

BROMLEY ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP

Minutes of the meeting held at 4.00 pm on 12 July 2011

Present:

Councillor Peter Morgan (Chairman)

Robert Goddard, Thackray Williams Solicitors LLP
Simon Norton, Orpington College
Martin Pinnell, LBB Renewal & Recreation
Dene Stuart, NewsQuest

Also Present:

Mary Manuel, LBB Renewal & Recreation
Kevin Munnelly, Town Centre Development
Councillor Sarah Phillips, Chairman, Renewal & Recreation PDS Committee
Michael Wheeler, Bromley Adult Education College
Jennifer Whyte, Communications Team

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Rob Cundy – Federation of Small Businesses, Adrian Hollands – Chamber of Commerce, Marc Hume – LBB Renewal and Recreation, Liz McNaughton – Treval Engineering, Howard Oldstein – The Glades, David Keogh – Jobcentre Plus and Peter Pledger – South London Business.

2 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13TH APRIL 2011 AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the meeting were agreed. There were no matters arising

RESOLVED that the minutes be agreed.

3 UPDATES 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 Head of Renewal 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 a development plan had now been prepared. Following a competitive tendering process CB Richard Ellis had been selected as the Council's

development advisor in relation to Site G and it was hoped that a development partner would be in place by autumn 2011.

The challenge lodged by Linden Homes/Network Rail in relation to Site A: Bromley North would be heard before the High Court at the end of October 2011. Work had commenced on the refurbishment of Site E: The Pavilion and would be completed in March 2012.

With regards to the other sites across Bromley Town Centre, further work was being undertaken at Site B: Tweedy Road seeking to develop a temporary parking area during the refurbishment of The Hill and the redevelopment of Westmoreland Multi-Storey Car Parks. The Land Group had been selected as the Council's development partner in relation to Site C: the Old Town Hall site, and it was anticipated that proposals for development of the site would be submitted to the Council in August 2011.

Following a review of options at Site F: Civic Centre, refurbishment of the North Block was currently being undertaken to support more efficient use of the campus site and would be completed by January 2012. Preliminary scope of work and delivery programme for the refurbishment of Site J: Bromley South to include step free access had now been agreed with Network Rail. It was anticipated that the improvement works would commence by September 2011, with step free access being implemented by the end of March 2012.

Cathedral Group, the Council's development partner for Site K: Westmoreland Road Car Park had recently hosted a car park cinema on site over a four day period. It was anticipated that a planning application for Site K would be submitted to the Council in September 2011. A scheme outline for a mixed use, hotel-led development had already been submitted by agents in respect of Site L: Former DHSS, and it was anticipated that the site owners would submit a planning application before September 2011.

An area based bid to Transport for London, as part of the Mayor's 'Great Spaces' initiative, had been successful in providing access to £300k for detailed design work in respect of Bromley North Village. A further allocation of £3m had been made available by Transport for London to implement improvements to the public realm in line with the distinctive character of the area. A provisional bid of £1.5m had been made to the Council's Capital Programme 2012/12 in support of this project, which was still subject to confirmation, and further public consultation on the detailed designs would take place in October 2011, with first phase implementation on works to commence by early summer 2012.

The Outer London Fund, a three year initiative dedicated to supporting the vibrancy and growth of high streets, had recently been launched and would be allocated in two rounds. The first would provide funding for immediate measures such as promotion, events and marketing, and the second would make funds available for capital works. The Council was currently developing a bid for the Borough, and it was hoped that funding would be granted towards improved wayfinding and signage in Bromley as well as public realm improvements across Beckenham, Penge and West Wickham Town Centres

In terms of development across the Borough, two key opportunity sites had been identified in the Walnuts shopping complex in Orpington Town Centre, and a development brief was being developed. The Principal and Chief Executive of Orpington College highlighted the importance of involving Orpington College in any consultation around proposed development in the area.

The first phase of environmental improvements had been successfully implemented as part of the Penge Renewal Strategy. It was proposed to hold a stakeholder workshop to develop a long term renewal strategy for Penge in Autumn 2011.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

B) TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT / BUSINESS SUPPORT

The Head of Town Centre Management and Business Support gave an update around progress across the main Partnership themes of Town Centre Management and Business support in Quarter 1 2011/12.

In the first Quarter of 2011/12 the Town Centre Management Team had successfully delivered a range of spring events, including the Bromley 'Easter Egg-stravaganza' and the Festival of Sport. An outreach campaign was currently underway to encourage increased business donations to Christmas lights in town centres following a reduction in Council funding. It was also proposed to include Christmas lights as part of the Council's bid to the Outer London Fund. Informal consultation had been undertaken with businesses around the possible introduction of a Business Improvement District Scheme (BIDS) in Orpington Town Centre, and the Beckenham Business Association had been successfully re-launched.

Future activities for the Town Centre Management Team included developing proposals for inclusion in area-based bids to the Mayor's Outer London Fund in July 2011. Informal consultation would continue on the proposed Orpington BIDS, and a review of markets, promotions and rides in town centres would also be undertaken. A programme of summer events would be delivered, including the Big Dance event in Orpington and a Street Theatre Festival in Bromley.

The Business Support Team had undertaken a wide range of activities including the promotion and distribution of the new Bromley Business Guide and Directory and revision of the Business web pages on the revamped Council website. The 'Explore Bromley Borough' visitor guide had recently been published and work had been undertaken with the Communications Team on the Borough Inward Investment brochure. An edition of the Bromley Business E-Bulletin had also been published and a new electronic 'A to Z Guide to Local Services for Business' publication had also been produced in partnership with the News Shopper.

