

BROMLEY ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP

Minutes of the meeting held at 3.30 pm on 23 January 2024

Present:

Councillor Yvonne Bear (Chairman)
Katy Woolcott, London Biggin Hill Airport (Vice-Chairman)
Ose Akpom, Economic Development Manager
Elena Diaconescu, Bromley Adult Education College
Christopher Evans, Community Links Bromley
Frances Forrest, Your Bromley BID Company
Gary Hillman, N. Hillman & Sons
Michael Humphries, Handelsbanken
Lorraine McQuillan, LBB Place Shaping & Local Economy
Manager
Daniel Murray, LBB Head of Economic Development
Chandra Sharma, Federation of Small Businesses
Liz Timms, Treval Engineering Ltd
Chris Travers, Orpington 1st BID Company
Bruce Walker, Lansdown Asset Management

Also Present:

Zoe Carr, Penge SE20 BID Company (*via conference call*)
Neil Coates, London South East College
Bethan Doran, LBB SEND Team
Liz Lake, London South East College
Linda Oulton, Bromley Adult Education College
Hannah Phoenix, London South East College
Nina Sian, London South East College

21 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Mark Haynes – The Glades, Mike Lewis – Michael Rogers LLP, Robert Sargent – Cobalt Ltd, Clare Searle – Greener and Cleaner, Caroline Tatchell – Splash Damage and Lee Thomas – Fairlight Group.

Apologies for lateness were received from Michael Humphries – Handelsbanken.

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

No questions had been received.

**23 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7TH NOVEMBER 2023
AND MATTERS OUTSTANDING**

The Chairman noted that there were no matters outstanding.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 7th November 2023 be agreed.

**24 DANIEL MURRAY, HEAD OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT -
INTRODUCTION**

The Chairman welcomed Daniel Murray, the new LBB Head of Economic Development, to the meeting and introductions were made.

The LBB Head of Economic Development noted that potential future areas of work would include a refresh of the Economic Strategy and the development of a Growth Plan to support it. The importance of understanding (and engaging with) the borough's large and high growth businesses, and the need to help them address any growth challenges faced, was emphasised. Other areas of focus would include an analysis of emerging/innovative sectors; inward investment; commercial space requirements/availability; and skills and employment.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

25 BEP SURVEY FINDINGS

The LBB Place Shaping & Local Economy Manager provided a summary of the findings from the BEP survey (attached at Appendix A).

The LBB Place Shaping & Local Economy Manager advised that the survey had been sent to all 28 Members of the Partnership in early December 2023, and 9 responses had been received. The responses indicated that a 4.00pm start time was preferred with the meetings lasting for a duration of 1 hour 30 minutes. Members would like the Partnership meetings to be held in person on a quarterly basis. The elements that Members would particularly like included in the meetings were Council updates, partner updates and open discussion. A number of respondents had also considered that relevant subgroups could be established.

In terms of the general comments received about how the BEP could evolve, Members said they would prefer the meetings to be less formal, and more dynamic and interactive. Members would also like themed meetings with open discussion, opportunities to have more collaboration on projects and better engagement with a wider variety of participants.

The Chairman noted that Members wanted more discussion to take place during the meetings. It was proposed that the meetings would be themed, with this meeting focussed on employment and skills and creating a discussion forum. They would try to ensure there was time for partner updates/feedback

to be provided, however these may also need to be themed. Christopher Evans – Community Links Bromley suggested that themes could also include digital inclusion, external speakers on the skills and training agenda and inward investment.

The LBB Place Shaping & Local Economy Manager highlighted that this was an evolving process and Members were encouraged to submit any further feedback.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

26 BROMLEY BUSINESS GROWTH PROGRAMME

The LBB Economic Development Manager provided an update on the four UK Shared Prosperity Fund programmes to support local business – Growth Builder programme (Goldsmiths, University of London); Supply Bromley programme (Newable); StartUp Bromley programme (GLL); and Bromley Business hub programme (SOS Creativity). A copy of the presentation is attached at Appendix B.

In response to questions from the Chairman, the LBB Economic Development Manager advised that the Growth Builder programme would be delivered locally at different venues, including businesses premises, and would be needs led. With regards to the targets stated for each programme, it was highlighted that these were the minimum targets.

