

**Decision Maker:** RENEWAL AND RECREATION PORTFOLIO HOLDER WITH  
PRE-SCRUTINY BY THE RENEWAL AND RECREATION  
POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**Date:** Wednesday 6 April 2016

**Decision Type:** Non-Urgent Executive Non-Key

**Title:** TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT AND LOCAL PARADES  
INITIATIVE UPDATE MARCH 2016

**Contact Officer:** Martin Pinnell, Head of Town Centre Management and Business Support  
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**Chief Officer:** Executive Director of Environment & Community Services

**Ward:** (All Wards);

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1. Reason for report

This report seeks Portfolio Holder approval for the extension of the successful Local Parades Improvement initiative using an allocation of a further £250k, as part of a new £750k Members Initiative fund announced following Full Council on 22 February.

It also seeks views from Members of the Renewal and Recreation PDS Committee and a decision from the Portfolio Holder in relation to the Council's future support for Christmas lights in non-BID town centres.

In addition the report provides an update on Town Centre Management and business support activities - covering those which have taken place from November 2015 to March 2016, and also summarises the priorities for the period until end of June 2016.

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2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

The Portfolio Holder for Renewal & Recreation is asked to;

**2.1 Approve the expenditure of £250k for improvement projects at Local shopping parades across the borough.**

**2.2 Approve the proposed scheme of delegation and rules of engagement for decision making on requests for expenditure from the allocated fund, based on the parameters and criteria set out in paragraphs 3.3 – 3.10 below and in APPENDIX 2.**

**2.3 Decide on a preferred approach to the Council's funding of Christmas lights in managed town centres in 2016/17, based on options a), b) or c) as set out in paragraph 3.13 below – taking account of the views of Members of the PDS committee.**

**Members of the Renewal & Recreation PDS Committee are requested to:**

**2.3 Note and provide comment upon the proposed scheme of delegation for the new round of the Local Parades Improvement initiative.**

**2.4 Note and comment upon the options set out in paragraphs 3.13 below with regards to the Council's support for Christmas light schemes in non-Business Improvement District town centres.**

**2.5 Note the key developments and activities within the Town Centre Management and Business Support Team summarised paragraphs 3.18 and 3.19 of this report.**

## Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing Policy:
  2. BBB Priority: Vibrant, Thriving Town Centres
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## Financial

1. Cost of proposal: Estimated Cost £250k for Local Parades round 2
  2. Ongoing costs: Non-Recurring Cost
  3. Budget head/performance centre: Town Centre Management and Earmarked Reserves
  4. Total current budget for this head: £24k, £75k and £273k
  5. Source of funding: Existing revenue budget 2016/17, New Homes Bonus top slice funding and Earmarked Reserve
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## Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): 2
  2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours:
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## Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Non-Statutory - Government Guidance
  2. Call-in: Applicable
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## Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): Over 1000 businesses (and their local residents / customers) across 68 local parades across the borough.
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## Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? Councillors with wards covering or adjacent to Beckenham & Penge town centres have been asked for their views.
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: None received to date. Any Councillor comments received between publication of this report and the meeting will be reported on the evening.

