

## **BROMLEY ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP**

Minutes of the meeting held at 4.00 pm on 2 February 2011

### **Present:**

Councillor Julian Benington (Chairman)  
Adrian Hollands, Chamber of Commerce (Vice-Chairman)  
Robert Goddard, Thackray Williams Solicitors LLP  
Marc Hume, LBB Renewal & Recreation  
Mary Manuel, LBB Renewal & Recreation  
Ruth Nightingale, Business Link in London  
Martin Pinnell, LBB Renewal & Recreation  
Prathiba Ramsingh, Jobcentre Plus

### **Also Present:**

Stuart Dene, NewsQuest  
Simon Norton, Orpington College  
Peter Pledger, South London Business  
Jennifer Whyte, Communications Team

## **1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies had been received from John Hayes – Chamber of Commerce, Liz McNaughton – Treval Engineering, Kevin Munnely - Head of Town Centre Planning Projects, Howard Oldstein – The Glades, Sam Parrett – Bromley College of Further and Higher Education, Brian Turpin – Bromley Mytime and Michael Wheeler – Bromley Adult Education College.

## **2 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9TH NOVEMBER 2010 AND MATTERS ARISING**

The minutes of the meeting were agreed.

Matters Arising:

1. With regard to Item 3: National and Regional Changes: Update from the meeting of 9<sup>th</sup> November 2010, the Chairman confirmed that the development of a pan-London Enterprise Partnership had been agreed. The Expression of Interest submitted by the South London Partnership to develop an Enterprise Partnership for the South London region would not be taken forward.
2. With regard to Item 4: Partner Updates from the meeting of 9<sup>th</sup> November 2010, the Principal and Chief Executive of Orpington College confirmed that the the Corporations of Bromley College of Further and Higher Education and Orpington College had announced a public consultation to consider the proposed merger of the two colleges. The consultation period would run from 26th January to 4th

March 2011, and partners were invited to express their views. The Chairman would provide a response to the consultation on behalf of the Bromley Economic Partnership.

3. With regard to Item 5: Update from Director of Renewal and Recreation from the meeting of 9<sup>th</sup> November 2010, the Chairman confirmed that Biggin Hill Airport had recently won the 'Best Business Aviation Airport' award in a nationwide annual awards scheme. Work continued around the development of the proposed Biggin Hill Heritage Centre.
4. With regard to Item 8: Business Competitiveness and Investment and Town Centres Sub Groups – Update and Progress against Delivery Plans from the meeting of 9<sup>th</sup> November 2010, the Chairman confirmed that the Federation of Small Businesses would deliver a high profile trade event at Oakley House in June 2011.
5. With regard to Item 10: Any Other Business from the meeting of 9<sup>th</sup> November 2010, the Head of Town Centre Management and Business Support confirmed that Officers were liaising with London BIDS to explore the potential for establishing a Business Improvement District in the Borough.

**RESOLVED that the minutes be agreed.**

**3 REVIEW OF TERMS OF REFERENCE AND CHANGES TO STRUCTURE OF THE PARTNERSHIP (INCLUDING TOP 5 PRIORITIES FOR THE PARTNERSHIP)**

Members of the Partnership considered the need to amend the existing Terms of Reference for the Bromley Economic Partnership, as the Local Strategic Partnership was no longer in operation.

It was agreed the Chairman would meet with representatives of the Renewal and Recreation Department to consider the existing guidance, and an amended Terms of Reference would then be circulated to all members of the Partnership for their consideration and agreement.

**RESOLVED that an amended Terms of Reference be developed by the Chairman in consultation with Officers and be circulated to all members of the Partnership for their consideration and agreement.**

**4 UPDATE REPORTS ON MAIN PARTNERSHIP THEMES**

Members of the Partnership gave an update around progress across the main themes of the Partnership.

**A) TOWN CENTRE DEVELOPMENT**

The Director of Renewal and Recreation gave an update around Town Centre Development across the Borough.

Progress was continuing across the sites that made up the Bromley Town Centre Area Action Plan, and the Council was in the process of appointing a Development Adviser to support the Council in procuring development partners and ensure sites were configured correctly to attract developers. A challenge had been lodged by Linden Homes and Network Rail to the adoption of the Area Action Plan with regard to the number of units that could be accommodated at Site A: Bromley North, and the Council was considering its response. Bromley North Village had been selected for inclusion in the Mayor's Great Spaces Initiative and had been allocated a grant of £300,000 for detailed design and development of a range of proposals for public realm improvement which would be considered by Members shortly. In addition, a Member Working Group for Bromley North Village had been established to consider issues surrounding the area and its future development, and work was being undertaken on a Wayfinding strategy to improve signage.

With regard to the other sites across Bromley Town Centre, planning guidance for developers was currently being prepared for Site B: Tweedy Road, and seven expressions of interest had been received around Site C: the Old Town Hall site. A contractor had been appointed to undertake the refurbishment of Site E: Pavilion Leisure Centre and work would start shortly. With regard to Site F: Civic Centre, the Council would remain on the Civic Centre site until at least 2015, giving time to consider potential relocation options which could be undertaken as part of the implementation of Opportunity Sites identified in the Area Action Plan.

The Council was currently in discussions with Network Rail around the development of Site J: Bromley South with a view to seeking expressions of interest from developers around a mixed use development scheme. The Cathedral Group had been selected as the Council's development partner in respect of Site K: Westmoreland Car Park and was currently working on a detailed development programme. A scheme outline for a mixed use, hotel-led development had been submitted by agents in respect of Site L: Former DHSS and was being reviewed by Officers.

