

BROMLEY ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP

Minutes of the meeting held at 4.00 pm on 19 July 2022

Present:

Councillor Yvonne Bear (Chairman)
Katy Woolcott, London Biggin Hill Airport (Vice-Chairman)
Carol Arnfield, LBB Head of Service for Early Years, School Standards and Adult Education
Zoe Carr, Beckenham Together BID Company & Penge SE20 BID Company
Russell Clarke, Sundridge Investments Limited
Frances Forrest, Your Bromley BID Company
Gary Hillman, N. Hillman & Sons
Lesley Holland, LBB Operations Manager, Bromley Education Business Partnership
Michael Humphries, Handelsbanken
Mike Lewis, Michael Rogers LLP
Caroline Tatchell, Splash Damage
Lee Thomas, Fairlight Group
Bruce Walker, Lansdown Asset Management
Louise Wolsey, London South East Colleges

Also Present:

Councillor Jeremy Adams
Ose Akpom, LBB Economic Development Manager
Neil Coates, London South East Colleges
Nigel Court, Mytime Active
Jeff East, Acorn Commercial
Daniel Godfrey, Openreach
Councillor Hannah Gray
Ben Johnson, LBB Head of Planning Policy and Strategy
Hal Khanom, LBB Head of Economic Development
Sarah King, Federation of Small Businesses
Danny Lennon, Footprint Scenery
Peter Manlay, Contingent Works
Darren Weale, InTune PR

1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chairman welcomed Members to the meeting of the Bromley Economic Partnership, which was held virtually via Teams.

Apologies for absence were received from Sam Parrett – London South East Colleges, Robert Sargent – Acorn Group, Chandra Sharma – Federation of

Small Businesses and Jason Stanton – Mytime Active, and Louise Wolsey – London South East Colleges, Jeff East – Acorn Group, Sarah King – Federation of Small Businesses and Nigel Court – Mytime Active attended as their respective substitutes.

Apologies for absence were also received from Chris Glover – Churchill Theatre and Mark Haynes – The Glades.

2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED that Katy Woolcott, London Biggin Hill Airport be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Bromley Economic Partnership for the 2022/23 municipal year.

3 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ATTENDING THE MEETING

No questions had been received.

4 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 29TH MARCH 2022 AND MATTERS OUTSTANDING

It was noted that, with regards to page 39/3 of the minutes, the end of the second paragraph would be amended to read: “The old stock was likely to be turned into other uses which meant that the office hubs *would not be retained unless A grade offices came forward and the Local Plan was supportive of such employment uses.*”

The Chairman advised that any matters outstanding would be addressed during the meeting.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 29th March 2022 be agreed.

5 TERMS OF REFERENCE

Members considered the Terms of Reference and membership of the Bromley Economic Partnership. The Chairman advised that no substantive changes had been made to the Terms of the Reference – they only amendments made had related to changes in the named representatives.

RESOLVED that the Terms of Reference for the Bromley Economic Partnership be agreed.

6 BROMLEY ECONOMIC EVIDENCE STUDY - INITIAL FINDINGS

The Partnership received a presentation from Hal Khanom, LBB Head of Economic Development, providing a summary of the initial findings of the Economic Evidence Study undertaken by Avison Young.

As mentioned at the last meeting, Avison Young were commissioned by the London Borough of Bromley to provide quantitative and qualitative insights into the borough's economic strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The evidence provided detailed insights on a wide range of economic, social and commercial topics, and was structured around seven key themes:

1. Productivity – Bromley's business and employment base;
2. Property – Bromley's office and industrial markets;
3. Place – Bromley's places, town centres and infrastructure;
4. People – Bromley's residents and labour market;
5. Pandemic – Bromley's resilience and recovery;
6. Perspectives – Bromley's business needs, trends and plans; and,
7. Precedents – learning from elsewhere.