In the second quarter of 2011/12, work would continue on a number of activities delivered in Quarter 1. In addition, the Business Support Team aimed to develop an inward investment plan for Bromley North Village, with possible additional funding from the Outer London Fund. Further work would be undertaken towards the publication of the Borough Investment brochure in the run-up to the Invest Bromley

event on 20th September 2011. Two editions of the Bromley Business E-bulletin were planned, and support would be given to the Cray Avenue Industrial Estate business group.

Members of the Partnership considered progress made across Town Centre Management and Business Support. The number of business-start ups was encouraging and had recently been featured in the News Shopper. The representative of Newsquest also highlighted the potential to ask business customers of the News Shopper how the Town Centre Management offer across Bromley might be developed.

With regard to the proposed Orpington BIDS, the Chairman suggested a similar scheme for Bromley Town Centre. There was a need to include Bromley Charter Market in the upcoming review of markets, promotions and rides in town centres.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) Recent work around Town Centre Management and Business Support in the 1st Quarter of 2011/12 be noted;**
 - 2) The plans for Town Centre Management and Business Support activity for the 2nd Quarter of 2011/12 be noted.**
- C) SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT (INCLUDING UPDATE ON COORDINATION OF COLLEGE COURSES WITH THE NEEDS OF BUSINESSES)**

The Principal and Chief Executive of Orpington College gave an update on the Skills and Employment sub-group.

The final merger proposal between Bromley and Orpington Colleges had been approved by the Secretary of State in June 2011, and the merged college would be in operation on 1st August 2011. There would be a strong vocational focus to the college offer, including continued support of apprenticeship schemes, and changes to the way university education was funded was expected to increase the demand for higher education courses delivered in the Borough.

An emphasis would be placed on building stronger links with businesses and business support organisations to ensure the college offer met the needs of local employers. Close links were already in place with businesses delivering social care services, which enabled courses to be tailored to the needs of local businesses and supported work placements and recruitment, and the Principal and Chief Executive of Orpington College highlighted the need to encourage employers to approach the college with their training needs.

It had been identified that developments across the Bromley Town Centre Area Action Plan would provide new employment opportunities in the hospitality and catering industry. There were also opportunities offered by the aeronautical industry at Biggin Hill Airport which could be incorporated into the college offer.

The future role of the Skills and Employment Sub Group was considered. Following discussion, members of the Partnership agreed that it would be appropriate to merge the Sub Group with the Partnership, inviting members of the Sub Group to join future meetings of the Partnership to carry forward work around skills and employment.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

D) LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK AND PLANNING POLICY ISSUES

The Head of Planning Strategy provided an update on the development of the Local Development Framework. Bromley's Core Strategy would be the overarching planning document within the Local Development Framework, and a draft Core Strategy Issues document had recently been released for consultation with local residents and the wider community. This document set out a vision and objectives for the Borough and outlined key issues for consideration when the next stage of the strategy was being prepared.

The consultation on the draft Core Strategy Issues Document would be available at www.bromley.gov.uk/ldf and at Bromley libraries until the end of September 2011, and responses were encouraged from the business community as a number of the identified priorities impacted business, employment and town centre issues. To support this, the representative of Newsquest offered to add a link to the consultation on the News Shopper website. The business e-bulletin was also being used to reach local businesses promoting the opportunity to comment.

The Coalition Government had published a range of policy-related documents including the Localism Bill, which was currently entering the final stage of consideration. This Bill set out amongst other proposals the potential for Neighbourhood Plans and Development Orders together with other changes to the planning system including enforcement and the regulations for the Community Infrastructure Levy.

A Government consultation on the ability to change the use of industrial buildings to residential without requiring planning permission had just closed, and both Bromley Council and London Councils had raised objections to the proposals. The Government was also expected to issue a consultation on a new national policy framework during Summer 2011.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

4 PARTNER UPDATES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR JOINT WORKING (VERBAL UPDATE)

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

The Principal of Bromley Adult Education Centre announced that the prospectus for 2011/12 had now been published and the number of enrolments had been encouraging. A new website would also be launched shortly.

Dene Stuart, the representative of Newsquest, reported that the 'Talking Business' feature in the News Shopper had been well received and would shortly be marketed electronically to over 2,500 business customers. Dene Stuart underlined that the News Shopper was keen to get involved with new initiatives with partners, and was currently seeking to engage with schools and colleges around provision of work placements.

Robert Goddard, representing Thackray Williams Solicitors LLP highlighted the recent work by the Cathedral Group to promote their development plans in Bromley South and underlined the importance of consulting with local businesses as plans were finalised for the upcoming investment in public realm improvements across Bromley North Village. The Head of Renewal agreed to provide a presentation to local businesses in Bromley North around the proposed public realm improvements. The Chairman noted the concerns about Bromley North and, whilst he hoped that the improvements to the public realm would assist somewhat, he agreed that a strategy for new development was urgently needed. Council officers were currently developing a strategy for Bromley North Village, and the Chairman emphasised the importance of developing a feasible plan for consultation as soon as possible.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

5 COMMUNICATIONS ISSUES (VERBAL UPDATE)

The recent work by the Cathedral Group to promote their development plans on Site K: Westmoreland Car Park was noted.

RESOLVED the update be noted

6 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Head of Town Centre Management and Business Support announced that an Invest in Bromley event would be held on 20th September 2011. Investment opportunities across the Borough would be showcased and speakers would include Boris Johnson, the Mayor for London and Bob Neill MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department of Communities and Local Government.

RESOLVED that the issues raised be noted.

7 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

4.00pm, Tuesday 18th October 2011

4.00pm, Tuesday 10th January 2012

4.00pm, Tuesday 24th April 2012

The Meeting ended at 5.28 pm

Chairman