Initiative Fund in support of Christmas lights funding and town centre events during the coming financial year.

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2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

The Renewal & Recreation Portfolio Holder is asked to:

2.1 Note the range of activities which have taken place during Q4 2013/14 as provided in APPENDIX 1.

2.2 Note the outcome of an officer review of Christmas lights policy, as outlined in paragraphs 3.4 – 3.10, and agree that up to £25k be set aside from the Town Centre Initiatives Fund 2014/15 for use on Town Centre Christmas Lights schemes as set out in paragraph 3.10.

2.3 Agree the schedule of Town Centre Management events and activities for 2014/15 outlined in paragraph 3.14, which will have a total net cost of £14k funded from the Town Centre Initiative Fund.

### Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing Policy
  2. BBB Priority: Vibrant, Thriving Town Centres
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### Financial

1. Cost of proposal: Estimated Cost: £39k
  2. Ongoing costs: Recurring Cost
  3. Budget head/performance centre: Town Centre Management Initiatives Fund
  4. Total current budget for this head: £39k
  5. Source of funding: Existing revenue budget for 2014/15
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### Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): 3
  2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours:
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### Legal

1. Legal Requirement: None : Discretionary activities
  2. Call-in: Applicable
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### Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): Approximately 2,000 town centre businesses, plus residents using town centres.
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### Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? Not Applicable
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments:

### 3. COMMENTARY

#### Introduction

- 3.1 The Town Centre Management (TCM) and Business Support service in Renewal & Recreation exists to maintain and enhance the competitiveness, attractiveness and vibrancy of the borough's town centres – and to support businesses across the borough. This involves working closely with town centre businesses, both directly and through business and traders groups, and with other key town centre occupiers and service providers. The resources for the service are derived not only from Council budgets but also from income from business donations and sponsorship. Highlights of the TCM and Business Support work programme in Quarter 4 of 2012/13 is provided as **APPENDIX 1**.
- 3.2 The proposed work programme for the Town Centre Managers during 2014/15 will continue to involve a wide range of duties ranging from facilitation of some public events through to day to day assistance to town centre occupiers. Members are asked to take note, however, that resources available are less than in previous years due to the ending of the Mayor of London's Outer London Fund programme (which provided significant additional funding for events during 2012 and 2013). There will also be an estimated £21k shortfall in income derived from town centre promotions and rides in Bromley town centre, mainly due to the impact of the Bromley North Village works in Market Square, which will have an impact on the Council funding available for initiatives (further information on this is provided in paragraph 5.2 below). The Council's approach to the management of promotions, rides and other activities in Bromley town centre is under review and will be the subject of a report to a future meeting of the R&R PDS Committee. The staff resource available during 2014/15 will also be less than previously due to the maternity leave of the Bromley Town Centre Manager, whose post will only be partially covered during the year due to funding restrictions.
- 3.3 One of the key priorities for the TCM and Business Support service has been and continues to be the development of Business Improvement Districts in town centres. As Members are aware the proposed Orpington BID was successful at ballot in February 2013 and was launched in April 2013. The Head of Town Centre Management and a local ward Councillor attend the BID Board meetings as advisory members, and the former provides a key liaison and monitoring contact between Council officers and the BID – although the Council no longer retains a Town Centre Manager post for Orpington. Officers in the TCM and Business Support team have undertaken an initial feasibility exercise into the prospects for BIDs starting in other locations, and as a result have started the process for a Bromley BID, which is the subject of a separate report to Members on the Renewal and Recreation PDS Committee.

#### Christmas Lights

- 3.4 As requested by the Chairman of the PDS Committee and prompted by the forthcoming expiry of the contract for supply of Christmas lights in 3 of the main town centres, Officers have undertaken a short review of Christmas lights policy for 2014 onwards. This is to refresh a more thorough review of Christmas lights policy which took place in 2011 and was reported to the Renewal and Recreation PDS Committee in April 2011.
- 3.5 After in-depth consultation with businesses and business representative groups during early 2011, Members were advised that there was little prospect of businesses contributing enough to cover all costs related to Christmas lights, but with a concerted campaign it would be possible to increase the level of contribution from the private sector. Members were presented with a number of options, ranging from continued full funding of lights in the main town centres, to withdrawal of all funding. The preferred option was to offer match funding of up to 50 percent of each scheme, with the remainder funded by businesses or other partner contributions. In the small town centres, it was agreed that the Council would continue to make small donations

towards lights schemes, which are generally organised and paid for by local business and residential groups. Following the April 2011 decision, Town Centre Managers spent considerable time and effort engaging with businesses in each main town centre, in partnership with traders groups, to encourage participation in the scheme. Whilst there was some increase in contributions in 2011 as a result of this (as illustrated in Table 1, below), it was not sufficient to provide displays of sufficient quality or extent to match previous years light schemes in these centres. Later in 2011 the Council was successful in bidding for funding from round 1 of the Mayor of London's Outer London Fund. This provided capital funds which were used to purchase lights for the three successful town centres – Bromley, Orpington and Penge – with the Council only required to fund the installation and storage costs. Following a tendering exercise, a contractor was engaged to supply the lights, and install, store and maintain these during the period from Christmas 2011 to Christmas 2013. This contract is due to come to an end in October 2014.