The Bromley Economic Partnership would play an important role in economic development, as it involved bringing partners and resources together to stimulate the economy of a local area. There were six key roles that a local authority could take in the process as set out below:

1. Anchor – using council funding (e.g. via procurement processes) or powers (e.g. via planning policies) to support local business activity and deliver social value;
2. Facilitator – bringing businesses, organisations and groups together to collaborate on projects or to develop innovative new ideas that support economic growth and improve livelihoods;
3. Advocate – championing a local area at a regional and national level to ensure policies, projects and funding support and benefit local businesses, workers and residents;
4. Marketer – attracting businesses, start-ups and third sector organisations to an area by communicating the locational benefits of the area and brokering relationships between important players;
5. Commissioner – procuring services (e.g. relating to business support or adult education) to support economic development and securing public and private investment to pay for it; and,
6. Deliverer – actively delivering physical and non-physical projects that support economic development ambitions.

The LBB Head of Economic Development noted that the evidence indicated that Bromley had significant potential to grow its economy, and a number of strengths that could be built upon, including connectivity and its industrial and office-based clusters. In terms of opportunities, Bromley's economy had scope to increase its productivity; accelerate the pace of economic growth; diversifying its sector mix; safeguard higher value employment sectors; increase worker earnings which could lead to increased local spending power;

increase the industrial provision; increase the office market; and reduce vacancies on the high street by diversifying uses. There were also a wide range of other challenges that influenced Bromley's economic performance – higher education provisions could accelerate growth and the shift of commuting habits could support talent retention. It was highlighted that there were also critical infrastructure and space challenges – parts of Bromley were cut off from efficient public transport connections and lobbying needed to continue. Compared to some neighbouring borough there was a lack of space, outside of Bromley town centre, for entrepreneurs, start-ups and small businesses.

The LBB Head of Economic Development noted that business engagement with key sectors was ongoing. The full report was due to be completed in August, after which findings could be circulated. The initial findings had already been fed into grant applications and would help inform the economic evidence required for the Local Plan review.

In response to a question from Lee Thomas – Fairlight Group, the LBB Head of Economic Development advised that, as the Partnership led on economic development, the summary was being provided to them first. Round table discussions with representatives from various sectors would be held in the coming weeks, and would feed into the finalised report – this would then be shared with internal stakeholders, including Members and staff. The Chairman noted that the Economic Development Team was now fully funded, and conversations had been held with the Leader of the Council regarding what they were looking to achieve. There was further work to be undertaken to draw this work to the attention of Members, and the report would be disseminated and discussed with them.

Louise Wolsey – London South East Colleges (LSEC), highlighted that there had been a number of government policy changes relating to the skills agenda, and from 2025 people would have a lifelong learning entitlement loan. This would provide individuals with a loan entitlement to the equivalent of four years of post-18 education to use over their lifetime. It would be available for both modular and full-time study at higher technical and degree levels (levels 4 to 6). This presented a huge opportunity, as LSEC already provided a university centre in the borough which delivered degrees – they would like to work with the Local Authority and leading businesses within the growth sectors to discuss what future provision was required.

The Chairman asked about the aspirations for LSEC's Orpington Campus. Ms Wolsey advised that, over the last few years, a review of the site had been undertaken – they wanted to continue to “play their role” in Orpington as best they could, and the higher education provision would be moved from Bromley into the O-zone Building of the Orpington Campus. This would allow the Bromley Campus to be further developed to deliver the 14-18 provision, and also provided the adult higher education learners a university-type experience in the town centre during the afternoon and evening. It was noted that the rest of the Orpington Campus would be kept under review, and options may be

considered to support strategic partners with the redevelopment of the town centre.

