

BROMLEY ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP

Minutes of the meeting held at 4.00 pm on 7 October 2014

Present:

Councillor Peter Morgan (Chairman)
Katy Woolcott, London Biggin Hill Airport (Vice-Chairman)
Sharon Baldwin, Orpington 1st BID Company
Dave Freeborn, George Proctor & Partners
Mark Henderson, MSE UK
Colin Maclean, Community Links Bromley
Adesina Okuboyejo, Skills Funding Agency - National Apprenticeships Service
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:

Lydia Coelho, LBB Community Development Manager
Mike Ellis, Prospects
Amanda Grice, Jobcentre Plus
Lesley Holland, LBB Operations Manager, Bromley Education Business Partnership
Stella Marshall, LBB Youth Support Programme Development Officer
Kevin Munnely, LBB Head of Town Centre Renewal
Dianna Neal, Head of Economy and Culture, London Councils
Adam Pope, Phoenix Community Housing
Ivan Reffell, Best of Bromley Borough
Robert Sargent, Acorn Commercial

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Robert Goddard – Thackray Williams Solicitors LLP, Karen Hine – Baker Tilly Tax and Accounting Limited, Mike Lewis – Michael Rogers LLP, Mary Manuel – LBB Head of Planning Strategy and Projects, Tyler McGill – Phoenix Community Housing, Marc Myers – intu Bromley, Steve Nelson – South East London Chamber of Commerce and Melanie Ross, Barclays Bank PLC.

2 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8TH JULY 2014 AND MATTERS ARISING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 8th July 2014 be agreed.

3 WORK OF LONDON COUNCILS AND FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES ACROSS LONDON

Dianna Neal, Head of Economy and Culture at London Councils gave a presentation on the work of London Councils in the area of economic development and outlined a number of funding opportunities available across London.

London Councils was a cross-party organisation which represented London's 32 borough council's and the City of London, and worked to develop policy and provide London-wide services such as the Freedom Pass.

London Councils had a number of economic development priorities which included working collaboratively with a range of agencies to accelerate London's growth, greater devolution of employment and skills programme to enhance individual opportunity, and supporting local economic growth. Recent activities of London Councils included supporting a governance review of the London Enterprise Panel, developing the London Enterprise Panel Economic Development Plan and working to secure greater devolution of powers and resources to London through the London Growth Deal.

A range of funding opportunities were currently available across London to support economic development. This included a number of pilot projects funded through the London Growth Deal which aimed to support the employment and skills agenda in identified pilot areas across London. Funding of £678m would be made available across London through European Structural and Investment Funds between 2014 and 2020. This funding would be available to organisations seeking to deliver programmes which targeted support into employment and business competitiveness. Funding for projects which were designed to benefit regional or local economies was also available through the European Regional Development Fund, and could be accessed via direct bidding. Free support and advice on applying for European funding was available from AccessEurope at <http://www.accesseurope.org.uk/>. Additional guidance could also be provided by the Local Authority where appropriate.

In response to a question from a Member of the Partnership, Dianna Neal confirmed that the New Homes Bonus was paid to each London Borough based on the number of homes built in the Borough in the previous year. In 2014/15, Bromley was expected to receive up to £1.928m to fund agreed projects across the Borough which supported the delivery of the seven London Enterprise Panel priorities.

The Chairman noted that there was potential to bid for European funding to support infrastructure projects across the Borough where it could be evidenced that the proposed projects contributed directly to business growth and competitiveness.

The Chairman thanked Dianna Neal for her excellent presentation which is attached at **Appendix A**.

RESOLVED that the presentation be noted.

4 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) TOWN CENTRES DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Head of Town Centre Renewal gave an update on Town Centre Development across the Borough.

Progress was continuing across the sites that made up the Bromley Town Centre Area Action Plan.

