

# BROMLEY ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP

**Meeting:** Bromley Economic Partnership

**Date:** 14<sup>th</sup> July 2015

**Subject:** Town Centre Management and Business Support Update

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## 1. Recommendations.

The Partnership is asked to:-

- 1.1 Note recent work around Town Centre Management and Business Support in the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2015/16.
- 1.2 Note and endorse the plans for Town Centre Management and Business Support activity during the next quarter.

## 2. Summary of Activities – April to June 2015

### 2.1 Business Improvement Districts

- 2.2 The **Bromley BID Working Group**, with the help of Central Management Solutions (CMS), has now completed the Planning Stage of the BID set up process. This built upon the findings of the Feasibility Stage consultation survey of 11% of the businesses by undertaking a much more wide ranging consultation with at least 45% of all business rates payers that are likely to be eligible to vote. As with the feasibility stage, the purpose of the Planning survey was not to ask whether the businesses are in favour of a BID but to understand what issues are important to them and, based on the themes arising from the feasibility study, start to develop the project themes the proposed BID will deliver. At the end of the Planning Process CMS provided a report to the BID Working Group to present the findings and the proposed Outline BID Proposal including the proposed BID levy rules (defining who has to pay and how much) and the key themes for delivery. The Outline Proposal and the legal agreements accompany a report on the Bromley BID which is to be discussed by the Council's Executive on 15 July. The Executive is being asked to agree in principle that a ballot is held for Bromley BID but also to delegate authority to the Portfolio Holder for R&R to review the final version of the BID Proposal in order to authorise the Ballot Holder to run the ballot.
- 2.3 In parallel with the Planning work, CMS have been working with Council officers to draft the key legal agreements which will underpin the future relationship between the Council and the BID – namely the Operating Agreement and the Baseline Agreement.
- 2.4 Once the approval from the Executive is agreed, the BID Working Group, with assistance from CMS, will be working to undertake more in-depth consultation with businesses to tease out the detail of the BID delivery programme and finalise the BID Proposal document which will be submitted formally to the Council by 1 September. They will also

be working to enhance and develop the database of business rates payers for the town to arrive at a voter list which can be used to run the postal ballot, which will run for a month and have closing date of 5 November. If successful at ballot the Your Bromley BID will start operation in April 2016.

2.5 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. Recent highlights of the BID programme include:

- Launched the Orpington 1<sup>st</sup> Business Forum – to provide a regular networking and engagement opportunity for Orpington’s businesses community, filling a gap left by the winding up of the Orpington Business Forum.
- Clean up and Green up days – getting businesses and the community involved in improving the street scene. Orpington 1<sup>st</sup> has also supported additional floral displays in the High Street.
- Organising a continental market in mid-June
- Developing a new business support programme and pop up market which will be funded through the High Street Fund and New Homes Bonus – in partnership with the Council.

## 2.6 Local Parades Improvement Initiative Fund

2.7 Since the start of the Local Parades programme (in 2012/13) £211k has been spent or committed on projects in various locations. An additional £39k remains to be spent, £26k of which has already been allocated to projects. However, a number of projects agreed for some locations were not possible to complete due to a variety of factors beyond our control. Therefore revised applications are expected for Coney Hall, Sundridge Park and Hayes Street. Key contacts in those locations have been written to requesting revised applications before end of June. Where no suitable projects are put forward in these locations the under spend will be re-allocated to the overall project budget to enable further areas to bid.

## 2.8 Bromley Town Centre

2.9 The Bromley Town Centre Manager is nearing the end of a review of the operation, location and offer of the town’s 3 day market with the assistance of a specialist markets consultancy. Market Research was undertaken to understand the attitude of shoppers, businesses and traders to the market and possible changes. The outcome of the review and options for the future shape, location and operation of the market form part of the overall design parameters for Public Realm work for the central pedestrianised area of Bromley, being led from within the Council’s Renewal Team (reported elsewhere on this agenda). Consultation on the initial design proposals for the public realm is taking place over the summer. It is expected that the options for the future of the market will be provided to Councillors for decision alongside the Public Realm design proposals during autumn 2015.