The Vice-Chairman highlighted that for London Biggin Hill Airport, the skill base remained an issue, particularly with growing MROs (Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul), such as Bombardier. They provided fantastic job opportunities and there was a need to ensure that engineers were trained – there were issues in terms of recruitment, and ultimately they would be recruited from further afield if they could not “grow their own”. With regards to global connectivity, there had been a huge shift since the COVID-19 pandemic in businesses moving from first class to business class, and realising the opportunities that business aviation offered. It was highlighted that business aviation provided a form of global connectivity and as a result there was a substantial increase in aircrafts – companies would be looking for business and office locations, which provided a fantastic opportunity for Bromley to capitalise on this economic growth. In response to a question from the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman said that they had held extensive discussions with LSEC regarding their requirements for talent, and had looked to deliver a college. Ms Wolsey said that the team at London Biggin Hill Airport had been supportive throughout the process – there had been ongoing dialogue for a number of years, and they remained committed to trying to deliver the skills required by the Airport, Bombardier and other businesses. There had been challenges with the project to deliver a college, but they looked forward to providing an update to the Airport later in the summer, once a response was received from the Greater London Authority (GLA) regarding options going forward.

The Vice-Chairman noted that a key issue for customers was sustainability, and it has highlighted that the majority of aircrafts at London Biggin Hill Airport did short range flights. There was the potential to move into electric aviation, which would help to improve the environment and would be beneficial in terms of noise implications. However the Local Authority would need to be “ahead of the game” to assist in relation to having a sustainable infrastructure in place for the future.

Russell Clarke – Sundridge Investments Limited asked what the next steps would be, and queried what the process was for ensuring that it was delivered within a reasonable timeframe. It was considered that an overriding member of senior management, who was easily contactable for informal discussions around opportunities for development and economic improvements, was needed. The Chairman highlighted that there were no ways round the planning process that the Local Authority had to follow. However both the LBB Head of Economic Development and herself would be willing to have informal conversations regarding opportunities, but they would not be able to provide any formal answers. The Chairman advised that the evidence study would inform policy documents, the key one being the Local Plan. Once this was implemented from 2024, it would form the framework for what the Local Authority did in terms of the built environment, and which areas would be designated for intensification of industrial, office clusters, and the ad hoc requirement for flexible working space. Mr Clarke noted that the

implementation of the Local Plan was a couple of years away, and emphasised that actions needed to be taken as quickly as possible. It was considered that, over the years, planning applications had become much more bureaucratic and costly which had reduced the number of schemes that he was willing to be involved in. The LBB Head of Planning Policy and Strategy said that there was some scope to reflect things locally, however the processes were determined by the National Planning Policy Framework. The LBB Head of Economic Development advised that the team provided comments to the Planning Department on applications – these would be based on the evidence provided in the report, and allowed them to give a steer.

Mike Humphries – Handelsbanken noted that developers were looking at property deals outside of the borough. It was considered that it may be beneficial for the LBB Head of Economic Development to speak with other local London boroughs regarding how developers got their schemes through planning. The Chairman advised that the only difference between Bromley and other London boroughs would be the Local Plan, and members of the Partnership would have an opportunity to shape this document in the coming months.

Mr Thomas highlighted that continuity was required – it was good to see that the Local Authority was being both qualitative and quantitative about the needs in order to get people on board. The Chairman noted that an Economic Development Strategy had been devised, with external evidence now in place to support it, and there was a growing momentum behind this work.

The Chairman thanked the LBB Head of Economic Development for her presentation to the Partnership.

7 LOCAL INDUSTRIAL-BASED BUSINESS - CASE STUDY

The Chairman welcomed Danny Lennon, Co-founder of Footprint Scenery, to the meeting to provide a presentation about his business and his reasons for relocating to the borough. A copy of the presentation is attached at Appendix A.

In 2020, following a rethink of the business which was brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, a decision was made to move Footprint Scenery from its premises under the railway arches in Peckham, which it had occupied for 16 years. Having outgrown the space, and looking to change the way they worked in order to fulfil their sustainability goals, Footprint Scenery decided to look for an affordable and greener workspace, and were fortunate to find the newly built Klinger Estate on Edgington Way, Orpington.

