

## 1. Summary of activities September to November 2014/15

### 1.1 Business Improvement Districts

- i. The grant agreement between **Bromley BID** Working Group and the Council was finalised in early October, and the Working Group subsequently appointed a specialist consultant Central Management Solutions (CMS) to undertake the work programme required to bring the proposed BID to a ballot in October / November 2015. Work has now commenced on the first stages of the programme – which includes a review of the business rates data and some light touch consultation which is expected to confirm the results of the Council's own initial feasibility study. In addition work has started on developing the key legal agreements (Baseline and Operating Agreements) which will underpin the future relationship between the Council and the BID.
- ii. The BID Working Group, assisted by the CMS, will in January 2015 launch in-depth consultation which will seek to understand the issues for the town centre, and the aspirations of the businesses that could potentially be met through a BID. The results of the BID consultation and a draft Bromley BID Proposal are expected to be available in spring 2015 – at which time full update on the project will be reported to Members.
- iii. The Council continues to maintain direct contact with the **Orpington 1st BID** Board through the attendance of non-voting members Cllr William Huntingdon-Thresher and the Head of Town Centre Management & Business Support. The BID held its second Annual General Meeting on 8 October at which the majority of existing Board were re-elected and some new members were added to the Board. Recent BID project highlights include:
  - Initiating a partnership with the Police which will see the formation of a dedicated town centre team – part funded by the BID.
  - Occupation of an office building on the High Street – which has started to function not only as the BID HQ but also as an enterprise hub and meeting point for local businesses.

- Joint purchasing opportunities for BID members through partnership with Meercat procurement specialists – to help businesses save money
- Sponsorship / organisation of public events including
  - Cycle Mania (28 Sept) – which involved closure of the road at War Memorial end of High Street and was highly successful in attracting additional footfall and spend into the High Street on a Sunday.
  - Christmas lights switch on (20 Nov) is in late stages of planning – with another road closure planned so that the focus of activity will be on the High Street.

## 1.2 Vacant units

Vacancy rates for most Bromley town centres have not been updated by Local Data Company since the previous report.

## 1.4 Local Parades Improvement Initiative Fund

During the past 2 months work has been ongoing to implement improvement projects in various areas including:

- Chatterton Village – flower towers and hanging baskets.
- Chislehurst, High Street and Belmont Parade – village sign, community notice boards, resurfacing of alleyways and a deep clean.
- Chislehurst, Royal Parade – development of a bid to upgrade Christmas lights
- Clockhouse – improvements to damaged shop frontage, a deep clean and upgraded litter bin installation planned.
- Coney Hall – installation of planters has taken place – with some other work pending a possible change to parking and loading bays, which is under consideration by local traders.
- Hayes Village, The Street – improvement to frontage of village hall and new bins.
- Hayes, Station Approach – 2 community noticeboards, repair to car park entrances and deep clean of the pavement from Station area and round into Bourne Way. .
- Keston – Flower towers installed over the summer, now replaced by permanent planters. Bid for planting of permanent Christmas tree is in preparation.

- Mottingham, Kimmeridge Cross – planters, community noticeboards and benches.

In each case, Town Centre Managers have been assisting local groups to identify costs and explore feasibility for a variety of projects. By the end of the 2013/14 financial year £237k of the original £250k was authorised by the Portfolio Holder. Of this, £185k has already been spent, the remainder committed or earmarked. There is therefore £13k remaining unallocated for projects in parades and small town centres not yet served by this programme.

### **1.5 Bromley North Village Improvement works**

The Bromley North Village improvement works are expected to run until end of November 2014. Works in Market Square is now mostly complete and this space is now being utilised for promotions and will play host to Bromley's Christmas lights switch on event and Christmas market. Happily, the two adjacent large retail units fronting the square (E.W. Paynes and Ernest Jones) have now been occupied by Chisholm Hunter (jewellers) and Thorntons which should improve footfall and vibrancy in this location.

