

1. Summary of activities July to October 2015/16

1.1 Business Improvement Districts

- i. As outlined in the main report, the Bromley BID proposal has now been presented to the Council, and a ballot is in progress, due to end on 5th November. Details of the results will be circulated to R&R PDS Committee members after 6th November.
- ii. 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 are as follows:
 - In July the BID was the main sponsor of The Big O Festival in Priory Gardens. Attended by several thousand people, the event drove a big increase in footfall to the town centre.
 - In August – the BID was also the main sponsor for Priory Live Music Festival which was very well attended and a positive knock on effect in the town centre – especially on local restaurants.
 - The BID organised the Cycle Mania event in September – with a range of cycle-related fun, practical help and safety advice, in partnership with the Council and Met Police.
 - The BID launched the Orpington Pubwatch with its first meeting in early October, developed with the local Police team and local bar managers.
 - The town centre have seen a number of new business openings over the last quarter and improvements to the vacancy rate within the BID boundary – now at 9.3% (compared with 11.6% nationally).
 - Installation of flower cubes in addition to the regular planting regime has resulted in positive comments from residents and businesses.

1.2 Local Parades Improvement Initiative Fund

Since the start of the Local Parades programme (in 2012/13) £221k has been spent or committed on projects in various locations. An additional £29k remains to be spent, around £23k of which has now been allocated to projects. A number of projects are currently either awaiting Member approval or are being implemented in various locations including Clock House, Sundridge Park, Hayes, Penge, Shortlands and

Chislehurst Royal Parade. A Coney Hall parade application is on hold, pending possible parking changes which are subject to a formal consultation process.

1.3 Bromley town centre

During the past quarter the Town Centre Manager has:

- 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 communications to businesses and the Your Bromley BID Launch Event on Saturday 26th September.
- Provided communications to businesses regarding the Widmore Road public realm improvements.
- Coordinated a town centre business meeting providing stakeholders with an update on upcoming events, development in the town, progress on the BID and update from Police.
- Developed and produced a new edition of the Town Centre Guide promoting the town centre and the businesses within it.
- Coordinated discussions with colleagues and external organisations to feed the recommendations from the Market Review into the design options for the public realm improvement works to the pedestrian area
- Organised a public consultation event and a stakeholder consultation event regarding the public realm improvements to the pedestrian area
- Coordinated communications to businesses regarding the replacement of the chiller unit at the Central Library
- Finalised and awarded the contract for the Festive Food & Entertainment Concession for Market Square for Christmas 2015
- Secured sponsorship from O'Rourke's Contracting PLC and Gristwood & Toms for the poppy display in Bromley town centre
- Secured sponsorship from intu and Specsavers for the Christmas Event
- Undertook an audit of ground floor empty properties within the core town centre in July (excluding the Glades and the Mall) showing a vacancy rate of 5.27%, down from 6.1% in April 2015

1.4 Beckenham town centre

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.

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

- Continued to coordinate the development of the Purple Flag project. Carried out an overnight assessment in preparation for submission to the accreditation body. This assessment involved representatives from the licenced trade, residents, businesses, officers from LBB and the police
- Working with partners to deliver the Christmas lights event on 5th December
- Working with the CCARA and BBA to run a shop window competition at Christmas.
- Supported the successful market on Beckenham Green on 18th July
- Worked with the town team on Procuring and appointing a contractor for delivery of the alleyway improvement project following the successful £20K bid to the high street Fund.
- Worked with partners to deliver a trial evening market with associated activities in Clock House. The event was well received and there are plans to make it a regular occurrence
- Worked with colleagues in Town centre renewal to build the business case to TFL for additional scheme funding
- Worked with Beckenham Business Association to secure their sponsorship for the Bromley Business Awards.
- Undertaken a recent audit of empty ground level properties which showed that the vacancy rate is currently 5.0% (11 vacant units).

1.5 Penge town centre

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 Penge Day event on 29th August which included a street market and entertainment. Businesses and local organisations were involved, providing equipment and sponsorship.
- Developed a map to promote local businesses which will have an online version and a limited number of hard copies. Commissioned a local artist to draw specific landmarks to enhance the feel of the map which is expected to be published in November.

- Worked with partners to deliver the Christmas lights event on Thursday 26th November
- Launched a new newsletter for businesses both online and hand delivered using volunteers.
- Undertaken an audit of empty ground floor properties, which showed that the vacancy rate is currently 6.4% (8 vacant units).