In response to questions from the Chairman, Mr Lennon said that the main attraction of the premises in the Klinger Estate was its sustainability credentials. It was a new building, which had solar panels on the roof and dedicated EV chargers for their small fleet of company vehicles; and the

location offered great access. The theatre and film and tv industries struggled to get things right in terms of sustainability – the starting point for them was to have a building that could assist towards this, and therefore the environmental features offered had been vital when looking for new premises. It was noted that the new premises had very competitive rental rates and more agreeable terms compared to those at their previous location in Peckham.

Lee Thomas – Fairlight Group enquired if Footprint Scenery had signed a green lease or a normal lease. Mr Lennon advised that they had signed a normal lease. Mr Thomas highlighted that in the office market there was a spectrum of green leases, and if premises did not tick all the boxes, companies were not interested in viewing them. Currently there was only one A grade office block in Bromley – there were no other buildings that were compliant, and therefore nothing to attract companies into the borough. The Chairman noted that the Halo Business Park had been built in the Cray Valley and units had been taken quickly due to its credentials. The Allied Bakeries redevelopment had originally been designed to provide more than one unit however Amazon had wanted to take the whole site. The challenge put to developers was when opportunities arose to redevelop old sites they needed to be of the highest specification, and include green credentials in their proposals.

Mr Lennon advised that Footprint Scenery had started to employ an increasing number of local talent and were setting up education and training partnerships with local schools and colleges. Their aims for future growth centred around sustainability and education. Lesley Holland – Bromley Education Business Partnership advised that they supported secondary schools with work experience, and had links with primary schools, and she would be happy to discuss potential projects, or promoting opportunities, following the meeting.

In response to a question from Mike Lewis – Michael Rogers LLP, Mr Lennon advised that Footprint Scenery created sets, scenery and props. They mainly worked for professional companies but, although it may be dependent on budgets, they would be happy to work with amateur groups. It was noted that some of the scenery they created could be reused as part of their community and outreach work around sustainability.

In response to a question from the Chairman, members of the Partnership agreed that, in order to gain a better appreciation of the breadth of activity across the borough, they would be interested in receiving presentations showcasing local businesses.

The Chairman thanked Mr Lennon for his presentation to the Partnership, and wished him, and his business, all the best for the future.

8 DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE WORK PLAN - OPENREACH

The Partnership received a presentation from Daniel Godfrey, Fibre First Engagement Manager – Openreach, providing an update on the full fibre build within the borough.

Members were advised that the full fibre build had been underway in the borough since 2020. It has been hindered by the first period of lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic, however they had since made significant progress. A key factor had been the signing of a digital charter, an example of which was retroactive permits which allowed works to be completed on an emergency permit and filed afterwards.

With regards to Orpington, 78.52% of residents were now able to order superfast packages. Openreach would want to cover 100% of an exchange area however various cost factors applied. They primarily targeted the overhead network before looking at incremental extras, such as properties which had cable networks running underground – these were not targeted first as they were more costly to the programme. It was noted that once 75% was achieved, a stop sale activity was triggered in the network and copper products would no longer be advertised. They would look to migrate all customers on to the superfast network – the copper networks would then gradually be closed down, with the copper removed from the ground and recycled. In response to a question from the Chairman, the Fibre First Engagement Manager advised that they hoped to close out Orpington by quarter 4 of this year.

In Farnborough, 59.69% of residents were now able to order superfast packages, which was below the stop sale target. This was due to the high proportion of direct, inground feed type, and they would now be looking to provide extra funding/permission to build for these residual premises. This was the same for Biggin Hill, which stood at 69.65%. Some areas were part of the community funded programme, where customers could use the government's gigabit digital scheme to part fund the build. This work was now being rolled out, and would see 75% achieved.

With regards to Chislehurst (70.52%) they were approaching the 75% target and would be looking at incremental extras. In Hayes Common the roll out was at 39.16% – this was significantly lower than other areas as this build had been started much later in the programme.