### **1.6 Beckenham town centre**

The Town Centre Manager continues to support the Town Centre Team and the Beckenham Member Working Group in their role of guiding and consulting on the design of the major TfL scheme currently in development. A number of short term improvements complementary to this scheme are in the process of being implemented following the setting aside of £47k from a section 106 agreement after the September R&R PDS Committee. During the past quarter, the Town Centre Manager has:

- Successfully applied for funding to support the Purple Flag project – which is about developing a partnership to promote improvements to safety in the evening economy – and organised the first project workshop for the partners in October
- Developed and supported a programme of networking evenings for retailers, with an event hosted at an art gallery and a bookshop.
- Supported the BBA in outreach to retailers with the aim of increasing the number of high street businesses in the BBA membership

- Assisted with the organisation of the autumn Market on the Green and staffed the information van. Also coordinated the 2<sup>nd</sup> discount voucher scheme linked to the event – which was repeated at the request of the participating businesses.
- Secured sponsorship in kind and in cash from Waitrose and Sainsbury

## 1.7 Penge town centre

During the past quarter the Town Centre Manager has:

- Brought together various stakeholders to create a Town Centre Team for Penge which has now been formed and recognised by the Association of Town Centre Management
- Developing ideas with local groups for a potential High Street Fund bid for Penge
- Working on the plans for the Penge Christmas event, involving for the first time the Bridge House theatre
- Helping to promote the new location and facilities at the library through organising a complementary event in Empire square which coincided with official opening
- Liaising with the new owners of the Goldsmiths Arms to establish links for future events and collaboration when the pub re-opens
- Liaising with the GLA appointed 00 architects on ideas for development of future projects

## 1.8 Events

- i. The now regular Beckenham local produce market was organised on 20 September partnership with the Copers Cope Area Residents Association and the Beckenham Business Association. The popular market on Beckenham Green was augmented with entertainment and a stall promoting businesses from across the town, along with a display caravan publicising the TfL funded plans for regeneration of the High Street – which was visited by over 80 local residents. The discount voucher was repeated due to demand from the participating businesses.
- ii. Poppies have been installed in trees and lamp columns in Bromley in readiness for Remembrance Sunday.

iii. In the late stages of planning are the following Christmas lights switch on events (in date order):

- Penge – Thursday 20 November, 3–6pm  
Christmas stalls, hog roast, Santa and entertainment on stage
- Orpington (High Street) – Thursday 20 November, 4–7pm  
Santa and his reindeer, lantern parade, fairground rides, Christmas market stalls, entertainment and a fireworks display.
- Biggin Hill (New Life Church) – Saturday 22 November, 4–5pm  
Entertainment, mulled wine and mince pies
- Hayes (New Inn, Station Approach) – Saturday 22 November, 4pm  
Santa's grotto, stalls and entertainment
- Farnborough Village – Sunday 23 November
- Chislehurst (Royal Parade) – Sunday 23 November, 12noon – 5pm  
Christmas market, food, entertainment and a raffle
- Beckenham – Saturday 29 November, 12noon – 6pm  
Candle-lit parade, children's fun fair, entertainment on stage, food stalls, Santa, carol singing and mince pies
- Chislehurst (High Street) – Saturday 29 November, 3–5pm  
Mulled wine, Father Christmas, popcorn, roasted chestnuts and entertainment.
- Petts Wood – Saturday 29 November, 1–6pm  
Stalls, rides, entertainment and fireworks at 6pm.
- Bromley Town Centre – Sunday 30 November, 12.00noon – 5.00pm  
Entertainment from 12 noon, festive stalls with Santa dash at 2pm, An appearance from Panto Stars at 4pm, Christmas parade starting at 4.45pm, lights switch on with snow, glitter and light show at 5pm

The majority of these events are organised by local business and residents groups and in Orpington by Orpington 1<sup>st</sup> BID. In Bromley, Beckenham and Penge the events are managed by Town Centre Management with only part of the costs met through agreed Council budgets, with the remainder funded through commercial sponsorship and other third party contributions.

- iv. Festive Impact Lighting Ltd have been contracted to install festive lights in Beckenham, Bromley, Chislehurst, Coney Hall, Orpington, Penge and Sundridge Park and are in the process of installing these displays in the agreed locations in preparation for the switch on dates outlined above.