### 3. COMMENTARY

#### Local Parades Improvement Initiative - Round 2

- 3.1. Full Council on 22 February 2016 approved the setting aside of £750k in an earmarked reserve for Member priority initiatives. The breakdown of these Member priorities is set out below:
- a) £250k to enhance our environment, particularly to help with the maintenance of trees and replacing those that have been lost;
  - b) £250k to attack the scourge of environmental crime, especially fly tipping;
  - c) £250k to enhance and improve local shopping parades.
- 3.2. The responsibility for delivery of Item (c) is within the remit of the Renewal and Recreation Portfolio and the following paragraphs set out the proposed parameters for the extended version of the Local Parades Improvement scheme.
- 3.3. Members should note the success of the previous scheme, launched in 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter 2012/13 and which is now fully allocated. A full list of each of the parades and small town centres which have been supported through the 2012-2016 scheme and a summary of each project is provided in **APPENDIX 1**. Local shopping parades play an important role in local communities right across our borough – providing choice to consumers, opportunities for entrepreneurship, easier access to services (especially for the less mobile) and places to express and develop a sense of local community. The extended scheme seeks to continue the good work to date in supporting local businesses, encouraging footfall, improving the environment for shoppers and residents and enhancing a sense of place in each locality.
- 3.4. As the vast majority of the local parades are privately owned and operated and the Council may not have a direct say in how much of the commercial premises is managed. However there are a number of levers which can be used to improve parades which need a boost, including:
- Improving the public realm through investment in elements such as enhanced paving, street lighting, wayfinding, street furniture and planting. Hand in hand with this the Council can also undertake de-cluttering exercises to remove obsolete, unnecessary or duplicate street furniture.
  - Installation of location signage to enhance a sense of place
  - Working with landlords and agents to improve the look of empty shops, through use of shop front dressing, grants for cosmetic shop front improvements or facilitating ‘pop up shops’.
  - Working with local businesses to encourage the development of sustainable traders groups, and to jointly promote local parades to residents
  - In addition to the projects such as the ones suggested above, the Council can also ensure that decisions and actions taken under its responsibilities for Planning, Public Protection and Parking are sympathetic to the needs of local parades. The Council can also use its powers to enforce various regulations to ensure that private landlords and occupiers do not neglect sites or erect signage or other street clutter (e.g. A-boards) which have a detrimental effect on the street scene.
- 3.5. When the Council set aside the sum of £250k for improvements to local parades it was on the understanding that this was for one-off investment in projects which would have a lasting effect. This means that the funding should not be used to support events, which may only have a short

term impact and which do not result in any permanent change to the environment or trading conditions.

- 3.6. The type of centre to be supported through this programme will be limited to those defined as Local Neighbourhood centres and Parades in the Council's hierarchy of centres as set out in the appendix of the Draft Policies and Designations document for Bromley's Local Plan. A list of all the centres proposed for this designation is attached in **APPENDIX 2**.
- 3.7. The type of intervention in each location under this programme is expected to be one or more of the activities described in 3.4. How the programme would be implemented will be determined by the needs of each local parade and detailed proposal put forward by Ward Councillors and would need to take account of the wishes of the local businesses and the available level of resource. As with round 1 of the Local Parades Improvement initiative Town Centre Management Team will administrate the scheme, and will commission work from other sections of the Council and contractors as required.
- 3.8. Because there are over 60 local parades, as defined in paragraph 3.6 across the borough, with a diverse range of needs there is likely to be considerable competition to be in receipt of funding from the scheme. Therefore the process for a particular local parade to be considered for funding needs to be transparent
- 3.9. It is recommended that the decision to fund an application is delegated to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal & Recreation in consultation with the Chairman of the Renewal & Recreation PDS Committee, for any scheme of a value of up to £25k. This will allow schemes of a smaller value to be decided upon and implemented quickly. For schemes with a total value of over £25k it is proposed that these are reported to the next available Renewal & Recreation PDS Committee for pre-decision scrutiny. The proposed 'rules of engagement' to govern Round 2 of the scheme are set out in full in **APPENDIX 2**, but the key points to note are:
- a) Applications to the fund will only be received from Councillors, who should apply on behalf of traders groups / businesses on a shopping parade or town centre in their ward.
  - b) There must be evidence of support for an application from businesses based in the locality.
  - c) In order to assist with the management of the scheme there will be application rounds on a quarterly basis throughout the scheme duration.
  - d) Applications for projects which would obligate the Council to future revenue spending, including maintenance, will not be considered without written agreement from local organisations to bear future additional costs.
- 3.10. In order to assist with the application process, the catalogue of public realm elements (such as signage, street furniture, street lighting and street trees) used in Round 1 will be updated. This will illustrate some common styles and provides guidance on estimated costs to for purchase and installation. In addition, a simple pro forma application form, to capture all required information on a proposal, will be circulated. Once the terms of the new scheme have been approved by Members, officers will circulate full details of the scheme, along with guidance on how to apply, to all Councillors, who will be encouraged to engage with businesses and traders groups on parades in their ward in order to work up proposed projects.

### **Christmas lights policy**

- 3.11. At the request of the Chairman of the R&R PDS Committee Officers undertook a short review of Christmas lights policy in 2014. During this review larger businesses and business representative groups in the main town centres, particularly Bromley, Beckenham and Penge

were consulted and some benchmarking with other areas undertaken. There continues to be reluctance amongst businesses to contribute to Christmas decorations, especially if they feel others are not contributing equally. Increasingly across London and the UK it is mostly town centres with BIDs that continue to maintain Christmas lights. In our own borough, as agreed Orpington 1st BID adopted the lighting purchased by the Council but has borne the cost of installing the lights since 2014 and the same arrangement will be in place for the new Bromley BID from Christmas 2016. In a number of our smaller town centres and parades – e.g. West Wickham, Petts Wood and Hayes – local businesses and residents themselves organise and pay for Christmas lights. It is for Members to decide whether larger town centres as yet without BIDs, such as Beckenham and Penge, should continue to be funded by the Council.