In terms of development across the Borough, two key opportunity sites had been identified in the Walnuts shopping complex and consideration was being given to the future of the library and museum site. Orpington had been nominated in the Excellence in Walking and Public Realm category of the London Transport Awards 2011 for public realm improvements across Orpington High Street. The Chief Executive of South London Business highlighted the opportunity for providing a 'touch down' centre for those running small businesses in the Borough which would provide access to meeting space. The development of the Penge Masterplan was also underway, and included the potential development of a new library for Penge and Anerley.

**RESOLVED that the update be noted.**

## **B) TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT AND BUSINESS SUPPORT**

The Head of Town Centre Management and Business Support gave an update around progress across the main Partnership themes of Town Centre Development and Business Support. The main priorities for Town Centre Management in Quarter 3 included the delivery of Christmas lights schemes and events and the development of action plans for the 2011/12 financial year. In addition a programme of environmental monitoring and improvement had been ongoing, particularly across Bromley town centre. The four town centres that were monitored across the Borough had shown a decrease in the number of vacant units over the past year, although footfall had been adversely affected by wintry weather around the time of the counts.

The Council's Business Support service had delivered the Borough's first Commercial Property Expo in partnership with local property agents. A Boost Your Business event had also been delivered which focused on businesses based in Bromley North and highlighted plans and ideas arising out of the Bromley North Village Improvement strategy, including potential plans for public realm improvements, marketing and branding the area. The Business E-Bulletin was also re-launched and a review was undertaken of content on the Business Section of the Council website. The Business Competitiveness and Investment Sub-Group had met for a final meeting in December 2010 and had highlighted the need to promote 'good news stories' about the Borough as a place to do business.

Future work of the Town Centre Management team would include delivering a programme of Spring events, including 'Love Bromley', a Valentine-themed event on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2011. The Town Centre Management action plans for 2011/12 would be finalised, as would funding for the future events programme. Feasibility work would be undertaken on the possible introduction of a Business Improvement District in the Borough. The Business Support service would undertake a wide range of activities including the delivery of a major Boost Your Business event on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2011, improving welcome packs and the delivery of an early morning Olympic workshop. The Chairman noted the Inward Investment event to be held in the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter of 2011/12, and underlined the importance of encouraging inward investment in the Borough.

The Regional Sales Director at Newsquest announced that the Bromley News Shopper was seeking to launch a monthly business section from 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2011. He highlighted the potential to provide support to small businesses around working with Banks through a government-backed scheme called 'Doing Business Together' first piloted by Richmond Council.

### **RESOLVED that:**

- 1) Recent work around Town Centre Management and Business Support in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter of 2010/11 be noted;**

- 2) **The minute of the final Business Competitiveness and Investment Sub-Group meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2010 be noted;**
- 3) **The plans for Town Centre Management and Business Support activity during the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter of 2010/11 be noted.**

### **C) SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT**

The Principal and Chief Executive of Orpington College gave an update on the progress of the Skills and Employment Sub-Group, underlining the importance of ensuring appropriate skills training was being offered to meet the needs of Bromley employers. The planned developments across the Bromley Town Centre Area Action Plan would have implications for future skills programmes, with the potential to increase skills training in the catering and hospitality industry. Prathiba Ramsingh noted that Jobcentre Plus was now required to work with local colleges to support the progression of jobseekers into employment with appropriate skills training.

**RESOLVED that the update be noted.**

### **D) PLANNING, CORE STRATEGY AND LOCAL ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT UPDATE**

The Head of Planning Strategy and Projects provided an update on planning, the core strategy, which would be the overarching policy document for the Borough, and the Local Economic Assessment. Future employment growth across London was projected to be driven primarily by the business services sector, however there was also expected to be growth across other sectors including the catering and hospitality industry.

The Bromley Economic Partnership was invited to comment on how the business community might be best engaged in consultation on the draft Core Strategy in May/June 2011, in addition to ongoing engagement with the Partnership and other partners. It was anticipated that key elements to support the consultation process would include the Business E-Bulletin, the Council's redesigned website and by providing advance notice to partner and umbrella organisations to publicise consultation opportunities in their newsletters and bulletins, including any exhibitions or meetings.

**RESOLVED that:**

- 1) **The Indicative timescale for the preparation of Bromley's Core Strategy be noted;**
- 2) **The Greater London Authority's headline economic forecasts for Bromley and the structure of the Local Economic Assessment be noted;**
- 3) **Comments on the suggested broad approach to consultation with local businesses with regard to the preparation of the Core**

**Strategy and to raising awareness of the Local Economic Assessment be noted.**

**5 PARTNER UPDATES (VERBAL UPDATE)**

Members of the Partnership had undertaken a range of activities since the last meeting.

**RESOLVED that the update be noted.**

**6 COMMUNICATIONS ISSUES (VERBAL UPDATE)**

Jennifer Whyte attended the meeting as a representative of the Council's Communications Team, and would be working to support the increased emphasis on communications across the Partnership.

**RESOLVED that the update be noted.**

**7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chairman informed the Partnership of proposals for Bromley to host the London Kilomathon on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2011. The Kilomathon would offer routes of 26.2 km (16.3 miles), a Half Kilomathon of 13.1 km (8.1 miles) and a mini Kilomathon of 2.62 km (1.6 miles), with the proposed route starting from Crystal Palace Park, and the Chairman underlined the opportunities for local businesses to get involved in the event.

Members of the Economic Partnership considered figures showing the level of business start-ups by Bank across five London boroughs. 18.4% more businesses started up in Bromley in 2010 compared with the previous year, however 21.8% more businesses started up in London during the same period and the number of start ups in Bromley was the lowest of the five boroughs surveyed. Members of the Partnership noted that this information did not include how many businesses had closed across the Borough during the same period.

**RESOLVED that the issues raised be noted.**

**8 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

4.00pm, Monday 18<sup>th</sup> April 2011

The Meeting ended at 5.31 pm

Chairman