With regard to Site C: the Old Town Hall, Cathedral was required under the agreement for lease to submit their planning application shortly. The grant of the long lease was conditional on the Group obtaining planning permission to convert the Town Hall to a hotel, conference centre and associated restaurants. Surveys had been carried out and a formal pre-application meeting had taken place with the Council's Development Control section. Work was progressing on the development of the scheme following advice from the Local Authority and English Heritage. The applicant had also agreed to the Local Authority's request to undergo a Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) design review. Cathedral aimed to open the hotel and conference centre in Spring 2016.

Work had now been completed in East Street, White Hart Slip, Naval Walk and the pedestrianised area of Market Square as part of the planned public realm improvements to Bromley North Village. The Thames Water main replacement works were also complete. Following an extension of onsite working hours during the summer, the full programme of public realm improvements was expected to be completed by 30th November 2014. It had been agreed to add a section of Widmore Road to the public realm improvement scheme and works would commence in early 2015.

In terms of development across the Borough, a revised scheme by Miller Development for the Walnuts Shopping Centre had been approved at Plans Sub-Committee No.1 on 5th June 2014. The revised scheme was now under construction and would provide a seven screen cinema, three retail units, three restaurant units, a gym and the creation of a new square with landscaping. The build was scheduled for completion in Spring 2015. Berkeley Homes was preparing to submit a planning application for a new Wellness Centre and a residential scheme on the Old Police Station site.

Following the successful funding bid to the Transport for London Major Scheme Allocation fund for 2014/15 to develop the Beckenham Town Centre scheme, the Design and Development phase was on schedule with the outline design expected to be agreed by the end of 2014. The design and development of the scheme was being undertaken through Beckenham Town Centre Working Group and Beckenham Town Centre Team, as well as through wider community consultation with residents, local businesses, community groups and other stakeholders.

The Local Authority had submitted its proposals to the London Enterprise Panel for the New Homes Bonus to fund projects across the Borough totalling £1.928m for 2014/15 which were based around the seven London Enterprise Partnership priorities. The priorities comprised apprenticeships, skills and training, high streets, places of work, unlocking development, business support, digital, creative and science and technology, and reliance and low carbon. The Local Authority was seeking to fund projects for Penge Town Centre/Crystal Palace, place making at the Walnuts Centre and Orpington business enabling and support, Biggin Hill Aviation Technology and Enterprise Centre and Lagoon Road Industrial Estate redevelopment.

Small business and community groups on London's high streets were being encouraged to apply for a share of a new £9m fund from the Mayor of London to help revitalise high streets. The High Street Fund aimed to support ideas for new activities for high streets, such as shop front and public space improvements and festivals, and members of the Partnership were encouraged to apply to the fund, which would require match-funding. Further information on the new fund would be provided to members of the Partnership following the meeting.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

B) LOCAL PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The Head of Town Centre Management and Business Support gave an update on progress in developing the Local Plan. The results of the consultation undertaken for the Local Plan 'Draft Policies and Designations' stage in Spring 2014 had been considered by Members and would form part of the next stage of the Local Plan which would be subject to consultation.

Work continued to protect areas of high priority from permitted development rights. The Local Authority was seeking to claim an Article 4 direction on identified sites across the Borough, and a submission had now been made to the Inspector which, if successful, was expected to come into operation by Summer 2015.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

C) 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 2 2014/15.

In Quarter 2 2014/15, a number of events had taken place in town centres including very successful local produce markets delivered in partnership with the Copers Cope Area Residents Association and the Beckenham Business Association on Beckenham Green. A contractor for the Borough-wide Christmas lights contract (covering Beckenham, Bromley, Chislehurst, Coney Hall, Orpington, Penge and Sundridge Park) had been appointed, with the Local Authority funding the part of the contract which dealt with Beckenham, Bromley and Penge town centres.