Members were advised that Openreach had a target of providing full fibre to 25 million premises around the UK by 2026, and this would be heavily impacted by multi development units (MDU). The majority of Bromley's social housing stock had been outsourced to Clarion Housing Group. Openreach would like to work alongside social housing landlords to gain access and provide their residents with the opportunity to order superfast broadband, and they would be attending the September meeting of the Bromley Federation of Housing Associations. Openreach offered 'fibre for free' and would not charge

residents to install the network – they were an open access network, and gained capital by service providers renting their network.

In response to questions from the Chairman, the Fibre First Engagement Manager advised that Openreach worked through geographical telephone exchanges maps, and therefore Penge and Bromley town did not fall into the cluster being built. The coverage of 98% related to the cluster area, rather than the whole borough. The next stage would be the Penge cluster, and the Fibre First Engagement Manager agreed to provide further information following the meeting. The Chairman requested that a copy of the presentation also be circulated to members of the Bromley Economic Partnership following the meeting.

In response to questions from the Vice-Chairman, the Fibre First Engagement Manager said that he would liaise with the build team regarding granular information on the connectivity of the Strategic Outer London Development Centre, which could be provided following the meeting. Fibre consultations were offered, and further information on this could also be fed back to members.

The Chairman thanked the Fibre First Engagement Manager – Openreach for his update to the Partnership.

9 MOBILE INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRESS

The Partnership received a presentation from Ose Akpom, LBB Economic Development Manager, providing an update on the 4G/5G small cell mobile infrastructure deployment in Bromley. A copy of the presentation is attached at Appendix B.

The Ofcom Connected Nations report in Spring 2022 highlighted that the geographic coverage of 4G mobile network services by at least one mobile network operator (MNO) was over 92% nationally, and was expected to rise to 95% by end of 2026. It was noted that Bromley had 95% geographic coverage of 4G mobile network services available from the four MNOs (EE, Vodafone, Three and O2). The coverage in Bromley was slightly below neighbouring boroughs, which ranged from 97% in Merton to 100% in Southwark. However, it was highlighted that Bromley was a much larger borough and nearly all premises were included within the area of coverage.

Bromley had been one of the first local authorities to develop its Digital Infrastructure Toolkit and an Open Access agreement for infrastructure providers to access Highway's assets and improve 4G/5G mobile connectivity, based on the DCMS model. The LBB Economic Development Manager advised that the Open Access agreement with Freshwave allowed access to street furniture/lamp columns to deploy 4G/5G small cell mobile equipment and improve coverage and connectivity in Bromley for MNOs like O2. The 4G/5G mobile small cell deployment was totally commercially driven and depended on the demand expressed by the MNOs to mobile

infrastructure providers like Freshwave. The 4G/5G small cells were initially deployed by Freshwave at 14 high street locations in 3 local town centres (Bromley, Penge and Orpington) during the first year, and this has improved the connected experience of O2 mobile users around these commercial areas. The full-fibre footprint across these areas had also been improved as every small cell was fibre connected. It was noted that Freshwave was presently awaiting approval from the LBB Highways Team to deploy 12 additional 4G/5G small cell mobile equipment during the current year, which would include new locations in Beckenham town centre, and they planned to engage an additional mobile network operator by 2023.

Zoe Carr – Beckenham Together BID Company & Penge SE20 BID Company enquired if there were any plans for free Wi-Fi to be offered in shopping areas and High Streets in the town centres. The LBB Economic Development Manager advised that, in terms of capacity and coverage, the deployment would support this, however it was not known if the operators planned to provide free Wi-Fi. It was agreed that this could be followed up outside of the meeting. *(ACTION: LBB Economic Development Manager)*

The Chairman said that the presentation, and the update from Openreach, demonstrated that they had come a long way over the last couple of years, and taking a proactive partnership approach had improved coverage in the borough. Thanks were extended to the team for the work undertaken to achieve this.

10 UPDATE ON FUNDING BIDS

The LBB Head of Economic Development informed members of the Partnership that the Local Authority had been successful in their High Streets for All bid, and had been awarded £140k to deliver interventions in Bromley High Street, including markets, testing of different uses on the High Street and a programme of activities for children and young people.