**Table 1 Expenditure on Christmas lights and sources of funding from 2010-2013**

Description	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total	%
Total spent on lights and trees	71,600	147,000	31,000	33,100	282,700	
Business contribution	900	10,300	1,600	2,100	14,900	5.3%
Other contribution - including OLF	0	116,000	600	0	116,600	41.2%
Net cost to LBB	70,700	20,700	28,800	31,000	151,200	53.5%

- 3.6 Town Centre Managers have again undertaken consultation with larger businesses and business representative groups in the main town centres, particularly Bromley, Beckenham and Penge. As in previous years, there is some reluctance amongst businesses to contribute to Christmas decorations, especially if they feel others are not contributing. For Beckenham and Penge it is considered realistic to generate around £2,500 and £1,500 respectively to assist with the cost of the scheme. For Bromley businesses were keen to sponsor the Christmas event, but less so to contribute towards Christmas lights, with the exception of the Christmas tree, which is usually sponsored. Potentially, some income could be generated through sponsorship and other charging related to business promotion at events, but this is not likely to generate more than £2,000 for Bromley. To put these figures in context the decorations for Beckenham during the past 3 years have cost around £6,000 per annum and the installation-only costs for Bromley and Penge have been £13,500 and £4,000 per annum respectively. Therefore it is likely that the Council would still need to fund the bulk of the costs in 2014 if Christmas lights are to be displayed in these town centres. A survey of other town centres in the London area in order to benchmark the most common approach unfortunately had a low response rate. However, what responses were received suggested that increasingly only town centres with BIDs were operating lights schemes, and these were usually wholly or mainly funded through the BID levy of businesses, without contributions from Local Authorities.
- 3.7 In order to understand the options open to the Council for Christmas lights in the main town centres for 2014 and beyond, an independent inspection of the festive lights and decorations owned by the Council (for Bromley, Orpington and Penge) was commissioned. Based on a bench test of all lights, frames and connections, the condition report showed that the lights were all in good working order and could be used for at least one, if not two further seasons. This means that for at least the 2014 season funding would only be required for installation, maintenance and storage of these.
- 3.8 Under the arrangements in place to establish the Orpington 1<sup>st</sup> BID (agreed by Executive in September 2012), the Council agreed to transfer the ownership of the Christmas lights used in Orpington Town Centre to the BID, on condition that they would fund all future costs associated

with their installation, storage and maintenance for the town. The BID will therefore be offered the lights in an 'as seen' condition for them to utilise or dispose of as they see fit.

- 3.9 Given the role of BIDs in funding Christmas lights in Orpington and other boroughs across London it is likely that this will also become part of the remit of any new Bromley town centre BID – which, if successful at ballot, would be launched during 2015. It would seem sensible therefore for the Council to retain responsibility for funding the installation, maintenance and storage for one further year in Bromley. As an option, Members may also favour maintaining support for lights schemes in Beckenham and Penge for 2014, with a view to withdrawing all Council funding in 2015 or 2016. Town Centres Managers will work to realise the potential private sector contributions towards Christmas lights for each town, as outlined in paragraph 3.6, above.
- 3.10 A one year contract for maintenance and installation of the existing lights in Bromley and Penge, plus the hiring of lights in Beckenham would be expected to cost in the region of £25,000. Traditionally, a sum has been set aside each year to support smaller town centres with donations towards their festive decorations. However, due to the very restrictive funds now available it is recommended that no contributions are made by the Council to small town centre Christmas lights in 2014. Should Members be in support of the overall approach suggested, a budget of £25k will be allocated from the Town Centre Management Initiative Fund towards Christmas lights in the 2014-15 financial year, and officers will undertake a three written quotes process to procure a contractor to undertake this work for the 2014 season.