In response to a question from Bruce Walker – Lansdown Asset Management, the LBB Economic Development Manager advised that a quarterly report was submitted to the GLA based on the evidence/audit trail provided in relation to the new jobs created. The data reported was the actual number of jobs created and did not account for any fall off.

Chandra Sharma – FSB/StartUp Bromley asked for further information regarding the Meet the Buyer events. The LBB Economic Development Manager advised that the next event would take place in March 2024. It was noted that these events would be more focussed, with particular institutions invited and matched up with buyers. Mr Sharma informed the Partnership that he was the new Business Support Manager for StartUp Bromley and confirmed that the support provided was measured. They were required to submit a quarterly report – this included the number of jobs created, jobs safeguarded, and the new sectors entered into.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

27 EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS THEME

The Chairman welcomed Neil Coates – LSEC Deputy Principal Apprenticeships, Adults and Higher Education (“Deputy Principal”), Liz Lake – LSEC Group Strategic Director for Projects and Partnerships (“Group Strategic Director”), Nina Sian – LSEC Director of Employer Engagement and

Innovation and Bethan Doran – LBB SEND Employment Project Officer to the meeting to deliver a presentation covering the local labour market, Good Work Bromley and employment and skills (attached at Appendix C). Further information regarding the Good Work Bromley Exchange Launch is attached at Appendix D.

In response to a question from Christopher Evans – Community Links Bromley regarding the quality of jobs created, the Deputy Principal advised that this could be looked at in further detail as it could be measured by median wage data within the borough and sector roles. *ACTION: LSEC*

It was noted that in addition to getting people into work, there was a need to get people better jobs and provide them with more skills and experience – as well as employers getting more staff which allowed them to become more productive and widen their offer.

Gary Hillman – N. Hillman & Sons asked where jobs were advertised. The Deputy Principal advised that online platforms such as LinkedIn, Indeed and Reed were used to advertise jobs, as well as Jobcentre Plus. Christopher Evans – Community Links Bromley highlighted that recruiters needed to give consideration as to where adverts should be placed. It was noted that a separate issue to consider related to the London Living Wage and in-work poverty. The Group Strategic Director noted that a key performance indicator (KPI) of the work should be to measure the number of ‘good’ jobs, which met the London Living Wage.

The Group Strategic Director informed the Partnership that the Bromley People & Skills Programme (2023-25) focussed on Good Work Bromley, supporting care leavers into employment and the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) programme. The programme was funded by Local London, through the GLA – it would identify people who were on the margins of employment and find the labour market required by employers. The LBB SEND Employment Project Officer advised that the SEND programme was a collaboration with partners including Good Work Bromley Exchange, Bromley Mencap and CASPA to support young people with SEND or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) into employment. The Group Strategic Director noted that the work was also focused on care leavers and those not in education, employment, or training (NEET).

The Group Strategic Director advised the Partnership that the Good Work Bromley Exchange was based at The Hive, LSEC Orpington Campus. The team received client referrals through the LSEC website (lsec.ac.uk) – their needs were assessed during a 1-2-1 meeting and the relevant pathway was identified. As part of the universal pathway, LSEC delivered Sector Work-Based Academy Programmes (SWAP). In response questions from the Chairman, the Group Strategic Director said that LSEC would work in partnership with employers that had vacancies to fill – the SWAP was a 5-week programme with a guaranteed interview at the end. The Director of Employer Engagement and Innovation noted that the people who participated in the SWAPs were close to the job market – they were eager to work and just wanted the opportunity to have an interview. The employer attended the

SWAP during the second week to provide an overview of their business and meet the candidates that had been identified as wanting to work in that sector. The Deputy Principal highlighted that, as per the economic modelling, the largest proportion of job vacancies in Bromley were no/low-skilled and this was what the SWAPs were focussing on – preparing candidates for interviews and helping them get back into work. The Group Strategic Director said the vacancies were for lower skilled jobs – there was a proportion of the borough's population that were economically inactive. The programme focussed on identifying these people and getting them to fill the vacancies. Christopher Evans – Community Links Bromley suggested that volunteering could be considered as an element of the pathways.