2.10 During the past quarter the Town Centre Manager has also:

- Continued to engage with key businesses and stakeholders in the town centre, supported networking events and maintained the regular monthly communications to local businesses.

- Provided ongoing support to the BID Working Group, particularly with recruitment of new members of the BID Working Group, business surveys, collating information for the baseline agreement and communications to local businesses.
- Provided communications to businesses regarding the Widmore Road public realm improvements.
- Coordinated a meeting with Police, Licensing and businesses to discuss the late night economy issues and how to approach the management of the evening economy in a sustainable manner.
- Developed projects for High Street Fund bid with the Bromley North Village Town Team
- Carried out soft market testing for a possible 'Summer at the Hill' Car Park event
- Coordinated communications to businesses regarding the Shop Safe Radio system upgrade to digital Provided communications to businesses regarding the external cladding and the chiller replacement works for the Central Library building
- Undertook some exploratory discussions with providers about possible public wifi in the main Town Centres
- Developed consultation plan with colleagues in Town Centre Renewal for the Public Realm improvements to the pedestrian area and facilitated a public consultation event in the town centre on 27 June.

## **2.11 Beckenham Town Centre**

2.12 The Town Centre Manager continues to support the Town Centre Team and the Beckenham Member Working Group in the delivery of a programme of improvements and engagement.

2.13 During the past quarter, the Town Centre Manager has also:

- Continued to coordinate the development of the Purple Flag project – which is about developing a programme to promote improvements to safety in the evening economy in partnership with colleagues in Public Protection, licenced premises and other partners (e.g. Street Pastors) Building the portfolio of activity and measurements for Submission in October.
- Involved in the upgrade of the Shop Safe radio system from analogue to digital, using this opportunity to promote Purple Flag with radio users.
- Incorporated the Safer neighbourhood meetings to follow on after the TCT meetings to encourage better participation and reduce the number of meetings.
- TCM Monthly E-Newsletter now sent out via the Beckenham Business Association (BBA) web site
- Supported the BBA in outreach to retailers. The three main retailers Waitrose, Marks and Spencer and Sainsbury are now members. Waitrose continue to provide free meeting facilities Sainsbury and Marks and Spencer are donating in the way of food tastings at local events and the market.
- Supported the successful market on Beckenham Green on 16<sup>th</sup> May.
- Worked with the town team on the alleyway improvement project following the successful £20K bid to the high street Fund.

## **2.14 Penge Town Centre**

2.15 The Town Centre Manager continues to support the Penge Traders Association and the Penge Town Centre Team. During the past quarter the Town Centre Manager has:

- Delivered a very successful Spring Event on 21st March which included a street market and entertainment. Businesses and local organisations were involved, providing equipment and sponsorship.
- Worked in partnership to deliver a clean up event which took place on Sunday 31st May sponsored by McDonalds. Over 40 volunteers took part across a wide ranging age group.
- Worked closely with the organisers of the Penge Festival to install 16 lamp column banners to promote the event. Grant funding to support enhancements has also been provided to the organisers of the Festival as agreed after the March R&R PDS Committee.
- Liaised with the developer of the former police station regarding scaffolding and CCTV issues and sponsorship opportunities.

2.16 In addition the Beckenham & Penge Town Centre Manager has led on the procurement process for procurement of Christmas lights and installation services in towns across the borough with a budget of £27k as agreed after the last R&R PDS Committee. A request for quotations has been dispatched via the London Tenders Portal.

