

APPENDIX 2: Bromley Town Centre Draft Spatial Management Plan

1. Purpose of Review

- 1.1 To develop a strategy for the management of the space in Bromley Town Centre, specifically Market Square and the pedestrian area, that will be compatible with and will enhance the improved public realm. The current disruption in the pedestrian area of Market Square to the improvement works has created a hiatus which allows Officers and Members to consider the various options for an improved management of activities within the Town Centre for the period after the space has been re-opened. The emerging strategy will be agreed and publicised to all interested parties to ensure that a consistent approach can be taken to responding to requests for use of the revamped space, and for managing users of the space.
- 1.2 In developing this plan officers have been mindful of the possible introduction of a Business Improvement District (BID) for Bromley – although this is still in the early stages of development. In keeping with best practice for BIDs in other town centres, it is likely that any resulting BID company for the town would wish to take over and run some or all of these activities, develop them for the benefit of the town and also generate an income from these to re-invest into BID activities. It is likely that any Bromley BID proposal would be going to a ballot in either summer or autumn 2015 and therefore would be operational by April 2016. The plan therefore will necessarily have a life span of between 18 and 24 months at most (from September 2014) before most of these activities would be taken over by the BID. The purpose will therefore be to provide a stable starting point for the BID to build upon.

2. Objectives for using the town centre space

1. Brings vibrancy and activity to the space. Increased variety improves the attractiveness of the town centre, encourages dwell time and by extension additional spend.
2. Opportunity for income generation, which can allow Town Centre Management (or a future BID) to create additional enhancements or events for the benefit of the Town.

3. Current Activities

- Promotions
- Children's rides
- Weekly Market
- Specialist Markets
- Street Entertainers
- Events

4. How successful have existing activities been to meet these objectives?

- 4.1 In the past year there has been an increase in the bookings for the promotional space, and although these can create some interest not all of these promotions necessarily involve activities that are interactive.

- 4.2 Prior to the start of the improvement works in Market Square at least one children's ride was present every day with additional rides installed for school holidays. However these rides not always open/operating (especially in periods of poor weather) therefore creating a negative visual impact.
- 4.3 The weekly market runs successfully on a Thursday, Friday and Saturday however the expenditure involved in the management of the market could be reduced through a review of current contractors. The implementation of a Market Policy would also address concerns regarding the mix of products on offer and utilisation of empty stalls, however income may be reduced if the policy deters existing or potential stallholders. The positioning of these stalls could potentially be improved to create a flow of customers past the adjacent shops rather than blocking them – although any reorganisation would need to take account of the need to maintain a clear fire / emergency access path.
- 4.4 Specialist Markets visit the town at least twice a year. These are popular with members of the public however positioning of the stalls and the visual impact have been raised as a concern previously.
- 4.5 Street Entertainers are generally of good quality and provide a good ambience within the town. They currently register with LBB and are booked into allocated locations within the pedestrian area.
- 4.6 Last year there were 4 large scale events which attracted additional visitors to the town however due to reduced Council funding it is likely that there will be fewer events in 2014.
- 4.7 Research on attitudes of visitors and businesses to activities provided in the pedestrian area are generally positive. The main negative comment relates to the visual impact of some of these activities. Most people would prefer to see more performers / artists and interactive activities for children. However it should be noted that the more high quality entertainment provided in the town centre generally involves a cost to Town Centre Management, therefore negates the second objective.
- 4.8 The income budget for promotions and rides is £35.5k and this is used to fund expenditure for Bromley Town Centre Management which includes an element of staffing, events and Christmas lights. Income from the Markets is allocated to Streetscene Services. If the income from town centre promotions and rides were to cease or significantly reduce the shortfall would need to be made up in the appropriate budgets by finding additional sources of income (e.g. sponsorship) or reducing the level of TCM service provided.

5. Benchmarking

To provide some comparison other town centres were contacted as part of this review to ascertain the activities that take place.

Kingston

The space in the town centre is managed by Kingston First BID Company. They currently run a full calendar of events and markets throughout the year. There is a 6

day food market and half day value market in two separate areas of the town. Children's rides operate during school holidays. There is a full programme of street activities including buskers and performers that do not book, just simply turn up. An area within the town centre is also allocated to promotional and commercial activities.

Wimbledon

The space in the town centre is managed by Love Wimbledon BID Company. A monthly market is run between March and November with a Christmas Market every weekend in December. Children's rides do not operate in the town centre. An area within the town centre is used to host large scale events and promotions throughout the year.