In response to a question from Michael Humphries – Handelsbanken regarding the targets for the year, the Deputy Principal advised that the project had funded targets, but they aspired to exceed these figures. The funded targets included engaging with 79 economically inactive people; demonstrating that 25 people were more employable; getting 25 people into work; and getting 5 people into 'good' work by March 2025. In response to a question from the Chairman, the Group Strategic Director advised that around 6% of the borough's working age population were unemployed. Some of these people would never enter into employment, however since the pandemic there had been a government push to get those that retired early back into work – the whole 6% should be seen as an opportunity.

In response to a question from Bruce Walker – Lansdown Asset Management regarding the work with schools, the Group Strategic Director advised that the Good Work Bromley Exchange had officially launched earlier that day. A Multi-Academy Trust was part of the LSEC group, and the schools included Pupil Referral Units (PRU). These children had a high level of need and families had been identified, but they would like to speak with other Trusts to market the programmes. In response to a question from the Chairman, the Group Strategic Director said that the College had 650 learners with EHCPs and SEND support. It was noted that the more able students often went on to Sixth Form, while LSEC's learners did not meet the criteria – many learners had additional needs, and they worked closely with them to boost their morale. The LBB SEND Employment Project Officer said that the SEND school population was growing and noted that from Year 9 pupils should discuss careers/employment as part of their EHCP. The Director of Employer Engagement and Innovation said that LSEC were also looking at a programme for NEET learners, Routes into Work. This was still at the development stage, and they would be happy to receive suggestions from employers regarding the skills needed.

Elena Diaconescu – Bromley Adult Education College said that the College would like to collaborate more closely with the LSEC initiatives, and she would contact the Group Strategic Director following the meeting.

Members of the Partnership were advised that any questions could be directed to: goodworkbromley@lsec.ac.uk and employers interested in offering support to candidates, developing a SWAP programme or sharing

current vacancies could contact: employers@lsec.ac.uk. It was suggested that further discussions take place at a future meeting or consideration be given to setting up an Employment and Skills subgroup.

ACTION: LBB Economic Development Team

The Chairman thanked the LSEC Deputy Principal Apprenticeships, Adults and Higher Education, LSEC Group Strategic Director for Projects and Partnerships, LSEC Director of Employer Engagement and Innovation and LBB SEND Employment Project Officer for their presentation to the Partnership.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

28 PARTNER UPDATES

Chandra Sharma, representing the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB), advised that an FSB networking event would be taking place on 20th February 2024 at Clockwise. With regards to StartUp Bromley, Members of the Partnership were encouraged to refer anyone who was looking to get into business, as a huge amount of support was available – a leaflet providing information on courses and events was tabled.

Gary Hillman – N. Hillman & Sons said that the 3G pitch at Cray Wanderers Football Club had been completed and floodlights installed. The first official game on the pitch would be the women's team playing on 4th February 2024. There were currently 35 youth teams with an aspiration to expand to 45 next year.

Katy Woolcott – London Biggin Hill Airport said that business continued to be good – it had not been quite as strong as 2022, but was well ahead of 2019. The on-site hotel had been operating for a year and continued to perform well, investment had been made into a taxiway which allowed aircrafts to get to the runway in a more efficient way, and they were in the process of installing air sensors.

Futures Week would be taking place at the Airport between 12th-16th February 2024, providing 15 young people, aged 15-18 years, the opportunity to experience the roles available within aviation.

The Airport had completed their report to be fed into the Local Plan and it was highlighted that it was the ideal opportunity to have the people with the required skills living locally. The response to the Local Plan suggested that a broader view was taken within certain areas in order to create business opportunities. Discussions were still ongoing in relation to establishing an aviation academy.

Nina Sian – LSEC informed Members that Apprenticeship Week would be taking place between 5th-9th February 2024. On the Tuesday, parents could come and meet the Apprenticeship Team to find out more information – 169 bookings had already been received. On the Thursday, an event for

employers would be held to provide information on apprenticeships and T-Levels. On the Friday, a 'Take Me On' event would be held which allowed employers to advertise their apprenticeship vacancies and interview candidates.

RESOLVED that the updates be noted.

29 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman extended her thanks to London South East College for hosting the meeting at their Orpington Campus.

30 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

4.00pm, Tuesday 26th March 2024

The Meeting ended at 5.13 pm

Chairman