Work had been ongoing with the Bromley BID Working Group. An initial 'light touch' feasibility study had also been undertaken into the possibility of a Business Improvement District (BID) on the Lower Sydenham/Beckenham Industrial Estate. A representative sample of the local business community had been contacted for their views on the operational needs and issues for businesses in the area and to gauge the support for the proposal to establish a BID. The next stage would involve requesting funding from the Greater London Authority to support the development of a potential BID.

The Town Centre Management and Business Support Service had worked closely with various organisations to deliver a programme of support and networking opportunities for local businesses. The bi-monthly Business e-Bulletin continued to be provided to over 3000 business addresses and a special edition of the e-Bulletin had been published in September 2014 to ensure that subscribers were aware of the large number of business events taking place during September and October 2014.

Future activities for the Town Centre Management and Business Support Service included encouraging and supporting the Bromley BID Working Group in engaging with businesses across the town centre to consult on a potential BID, assisting the Beckenham Town Centre Team and the Beckenham Town Centre Working Group in engaging with businesses on designs for the major Transport for London funded scheme for Beckenham and delivery of funded short term improvement projects, and overseeing the provision of Christmas lights services for the 2014/15 season in Bromley, Beckenham, Penge, Orpington and other smaller towns and parades.

An events and activities programme for the managed town centres would be developed, including special markets and Christmas events and work would also be undertaken with partner organisations to develop a programme of support workshops and seminars for local businesses. Other activities would include maintaining regular business communications channels and publications, including the business e-bulletin.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) Recent work around Town Centre Management and Business Support in the 2nd Quarter of 2014/15 be noted; and**
- 2) The plans for Town Centre Management and Business Support activity for the 3rd Quarter of 2014/15 be noted.**

D) BROMLEY YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROJECT ROUND 2

Stella Marshall, Youth Support Programme Development Officer and Lesley Holland, Operations Manager, Bromley Education Business Partnership gave an update on the Bromley Youth Employment Project (Round 2) which had been developed by the Local Authority to support sustainable employment opportunities for young people who were unemployed.

The project aimed to:

1. Target priority client groups, including young people identified as at risk of being 'Not in Employment, Education or Training' (NEET), young people aged 18-24 years claiming Jobseekers Allowance and Looked After Children aged 15-24 years.
2. Increase the supply of local employment opportunities for young people by implementing a Borough-wide employer engagement programme, creating a Local Authority graduate internship opportunity to develop a Local Authority strategy to increase the offer of work experience placements, traineeships and

apprenticeships across the Local Authority and its partners, and working with Community Links to create a voluntary and community sector based graduate internship opportunity to stimulate the creation of work experience placements, traineeships and apprenticeships across the voluntary and community sector.

3. Increase the work readiness of young people and raise their awareness of apprenticeships by delivering Next Step employability conferences and employability workshops to priority client groups, providing a tailored recruitment and matching service, and supporting short intervention mentoring relationships aimed at Jobseekers Allowance claimants aged 18-24 years

The key project outcomes over the two year project included creating 100 employment opportunities for young people, getting 500 employers participating in awareness raising events, offering one to one support for 200 employers, and creating 25 employment or work experience opportunities within the voluntary and community sector. It was also aimed to provide employability support to 900 students, enhanced employment opportunities for 25 Looked After Children, targeted mentoring support for 40 Jobseekers Allowance claimants aged 18-24 years, and to support 100 young people into contracted employment lasting a minimum of six months.

The Operations Manager, Bromley Education Business Partnership advised members of the Partnership that a number of employer engagement meetings had now taken place and that a series of employability workshops had been arranged for young people seeking to move into employment. One to one employer support was taking place with 20 employers, and five young people had been supported into employment. The two Local Authority graduate interns had now been appointed, and were expected to start in post shortly.