Bexleyheath

The space in the town centre is managed by Bexleyheath BID Company. There are no regular markets, only specialist markets visiting twice a year and Christmas Market stalls. Children's rides operate in the town centre during school holidays. Promotions take place in the town with 5 large scale events throughout the year

6. Recommendations

6.1 Future Options for Town Centre Activities

- Continue with promotions in the town centre, with a preference for more interactive activities where possible, but using this as the main means of generating additional income.
- Offer a varied mix of children's activities, not just rides, focussed on specific times of year (eg school holidays) but not as a permanent feature. Other activities could include sand pits, craft activities, soft play, sports activities. It should be noted that some of these activities may incur a cost to the Council. Organisations such as Bromley Mytime and local churches/charities/Sports clubs may be able to provide these activities free of charge.
- Continue with the weekly market but with a view to develop and implement a Market Policy to ensure high quality products and a varied offer – which does not conflict with the offer from 'bricks and mortar' retailers in the town centre. A review to be undertaken of the current Market Contractors to ensure best value for money.
- Specialist Markets to take place two, possibly three times a year taking into consideration the concerns from local businesses / retailers regarding duplication. These Specialist Markets could take the place in the newly appointed area in the Market Square, which provides electrical facilities and space for up to a maximum of 27 market stalls.
- Varied mix of street entertainment, including buskers and local groups, throughout the year at no cost to the Council. Introduce a regular programme of performances throughout the summer months to improve the ambience of the shopping environment.

- Regular programme of large scale events, partnering with other organisations, funded through Council and external sponsorship.
- Explore options, with the Town Centre Regeneration team, for bringing some permanent kiosks into the town centre, with a view to renting these out for additional income generation.

6.2 Quality Control & Visual impact

- All activities to be approved by LBB – specifically with permissions to be issued by Town Centre Management and the Street Scene teams.
- All activities to provide relevant health and safety documentation and visual mock ups prior to booking
- All activities to be of high quality and be presented and run in a professional manner

6.3 Location & Frequency

- Location of activities to be agreed with LBB prior to booking with site visit if applicable
- Activities must not block shop frontages or interfere with other town centre activities
- No activities to be left in the town centre overnight without prior agreement.
- Priority given to events, specialist markets and interactive activities
- Children's interactive activities to take place during the main school holidays

6.4 Fee structure

- Fee structure to be agreed between Town Centre Management and Street Services for activities. It is expected that in order to encourage promotional companies back into using the town centre after a period of disruption that fees would be held at their current levels, but would be reviewed to ensure that costs will be fully recovered from April 2015 onwards.
- Official invoices for activities to be managed by Street Services
- Late payments result in no further bookings until payments are made

6.5 Management structure

- Location of activities to be approved by both Street Services and Town Centre Management.

- Street Services continue to take bookings for activities using the joint calendar on onebromley
- Town Centre Management to continue to book dates in advance for large scale events and other interactive activities using the joint calendar on onebromley
- Regular review of activities to take place between Street Services and Town Centre Management.

6.6 Procurement

For the period April 2014 – March 2015 it is recommended that each town centre activity is approved by Streetscene Services and Town Centre Management on a case by case basis. A procurement procedure may be required for the Market Contractors dependent on the outcome of the review.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 With the current Bromley North Village Improvement works it was expected that, with the exception of the weekly market, the town centre activities will reduce dramatically between the period January 2014 – September 2014, and this has proven to be the case.
- 7.2 As stated above businesses in Bromley Town Centre are starting to organise themselves to develop a Business Improvement District (BID) for the town. If this goes ahead the BID company may be managing the space in the town centre after April 2016.
- 7.3 Therefore the recommendations above would only be an interim arrangement for 18 - 24 months. On the basis of the above it is recommended that officers undertake the following activities during the next 6 - 12 months:
 - i. Develop an information leaflet or web page to attract potential users of promotional space to consider Bromley town centre.
 - ii. Investigate and implement alternative children's activities for introduction during school holidays.
 - iii. Review and develop the policies and licences around the weekly market to ensure that the offer is consistently high quality and supportive of the wider town centre.
 - iv. Review the physical location of the market stalls to ensure best use is made of the pedestrian space.
 - v. Review of the market management and security arrangements to ensure best value for money is achieved.
 - vi. Trial new specialist markets in the new market spaces within Market Square
 - vii. Introduce a regular programme of street entertainment.