A Night Time Enterprise Zone funding bid would be submitted in the next couple of weeks – if successful, this would be used in partnership with the Your Bromley BID Company to encourage the night time economy and increase footfall after 5.00pm in the area of Bromley High Street. In addition, there was also a Business Friendly Licensing and Regulation bid to support a toolkit for businesses in the borough, and provide night time ambassadors in the town centre.

The LBB Head of Economic Development advised that a large levelling-up funding bid would shortly be submitted for Crystal Palace Park, with proposed works included restoring the landscape and creating a new cultural venue and events space.

11 LOCAL PLAN

Ben Johnson, LBB Head of Planning Policy and Strategy provided an update on the Local Plan.

Members of the Partnership were advised that, as previously highlighted, the Local Plan was a lengthy project, with multiple phases. The process had started last year with a 'call for sites' consultation, which had focused on housing supply in order to establish the number of sites that could help meet the Local Authority's housing target. The team were now looking for the evidence required to underpin the Local Plan – the Plan would cover a number of areas, including housing, open spaces, and economic and environmental issues, and they needed to ensure it was robust and could be defended at an independent examination by the Planning Inspectorate.

The LBB Head of Planning Policy and Strategy advised that following the evidence gathering, they would be aiming to start an initial 'issues and options' consultation toward the end of the year, or beginning of the next. This would then be followed by a detailed consultation on specific policies mid-way through 2023, with an aim to adopt the finalised Local Plan by the end of 2024. It was noted that although this was an ambitious target, it was achievable – they wanted to avoid any delays, and complete the work as soon as possible, however the need for the Plan to be robust was emphasised. The LBB Head of Planning Policy and Strategy said he would be happy to engage with members of the Partnership and discuss evidence as and when it emerged.

In response to a question from the Vice-Chairman, the LBB Head of Planning Policy and Strategy advised that an 'issue and options' consultation would take place following the evidence gathering. A 'call for sites' response had been received from the Airport, which would be assessed as part of the Local Plan – they were on the database and would be notified of future rounds of consultations.

Bruce Walker – Lansdown Asset Management noted the economic benefits to the borough that had been mentioned and enquired if there were any proposals to release areas of greenbelt land for employment or commercial uses. The LBB Head of Planning Policy and Strategy confirmed that land use would be reviewed as part of the preparation of the Local Plan, including an employment land review which would set out the type of employment spaces required, and in which areas.

The LBB Head of Planning Policy and Strategy informed members that the Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) had been adopted at the end of June 2022, which set out frameworks and planning obligations for when applications were put forward. The consultation for the Orpington SPD had closed on 1st July, and officers were currently going through the 1,003 responses received. They would be looking to assess the responses and note any necessary amendments to the document, before returning to Committee towards the end of 2022, or beginning of 2023.

The Bromley town centre SPD would be presented to the Council's Development Control Committee the following week, before being taken to the Renewal, Recreation and Housing Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee and Council's Executive. If approved, a 12-week consultation would be launched in the autumn. A draft Urban Design Guide had also been prepared, which provided detailed guidance on all aspects of design in the borough. This would be taken to the Committee cycle in September/October 2022, followed by a period of consultation.

12 PARTNER UPDATES

The Vice-Chairman informed members of the Partnership that London Biggin Hill Airport would be holding a careers open day on Friday 12th August 2022, which would be used to demonstrate the jobs on offer. Further information was available on the website: <https://bigginhillairport.com/london-biggin-hill-airport-hosts-first-careers-open-day/>

13 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Russell Clarke – Sundridge Investments Limited enquired if the Local Authority would consider working with the private sector in respect of compulsory purchase order to bring opportunities forward. The Chairman advised that the Local Authority already did so, and this was a route that could be considered, if it was appropriate to do so.

14 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

4.00pm, Tuesday 1st November 2022
4.00pm, Tuesday 31st January 2023
4.00pm, Tuesday 18th April 2023

The Meeting ended at 5.55 pm

Chairman