Sam Parrett, Bromley College of Further and Higher Education underlined the importance of ensuring that young people were supported into employment that had opportunities for training and development. She was also concerned to note the 'door knocking' element of the project, which aimed to identify young people whose employment, education and training status was unknown as this was the responsibility of the Youth Support Service. The Youth Support Programme Development Officer confirmed that the Bromley Youth Employment Project Round 2 funding would enable additional 'door knocking' to take place where appropriate, including to young people aged 18 years and over, and that this would not be used to replace any responsibilities which were part of the Local Authority's duties.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

E) BROMLEY BID DEVELOPMENT

The Head of Town Centre Management and Business Support provided an update on the development of the proposed Bromley Business Improvement District (BID).

Work had been ongoing to finalise governance arrangements for the Bromley BID Working Group, which was a pre-requisite for the grant agreement with the Local Authority to become operational. There were now twelve members of the Working

Group who represented a wide range of business types and locations across Bromley town centre, and the grant agreement had been finalised and signed in September 2014. Central Management Solutions (CMS) had been appointed by Bromley BID Limited as a delivery partner. A feasibility study on the Bromley BID would be undertaken from October 2014, and would be followed by an in-depth consultation of at least 45% of the potential levy payers to understand the key issues for the town centre. It was anticipated that the Bromley BID ballot might take place in October 2015 with a view to starting the BID (if successful) on 1st April 2016.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

F) CRYSTAL PALACE PARK IMPROVEMENT SCHEME

Lydia Coelho, Community Development Manager provided an update on the Crystal Palace Park Improvement Scheme.

Following completion of a public consultation, nine projects had now been agreed as part of a £2.4m works programme for Crystal Palace Park. The agreed projects included conservation of the dinosaur models and sphinxes, converting the parking site in the central area back into parkland, the renovation of the concert platform and the creation of a skate park. Work to appoint a consultant to deliver the scheme of works was now underway and it was hoped that feasibility studies would be completed in Spring 2015, with capital works starting in Summer 2015. The scheme of works was expected to be completed by Summer 2016.

A consultation had just been launched on the future of the National Sports Centre based at the park, and members of the Partnership were encouraged to contribute to the consultation where appropriate.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

5 PARTNER UPDATES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR JOINT WORKING TO INCLUDE:

Members of the Partnership had undertaken a range of activities since the last meeting.

A) EMPLOYMENT/UNEMPLOYMENT TRENDS IN THE BOROUGH

Amanda Grice, Jobcentre Plus advised members of the Partnership that the Jobseekers Allowance Count in Bromley in August 2014 was 3,070 claimants. This was a decrease of 75 claimants on the previous month and 1,475 claimants since August 2013. There had been a significant reduction in the number of Jobseeker Allowance claimants aged 18-24 years. In August 2014 there were 655 claimants aged 18-24 years, which was a decrease of 50 claimants on the previous month and 310 claimants since August 2013.

The time that new customers claiming Jobseekers Allowance and Employment Support Allowance were expected to wait prior to receiving their first allowance payment would be increased from three to seven days from 27th October 2014.

Universal Credit would be introduced from January 2015 for single customers, and later in 2015 for couples or other groups of customers.

The digital rollout had now been completed at Bromley Jobcentre. Customers had increased access to computers to support online job searches and applications, and a dedicated team was available to assist customers in using the new technology.

B) BIGGIN HILL AIRPORT

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 brought together a cluster of modern aviation-related businesses at and around London Biggin Hill Airport to support continued economic development in the area.

London Biggin Hill Airport was currently consulting with local residents and stakeholders on plans to extend the operating hours of the airport. The proposed extension of opening hours aimed to ensure the airport remained competitive with other business aviation airports across Europe, and to support the future potential development of the airport's offer which included plans to build a hotel, establish an aviation training college and increase the employment opportunities at the airport. Nine pledges had been made by the airport in conjunction with these proposals, which included limitations on the number of flights, noise monitoring measures and the continuing provision of the annual Festival of Flight, and members of the Partnership were encouraged to contribute to the consultation.