## Events

- 3.11 Coordinating events for the general public aimed at increasing footfall and raising the profile of our town centres have always been a key part of the work of the Town Centre Management service. During 2013/14 a number of successful town centre events have taken place, funded from the Town Centre Management Initiative Fund and other sources including grant funding of £25k from the Outer London Fund.
- 3.12 From 1 April, responsibility for town centre events in Orpington has been taken over by Orpington 1<sup>st</sup> BID company – and these have successfully enhanced the programme previously offered by Town Centre Management. Key events coordinated by Town Centre Managers during 2013/14 includes Bromley Fashion Week in May, activities on Bromley High Street Garden during the summer and the 'Are you Bromley's Future?' event on 1 September. In Beckenham the Town Centre Manager supported the Local Produce Market launched in May in partnership with Copers Cope Residents Association, and the Beckenham Heritage Trail Launch event in October. In Penge a pop up market was run on several occasions, enhanced by entertainment and live music. Many towns in the borough benefitted from community Christmas events during November and December – either directly managed or supported by the Town Centre Management team.
- 3.13 The 2013/14 events brought additional vitality into each of the town centres. For example, the lights switch on combined with a Santa Dash event in Bromley on the first Sunday in December, helped draw in over 88,000 people to the town centre, representing an increase of over 80% compared with the previous Sunday. The events also encouraged visitors and shoppers to extend their 'dwell time', provided positive publicity for the town concerned, fostered a greater sense of community and helped to promote local businesses, particularly those sponsoring or supporting the events.
- 3.14 In 2014-15 due to the lack of external grant funding (e.g. Outer London Fund) and the expected shortfall in income from promotions and rides, there will be a very limited events programme. Town Centre Managers will concentrate on delivering good quality and high profile Christmas events in Bromley, Beckenham and Penge. In addition, officers will continue to support smaller

events and promotions through assistance to local groups with fund raising, facilitation, advice and guidance.

**Table 2: Draft Council-funded Town Centre event programme 2014/15**

<b>Town</b>	<b>Approx date</b>	<b>Event title</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Estimated total cost</b>	<b>Estimated partner contributions</b>	<b>Net cost to the Council</b>
Beckenham	29/11/2014	Christmas event	Christmas parade, market, mini-fair ground and Lego workshop	£2,680	£500	£2,180
Bromley	November TBC	Christmas Parade / Santa Dash	Family event including Santa Dash, stage with entertainment and local performers, Christmas parade with reindeers, lights switch on and fireworks	£16,000	£6,000	£10,000
Penge	November TBC	Christmas event	Christmas themed event with entertainment, market and children's rides	£2,500	£500	£2,000
<b>TOTALS</b>				<b>£21,180</b>	<b>£7,000</b>	<b>£14,180</b>

3.15 The funded events programme would have a net cost to the Council of £14,180, and therefore this sum is requested to be allocated from the Town Centre Management Initiative Fund.

#### **4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

The events and activities outlined above are aimed specifically at enhancing the vitality of town centres across the borough and as such contribute to the Building a Better Bromley key priority of Vibrant, Thriving Town Centres.

## 5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 For 2014/15 the Town Centre Management Initiative Fund budget is £60,180. This is reduced from the previous year as the Council will no longer be providing a contribution towards the Christmas lights in Orpington.

5.2 There is a further reduction in available funding as a result of an expected shortfall in income of £21k for 2014-15. This results from a restriction in the availability of pedestrianized space which can be used for promotions and rides in the Market Square area of Bromley due to the ongoing Bromley North Village improvement works. It is expected that once the works have been completed in the pedestrianized area (August 2014) the promotional income will take some time to recover to 2013 levels,

5.3 The following table summarises the proposed spending on this fund:-

<b>Town Centre Management Fund</b>	<b>£</b>
2014/15 Budget (excluding impact of Orpington BID)	60,180
Less impact of expected income shortfall	<u>-21,000</u>
Net budget available	<u>39,180</u>
<b>Proposed events and activities</b>	
Town Centre Events	14,180
Christmas Lights	<u>25,000</u>
<b>Total</b>	<u>39,180</u>

5.4 For 2014/15, the activities of the Town Centre Management and Business Support Team are financed through various funding streams, summarised as follows: -

### Funding available for TCM and Business Support Activities

<b>Funding type</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Town Centre Management Initiative Fund (adj for income shortfall)	39
Outer London Fund	10
Earmarked reserve for Local Parades Improvement Initiative	15
Earmarked reserve for Bromley BID project	<u>110</u>
	<u><u>174</u></u>

<b>Non-Applicable Sections:</b>	Legal, Personnel
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	R&R PDS Report – Town Centre Management Initiative Fund 2013/14 (DRR13/034 – 26 Feb 2013)