## **1.8 Business Support Programme**

- i. Town Centre Management has continued to work closely with various organisations to ensure that there continues to be a programme of support and networking opportunities for local businesses. The events are organised without any financial subsidy from the Council – but rely on offering third parties free use of space, promotion via our networks and officer time.
- ii. At the last R&R Committee Members requested further feedback on the 18 June ‘Bromley Means Business’ Expo. In early October 195 participants were emailed with a link to an online survey and encouraged to provide feedback on the event and its impact on their businesses. Disappointingly only 16 of these provided a response, but out of these responses were generally positive, with 62% satisfied with the event (the remainder neutral). More than half of those responding had achieved growth since the event, and half of these attributed some part of that growth to having attended the event. Over a third of those responding said that they generated additional sales through having attending the Expo – all of these saying the that the sales were valued up to £5k. Some comments provided by participants include:
  - “We were able to deliver disability awareness training and gained additional fundraising as a result”
  - “I thought it was an excellent event. It was small enough to make one feel it possible to get all the way round, but big enough to have good variety. I was impressed.”

On the basis of this feedback and earlier feedback provided by the stall holders, officers are in discussions with London Means Business about hosting another Bromley Means Business Expo in June 2015, possibly utilising the Great Hall rather than the Committee Rooms, as this venue would facilitate all the stands being within one room.

- iii. In late September, the Council hosted a joint event with Barclays Bank and UKTI which promoted overseas trade. The event took place in Committee Room 1 and was attended by a range of existing and start up businesses with an interest in doing business abroad. The session included excellent presentations from expert practitioners.  
On 23 October the Council, in partnership with Action Coach, re-launched the Bromley Business Growth Club, which will become a regular monthly session for established local businesses with an ambition to grow. The first session, entitled 'Six Steps to a Better Business' was attended by 25 local business owners.
- iv. The bi-monthly Business e-Bulletin has changed its format and is now being hosted and managed on behalf of the Council by a local e-marketing agency. At present just over 3000 businesses are sent the bulletin every other month, with the next issue due in mid-November.

## **1.9 Business and Traders Group liaison**

In addition to the main town centre activities, the Town Centre Management team has maintained links, providing support and advice where required to a number of traders and town centre groups across the borough. As discussed in 1.1 the Town Centre Management team maintains direct links to the Orpington 1<sup>st</sup> BID through both formal and informal meetings.

## **2. Key priorities for the Town Centre Management & Business Support Team from November 2014 to February 2015**

The Town Centre Management & Business Support team's main priorities for this period will be:

- 2.1 Encourage and support the Bromley BID Working Group in engaging with businesses across the town centre to consult on a potential BID. Coordinating the Council's internal officer team in responding to the development of the BID proposal as the project progresses. Undertaking communications with the wider business community to raise the profile of the BID project.
- 2.2 Support for the Beckenham Town Centre Team and the Beckenham Town Centre Working Group – including assisting with engagement with businesses and other town centre stakeholders on designs for the major TfL-funded scheme for Beckenham.



- 2.3 Direct management and coordination of major Christmas events in Bromley, Beckenham and Penge and support for events elsewhere.
- 2.4 Upon Member approval of a 'direction of travel' report on the Bromley 3 day street market (also on this agenda) – to coordinate a project to prepare for the possible relocation and refocussing of the Bromley market – and prepare for a possible tender for a commercial operator for Bromley town centre markets.
- 2.5 Oversee the delivery of Christmas lights services for the 2014 season in Bromley, Beckenham, Penge, Orpington and some smaller towns / parades.
- 2.6 In collaboration with colleagues in the Town Centre Renewal Team support the submission of bid to the High Street Fund from Orpington and Penge. In the event that the bids to the New Housing Bonus fund are approved by the London Enterprise Panel, officers from this team will also be involved in refining the programme including business support projects.
- 2.7 Work with partner organisations to deliver a programme of support workshops and seminars for local existing businesses and start ups – including hosting the Bromley Business Growth Club in partnership with Action Coach.
- 2.8 Work with colleagues in the Council's Town Centre Renewal team to oversee the final evaluation of the Outer London Fund Round 2 programme – which will be undertaken by an external consultant and will be concluded by end of December for reporting to the GLA.
- 2.9 Maintain regular business communication channels and publications – including the business e-bulletin, website content, including a possible new Bromley Business Directory (for publication in 2015). The team will continue to engage with businesses through attendance at various networking events, and also facilitate the Bromley Economic Partnership and the Commercial Property Agents Forum.