## **2.17 Business Support Programme**

2.18 The New Homes Bonus allocation for the Borough has enabled the development of some new business support initiatives for Orpington and Penge town centres. In Orpington the New Homes Bonus allocation of £100k to business support and enabling projects has been augmented by the further allocation of £25k of capital funding from the High Street Fund. It is intended that the full programme of business support is delivered in partnership with the Orpington 1<sup>st</sup> BID. Interventions include working with the college to assist students to start their own businesses, workshops to assist parents to return to work or self-employment, seminars and mentoring to help existing businesses grow, digital high street initiatives and provision of new trading platforms through the running of a new pop up market. By early July it is expected that the detail of these programmes will be finalised ready for launch in early autumn. It should be noted that the funds are to be released to the borough in accordance with a grant agreement with the GLA – and likewise the Council will be entering into a Service Level Agreement with the BID to minimise risk and ensure value for money in the operation of the schemes.

2.19 In Penge, discussions have been under way with the GLA about the best use of the funding (£50k) which may link business support initiatives in the town with the wider regeneration agenda for the Crystal Palace area. It is expected that the programme, to be consulted on with local businesses and the Penge Traders Association, will be defined and commissioned in the autumn – with delivery taking place until March 2017.

2.20 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. Events taking place during the period include:

- Joint event with the Institute of Chartered Accountants and Metro Bank on the theme of exploiting IT for growth
- Bromley Business GrowthCLUB seminar on time management for business owners
- Starting a series of free one to one mentoring sessions for existing or new business owners

- Bromley Means Business – Major event including exhibition, seminars, one to one advice sessions and networking took place on 16 June in the Great Hall at the Civic Centre

2.21 The bi-monthly Business e-Bulletin continues to be sent out every other month, with issues published in mid-January and mid-March. Additional interim emails 'Bromley Business Extras' are now also being sent out in-between times to promote Council supported business events and initiatives.

2.22 An online Commercial Property Database for the borough has been commissioned and is now available on the Council website.

### **2.23 Business and Traders Group liaison**

2.24 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.

### **2.25 Key priorities for the Town Centre Management & Business Support Team from July to September 2015**

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

- Supporting the Bromley BID Working Group and CMS as it seeks to refine and finalise the BID Proposal, update the local business database and gear up for the Campaign stage of the process in the run up to a ballot starting in early October. Officers will also be involved in finalising the legal agreements and ballot arrangements during this period.
- Continued support for and liaison with the Orpington 1<sup>st</sup> BID, especially as it seeks to develop a programme of business support funded by the New Homes Bonus and High Street Fund. The BID will also be supporting the Big O Festival in Priory Gardens on 4 July and organising a Cycle Mania event in September.
- Support for the Beckenham Town Centre Team and the Beckenham Town Centre Working Group – meeting in early July - including assisting with public consultation on the major TfL-funded scheme for Beckenham. The TCM will also support the Town Centre Team in delivery of the High Street Fund alleyway improvement project. Consult with the Working Group on the final shape of the s106-funded interim improvement projects including stage cover and market infrastructure on Beckenham Green.
- Drive forward the Purple Flag project to improve the safety of Beckenham's night time economy – including running a public awareness-raising event, public perception survey and preparation for submitting the final application for Purple Flag accreditation.
- Work with the Renewal Team on development of proposals and public consultation for the Bromley pedestrianised area public realm improvements, including possible changes to the configuration of the market.

- Continue to deliver the agreed projects for the Local Parades Improvement Initiative (LPII) or where the originally agreed projects have not been feasible, to obtain authorisations for the re-allocation of any unspent funding to other LPII projects.
- Planning and delivery of a late summer event in Bromley, Markets on Beckenham Green in July & September and a special Penge Community event in late August.
- Finalise arrangements for the delivery of the New Homes Bonus and High Street Fund business support programme for Orpington – in partnership with Orpington 1<sup>st</sup>. Work with the GLA on development of a business support project in Penge – funded by the New Homes Bonus.
- Promotion of the new Bromley Commercial Property Database to agents and businesses.
- Work with partner organisations to deliver a programme of support workshops and seminars for local existing businesses and start-ups, including the Business GrowthCLUB, ICEAW / MetroBank joint events and the Bank on Business Expo (16 September).
- Maintain regular business communication channels and publications – including the business e-bulletin, website content, including a new Bromley Business Directory (for publication in late 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.