

BROMLEY ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP

Meeting:	Economic Partnership
Date:	9 th November 2010
Subject:	Update report on work of Business Competitiveness and Investment and Town Centre Sub-Groups and on Strategic Priorities 1 and 2.
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1. Recommendations.

The Partnership is asked to:-

- 1.1 Note the recent work of the Business Competitiveness and Investment Sub-Group and future proposed work.
- 1.2 Note the recent work of the Town Centres Sub-Group.
- 1.3 Agree changes to these sub-groups.
- 1.4 Note progress to date and planned activities under the Economic Framework's Strategic Priorities 1 and 2.

2. Work of the Business Competitiveness & Investment Sub-Group

- 2.1 Since the last Economic Partnership meeting in July there has been one meeting of the Business Competitiveness and Investment (BC&I) sub-group. This took place on 15 September and was attended by representatives from Business Link, Bromley College (Business Focus), Treval Engineering, News Quest Group and the Council. The meeting was chaired by Howard Oldstein of the Glades.
- 2.2 Items for discussion included a review of the Business E-Bulletin and the Council's Business pages, the revamped Welcome Pack and town centre activity – including the new Town Centre Management team arrangements. However, the main focus of the meeting was on progress against targets on Strategic Priority 1 and a discussion of how best to monitor progress in the future, including identifying suitable performance

indicators. Selected performance indicators and other economic statistics were circulated at the meeting – and it was agreed that further work was required to refine these and their presentation. Also under discussion were proposals for inclusion in the Council's business support programme, which due to budget restraints will be much reduced and more dependent on support from partners for its delivery.

- 2.3 The next meeting of the BC&I sub-group is planned for 14 December. In addition to the monitoring of the Strategic Priorities, and related monitoring data, members also intend to undertake a review of available communication channels for joint communications to businesses. Interest has also been expressed in looking at BIDs and a suitable speaker on this subject will be invited to a future meeting.
- 2.4 Subject to agreement from the Economic Partnership the remit of the BC&I sub-group will be broadened to include oversight and delivery of Strategic Priority 2. In the light of this, the membership of this sub-group will be reviewed to ensure sufficient representation from town centre businesses or organisations.

3. Work and current status of the Town Centres Sub-Group

- 3.1 Since the last Economic Partnership meeting in July there has been one meeting of the Town Centres sub-group, on 16 July. This was the 2nd meeting of the group to take place and was attended by representatives from Bromley Creative Community, BNI Bromley, Bromley Business Club, Biggin Hill Traders Group, BCX Bromley, Federation of Small Businesses, Orpington Business forum, BNI Crofton group, 12-30 Womens company, Bromley Business forum and the South East London Chamber of Commerce. The meeting was chaired by Howard Oldstein of the Glades.
- 3.2 Items for discussion included the remit of the sub-group and its role in relation to the Economic Partnership and the rest of the Local Strategic Partnership. Meeting also introduced members to the Strategic Priority 2 Action Plan, and updates were also heard on the Bromley Area Action Plan, Town Centre Management, the Council's town centre events programme and also news was shared about the activities of the various groups represented.
- 3.3 Although members of the sub-group were asked for comments and contributions to the Strategic Priority 2 Action Plan – very few responses were received. There was also little take up of the offer to reconvene the group on 15 October – which resulted in the cancellation of this planned meeting.

4. Proposed changes to the Business Competitiveness and Investment and Town Centres sub-groups.

- 4.1 Although there was some interest amongst the business group chairs in meeting together to discuss practical ways to develop the groups in each of the areas represented and to share good practice there was considerably less engagement with the process of monitoring and implementing Strategic Priority 2.
- 4.2 Howard Oldstein has now resigned chairmanship of this sub group and the remit and make up of the group will be subject to a review led by Town Centre Management, with a view to a possible relaunch in early 2011. It may be that any re-formed group could act as an advisory or sounding board on town centre issues for the Economic Partnership, but will not play the role of a formal sub-group.
- 4.3 In the light of these changes, it is proposed that delivery of the action plan for Strategic Priority 2 will now come under the oversight of the Business Competitiveness and Investment Group which is also responsible for Strategic Priority 1. The membership of this group, to ensure adequate representation of town centre businesses, will also be reviewed.

5. Update on Strategic Priority 1: Sustaining and growing business and investment

- 5.1 A full update of the Strategic Priority 1 Action Plan is provided as Appendix 1. However, key highlights are summarised below.
- 5.2 Activity by members of the partnership during the past quarter include revision of text and graphics for inward investment prospectus; the Mayor's business lunch for key employers; an SLB networking event at the Churchill Theatre attended by 50 local businesses; Boost Your Business event at Orpington College by the Council, in partnership with BLIL; discussions and site visit with English Heritage to develop proposal for West Camp (Biggin Hill); SLB submitted joint proposal with South London Partnership for a Local Enterprise Partnership to support businesses across South London in line with the government proposal that LEP's replace other forms of business support in the UK; BLIL adviser service focussed on growth businesses from Sept 2010 to include IDB offer and account management for selected clients showing high growth potential; and Bromley Environment Awards presented (9/7/10) to Croft Teas Rooms, Harris HospisCare and Warren Evans Beds.
- 5.3 Planned activities for the current quarter and beyond include delivery of inward investment prospectus; BLIL focussing adviser service on established growth businesses and piloting an account management model of support for key Bromley firms; Programme of growth focussed workshops being offered with planning for Q4 with local delivery partners;

Council working with agents to deliver commercial property event in November; SLB is developing plans for an awards programme in Bromley, with a launch planned in January, the main sponsor being Biggin Hill Airport. Also in this quarter a successful Boost Your Business event was delivered by the Council for Bromley North, in partnership with BLIL.

6 Update on Strategic Priority 2: Vibrant Thriving Town Centres

- 6.1 A full update of the Strategic Priority 2 Action Plan is provided as Appendix 2. However, key highlights are summarised below.
- 6.2 Activity during the past quarter include agreement signed with a developer for re-development of Westmorland Road Car park; Old Town Hall marketed for re-development; Pre-Tender Qualification stage for development of Pavilion Leisure Centre to include family entertainment centre; Orpington Public Realm works completed; New Orpington Library construction works started; 5 successful town centre events took place in Bromley, Beckenham Orpington during this quarter; and new improved Christmas lights contract procured.
- 6.3 Planned activities for the current quarter and beyond include adoption by Full Council of the Bromley Area Action Plan; up to 10 events in town centres planned for this quarter including very high profile Poppy Appeal launch (6 Nov); Delivery of lights schemes in 4 main town centres, and support for business-led initiatives in some smaller centres and preparation for relocation of the Bromley Charter Market (including advance publicity).
- 6.4 It should be noted that key monitoring data related to both Strategic Priority 1 and 2, and statistics of recession are also provided as appendix 3 to this report.