3.12. The context of this decision on Christmas lights funding is that Councillors have agreed only to a limited extension (for 12 months) of the Town Centre Management service and that this remaining post needs to actively encourage and support the development of BIDs in other locations, especially Beckenham and Penge. In addition, due to the scaling back of the Town Centre Management unit, the funding available to support Town Centre Management initiatives has been reduced from £60k to £24k in 2016/17.

3.13. In the light of this, there are three options open to the Council for 2016/17:

- a) Commission and fund lights in Beckenham and Penge, with some contributions from local businesses where possible (similar to the model for previous years). This would cost a minimum of £10k (possibly more as the existing lights for Penge are coming to the end of their useful life).
- b) Make a modest contribution (up to £5k) to the funds raised locally by the business associations or town teams in Beckenham and Penge – and to assist these groups to commission their own festive lighting schemes.
- c) Make no financial contribution to lights, but provide practical support through the Town Centre Manager to assist the business associations or town teams to commission their own lighting schemes.

3.14. The disadvantage with option a) is that this perpetuates the dependence of local business communities in Beckenham and Penge on Council funding, the availability of which is much reduced in the 2016/17 financial year. If funded to the same level as in 2015/16 this is expected to cost at least £10k for installation only – which would take nearly half the remaining TCM Initiative Fund budget – money which may be better spent on developing BIDs. To pursue option a) may also open the Council to a challenge on the basis that such funding in non-BID areas would be discriminatory against those businesses in BID areas that are contributing to lights through their levy payments – and therefore contrary to BID Baseline Agreements.

3.15. The disadvantage of option b) is that the Council may still be open to a challenge on the grounds of discrimination by the BIDs, and it may still leave businesses somewhat dependent upon Council support, where independence should be encouraged. However, it would help show that the Council is willing to play its part in contributing to the project in 2016 alongside other funding partners. The contribution (of up to £5k in total) could be packaged in the form of paying for improvements and repairs to the necessary electrical infrastructure within lamp columns etc.

3.16. Option c) – i.e. no funding from the Council - would throw the challenge to the business community as to whether Christmas lights are enough of a priority for them to fund, and will encourage with the transition from an unsustainable dependence upon the Council to self-reliance. This level of self-reliance in terms of organising and funding lights independent of the Council is already evidently successful in other towns in the borough – even in comparably-

sized town centres such as West Wickham. It should be noted that it would be part of the role of the remaining TCM to assist with fund-raising and to guide the local groups in commissioning the lights, so the Council will still play its part. However, there is a clear risk that even with this support the businesses will not rise to the occasion, and either or both towns will be without Christmas lights for 2016.

3.17. Members of the R&R PDS Committee are asked to provide their views to the Portfolio Holder on their preferred option for Christmas lights funding. Depending upon Member recommendation and the Portfolio Holder's decision an appropriate budget will be allocated from the Town Centre Management Initiative Fund towards Christmas lights in the 2016/17 financial year.

### **Update on Town Centre Management & Business Support Activities**

3.18. The following summarise the key activities undertaken by the Town Centre Management & Business Support team since the previous Member update in November 2015:

- The Town Centre Managers supported a number of large scale festive events in Bromley, Beckenham and Penge. The Bromley Christmas event attracted in excess of 10,000 people to the town centre on the day.
- Town Centre Christmas lights schemes for Bromley, Beckenham and Penge were successfully installed and de-installed for the 2015 festive season.
- Officers have supported the setting up of the Bromley BID following its success at ballot in November – with the BID due to become operational in April 2016. This includes the finalisation of the necessary legal agreements and administrative processes for collection of the BID levy, which will generate in excess of £550k of income for Bromley BID in its first year.
- Officers have also maintained close liaison with the Orpington 1<sup>st</sup> BID, including attendance at the BID Board meetings.
- A feasibility study into the potential for the development of BIDs in Beckenham and Penge town centres has been commissioned – to be completed by early May.
- The revenue element of the New Homes Bonus scheme (running until March 2017) is focussed on providing business support in Orpington and Penge. The Orpington tranche of this programme is being delivered by Orpington 1<sup>st</sup> in partnership with the Council. The past 4 months have included their delivery of a business support workshop programme, a business support expo (in partnership with Bromley College) and upgrading of the Orpington town centre website.
- Officers have been working with the Penge Traders Association to understand business support needs in Penge through use of a business survey and a mystery shopper exercise, which are being used to shape and commission a comprehensive and relevant programme of support until March 2017.
- Beckenham has been successful in its bid to be awarded the prestigious Purple Flag award – recognising excellence in the management of the town's evening and night time economy – following a rigorous assessment process taking place in November. The award is the night time economy equivalent of the Blue Flag for beaches and was a joint initiative between the Council, Beckenham Town Centre Team, the Police, Licenced establishments and Street Pastors, coordinated by the Town Centre Manager.

- Town Centre Management has also supported the Beckenham Town Centre Team in delivery of a project – funded by the Mayor’s High Street Fund – to clean up and enhance a number of the town centres many alleyways.
- As part of its wider role to support businesses, the team has also organised a number of business support workshops during the past 4 months, in partnership with a number of external organisations, to provide coaching, advice and business expertise to both start up and existing small businesses.

3.19. Looking ahead to the next quarter – the priorities for the Town Centre Management & Business Support team will be to:

- Ensure the best possible start and a smooth hand over to the new BID in Bromley town centre
- Engage with Town Centre Teams and business groups in Beckenham & Penge to identify their priorities for the coming year – and start to support them to deliver these.
- Support the engagement and communication with businesses in relation to the major scheme in Beckenham, the New Homes Bonus public realm scheme in Penge and proposed improvements to Bromley’s pedestrianised zone.
- Commission, launch and monitor the New Homes Bonus (NHB) enterprise support programme in Penge, and continue to monitor the Orpington 1<sup>st</sup> NHB projects.
- Support the feasibility study into the potential for BIDs in Beckenham and Penge – and to follow up by developing a road map for the delivery of BIDs in these town – where considered viable. This proposed roadmap – along with the necessary resource requirements – will be reported to Members in June 2016.
- Undertake a consultation with businesses and traders with regards to potential changes to the physical positioning, retail offer and management of Bromley’s regular market, with a view to reporting back to Members in June.

#### **4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

The work of the Town Centre Management & Business Support Team has as its primary focus the delivery of the Council’s Building a Better Bromley priority of encouraging and sustaining Vibrant Thriving Town Centres.

#### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 On 22 February 2016 Full Council approved the setting aside of £750k as one-off funding for Members Initiatives.
- 5.2 This report seeks approval to use £250k for improvement projects at Local Shopping Parades across the Borough according to the parameters and criteria set out in paragraphs 3.3 – 3.10 and in Appendix 2.
- 5.3 The level of expenditure on the initiative and progress with implementation of the selected projects will be reported at future meetings of the Renewal and Recreation PDS committee within the budget monitoring reports.
- 5.4 Any project that requires on-going revenue commitment should only be considered if there is a firm agreement with traders and/or residents that they are committed to covering these costs in the future.



5.5 The activities of the Town Centre Management and Business Support Team are resourced through various funding streams, summarised as follows:

**Funding available for TCM and Business Support Activities in 2016-17**

<b>Funding type</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Town Centre Management Initiative Fund	24
Earmarked reserve for Bromley BID project	7
Earmarked Reserve re Local Parade improvements - Round 1	16
Earmarked Reserve re Local Parade Improvements - Round 2	250
New Homes Bonus	75
<b>Total</b>	<b><u><u>372</u></u></b>

5.6 Of the £110k originally allocated by the Executive in January 2014 for BID development in Bromley, there remains a sum of £7,456. At the request of the Bromley BID Board, the Portfolio Holder for Renewal & Recreation has agreed for this final sum to be provided to Bromley BID Ltd as a one-off grant to assist with the costs associated with establishing the BID. This grant will be paid, subject to the ratification of a grant agreement, in April 2016.

5.7 Of the £250k originally allocated for Local Parades Improvements in 2012, £234k has been spent or committed as at end of March 2016. The remaining £16k has been allocated to projects which are to be delivered in 2016/17, but the expenditure has not yet been committed.

<b>Non-Applicable Sections:</b>	Legal, Personnel
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	