C) COMMERCIAL PROPERTY UPDATE

Mike Lewis, Michael Rogers LLP had provided a written update for the meeting which reported that the commercial property market continued to improve with strong occupier demand from all sectors, in particular the office and industrial markets. Recent transactional evidence clearly showed that rents were increasing, incentives were being reduced and leases were returning to their pre-recession lengths with an increase in capital values.

There had been no new office development in the Borough for approximately 30 years and, as demand was likely to soon outstrip supply, there was an urgent need for new development. Unfortunately, some office buildings in the town were now owned by residential developers and were likely to be converted into blocks of flats. Members of the Office Agents Society were concerned that the introduction of permitted development rights from 30th May 2013 had removed viable office stock and significantly reduced the amount of available office space across London. The Government was now consulting on proposals to remove the exemptions obtained by Central London and some London Boroughs to further allow the conversion of B1a offices beyond May 2016.

Dave Freeborn, George Proctor & Partners, confirmed that there continued to be interest in land development in Bromley, but that in some cases developers had expressed frustration at the length of the planning application process.

D) COMMUNITY LINKS BROMLEY

Colin Maclean, Community Links Bromley advised Members that following the highly successful Corporate Social Responsibility Expo that had taken place earlier in the year, a further event had now been planned for March 2015. This event would showcase the voluntary sector in the Borough and support the development of links between local businesses and third sector organisations, and members of the Partnership were invited to attend.

Community Links Bromley continued to work with Jobcentre Plus to deliver an 'Our Place' project in the Penge and Cator area, which would pilot the impact of volunteering on improving the employability of Jobseekers Allowance claimants aged 18-24 years.

RESOLVED that the updates be noted.

E) GENERAL NEWS ROUND

Mike Ellis, Prospects advised Members that the National start up loan scheme available to young people aged 18-30 years to support them to start their own businesses continued to be available, and that there had been strong take up of the scheme over the past year. Global Entrepreneurship Week would take place from 17th November 2014, and Prospects would deliver a number of seminars across the Borough around starting a business and accessing funding.

Ivan Reffell, Best of Bromley Borough, was pleased to announce that the Bank on Business Expo would take place on 15th October 2014 at Coolings Nuseries Ltd, Knockholt. This was the first joint expo for Bromley and Kent businesses with exhibitions, networking and seminars, and members of the Partnership were invited to attend the event.

Adam Pope, Phoenix Community Housing, confirmed that Phoenix Community Housing was seeking to undertake small scale development on some of its housing stock, which was largely based in Lewisham. A 'Building Lives' academy was being developed through one of its community centres, which could potentially benefit Bromley residents who were unemployed.

Suzanne Sharp, NewsQuest, reported that the web audience of the News Shopper now matched the level of its print audience at 180,000 unique users per week. Work continued to support businesses to effectively market their services online, and members of the Partnership were invited to contact NewsQuest to discuss sponsorship and partnership opportunities.

Sharon Baldwin, Manager, Orpington 1st BID Company was pleased to advise Members that the 'Orpington's Finest' award had now been launched, sponsored by Newsquest. Orpington's Finest aimed to recognise the best businesses in the Orpington BID area across a number of categories. Work continued to develop Orpington town centre. This included a contract agreed with the Metropolitan Police to provide a town centre policing team for High Street, Orpington, and work with

Bromley College of Further and Higher Education to develop links with the Hospitality and Catering College with a view to developing a vibrant street food offer.

RESOLVED that the updates be noted.

**6 BROMLEY ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP WORK PROGRAMME
2014/15**

Members of the Partnership considered the forward rolling work programme for the Bromley Economic Partnership for 2014/15.

In discussion it was noted that both the Local Authority and Orpington 1st BID Company were investigating the possibility of introducing super-fast broadband to Bromley town centre and the Orpington BID area and that progress would be reported to a future meeting of the Partnership.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

8 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

4.00pm, Tuesday 20th January 2015
4.00pm, Tuesday 14th April 2015

The Meeting ended at 6.11 pm

Chairman