1.6 Christmas lights

The Beckenham & Penge Town Centre Manager led on the 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. Festive Decorations have been awarded the one-year contract for supply, installation, de-rig and storage of the lights for Beckenham, Bromley, Orpington and Penge. Orpington BID will reimburse the Council for the cost of the installation, de-rig and storage of the Orpington lights scheme.

1.7 Business Support Programme

- i. 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 a project funded through the High Street Fund (£25k for this financial year only) to procure appropriate equipment to create pop up markets to showcase new businesses supported by the BID will be supplemented by a programme of business support funded through the New Homes Bonus (£100k over 2 years). This programme will include a mystery shopper survey to help identify areas for improvement, training workshops and mentoring for both new and existing businesses, a digital high street project, a feasibility study to inform strategy for attracting new investment to the town centre and a business and investment Expo. The project is funded until March 2017 and is expected to be launched during October.
- ii. In Penge, the funding of £50k over 2 years from the New Homes Bonus will provide support to existing businesses to assist with themes such as visual merchandising, marketing, using the web and social media etc. The programme, to be designed around needs identified through a survey of local businesses and following consultation with the Penge Traders Association, will be defined and

commissioned during the autumn – with delivery taking place from early 2016 until March 2017.

- iii. 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:
- Bromley Business GrowthCLUB seminars on email marketing and principles of recruitment
 - Free monthly one to one mentoring sessions for existing or new business owners
 - Accelerate Your Growth event – to introduce the government funded Growth Accelerator programme for ambitious small / medium business owners
 - Joint events with ICAEW and Metro Bank – on contingency planning and on protecting a successful business
- iv. The Head of Town Centre Management & Business Support was co-opted as a member of the judging panel for the Bromley Business Awards, and the Awards were also supported through some sponsorship funding and the attendance of both the Mayor of Bromley and the Portfolio Holder for Renewal and Recreation at the Awards Gala event on 15 October.
- v. Members of the team have taken part in a number of business networking events, including the hosting of a Council stand at the Bromley and Kent Business Expo at Biggin Hill Airport in September.
- vi. The bi-monthly Business e-Bulletin continues to be sent out every other month, with issues published in mid-July and mid-September. Additional interim emails ‘Bromley Business Extras’ are now also being sent out in-between times to promote Council supported business events and initiatives.
- vii. The online Bromley Commercial Property Database is now available on the Council website and was launched in September with a news release and distribution of promotional leaflets.

1.8 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 1st BID through both formal and informal meetings.

2. Key priorities for the Town Centre Management & Business Support Team from November to January 2015

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

- 2.1 Following up on the BID Ballot which completes on 5th November. Depending upon the outcome, this will involve assisting Bromley BID Ltd in the necessary steps involved in preparing the BID for operation starting in April 2016. This includes finalising and ratifying the legal agreements underpinning the BID and setting up arrangements for BID levy collection.
- 2.2 Continued support for and liaison with the Orpington 1st BID, especially as it seeks to deliver a programme of business support funded by the New Homes Bonus and High Street Fund. The BID will also be organising a Christmas lights event on 19 November.
- 2.3 Organise the installation of the large poppy display in Bromley Town Centre in the two weeks leading up to Remembrance Sunday.
- 2.4 Oversee the installation of Christmas lights in Beckenham, Bromley, Orpington and Penge town centres
- 2.5 Organise the installation of a 40ft Christmas Tree, nativity scene and festive food and entertainment concession in Market Square, Bromley
- 2.6 Support for the Beckenham Town Centre Team and the Beckenham Town Centre Working Group – 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 – for which a contractor has now been appointed.
- 2.7 Finalise the application for Purple Flag accreditation project which is about assuring the safety and viability of Beckenham's night time economy and, if successful, disseminating information to celebrate and publicise the accreditation.
- 2.8 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) and New Homes Bonus public realm schemes in Orpington and Penge.

- 2.9 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.
- 2.10 Planning, promotion and delivery of Christmas lights events in Bromley (29th November), Beckenham and Penge.
- 2.11 Oversee the delivery of the New Homes Bonus and High Street Fund business support programme for Orpington – in partnership with Orpington 1st – and delivery of New Homes Bonus funded business support in Penge.
- 2.12 Continue promotion of the new Bromley Commercial Property Database to agents and businesses.
- 2.13 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 workshops for business start-ups during Global Entrepreneurship Week (16 – 22 Nov).
- 2.14 Maintain regular business communication channels and publications – including the business e-bulletin, website content, including a new Bromley Business Directory (for publication early 2016). 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.