

**15 October 2014**

**Business and Town Centres Committee**

**Brentwood Borough Renaissance Group Workplan Update**

**Report of:** *Elaine Richardson, Town Centre Development Co-ordinator*

**Wards Affected:** *All*

**This report is:** *Public document*

**1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the Brentwood Borough Renaissance Group 2014/15 Workplan and Budget following agreement of the Annual Workplan at the Business and Town Centres Committee 16 July 2014.

**2. Recommendation that Members:-**

- 2.1 Agree the updated Brentwood Borough Renaissance Group 2014/15 Workplan (Appendix A) and note the progress made on projects.**

**3. Introduction and Background**

- 3.1 This report provides an update on Brentwood Borough Renaissance Group (BB Renaissance Group) projects and budget as outlined in the updated 2014/15 Workplan.
- 3.2 As agreed in the new Terms of Reference, the Traders Group was merged into the BB Renaissance Group by appointing Business Trade Clusters and representatives to deal with matters and issues at a local trade level and for their representatives to attend BB Renaissance Group meetings. This will address the declining engagement with traders and their input into Renaissance Group projects and decision making. The new Business Trade Clusters provides greater representation and access to bid funding for traders in all retail sectors of the Borough.

- 3.3 The following Cluster Group areas have been identified and are in the process of being formed:-
- i. Crown St./Roper's Yard, Brentwood (formed and up and running);
  - ii. Ongar Road (formed and up and running);
  - iii. Brentwood Town Centre – West End (not yet formed);
  - iv. Brentwood Town Centre – East End (under formation);
  - v. Brentwood Town Centre – Pubs and Clubs (talks underway);
  - vi. Kings Rd., Brentwood (not yet formed);
  - vii. Warley Hill Brentwood (not yet formed);
  - viii. Pilgrims Hatch (under formation);
  - ix. Shenfield (formed and up and running);
  - x. Ingatestone (under formation)

3.4 BB Renaissance Group is looking to deal with financial bids at cluster level, as well as centrally for Borough wide projects. Cluster bids from Ongar Road and Crown Street have already been received and approved by BB Renaissance Group for Small Business Saturday and Crown Street Market. Cluster groups are also responsible for populating and updating its part of the new Renaissance Group website, going live in October. Project updates are as follows:-

### 3.5 **Public Realm**

An estimate of £9,000 has been obtained to update, improve and refurbish the directional finger post signs and noticeboards in Brentwood Town Centre to make it a more welcoming, attractive and easy to navigate environment for residents and visitors. Some cleaning and maintenance of noticeboards, bins and areas that have grown into disrepair have also been reviewed by the Head of Street Scene who is arranging for the Neighbourhood Action Teams and Essex Rangers to help with these.

The proposed new and improved signage to the Multi Storey Car Park has been put on hold by Essex Highways due to the large number of new signage projects already being undertaken.

### 3.6 **Medieval Market Charters**

A reduced estimate of £3,900 was obtained for the calligraphy and presentation of the translated charters, and materials used, for permanent display at the Town Hall. There has now been agreement for costs to be split between Renaissance Group bid funding, the Chamber of Commerce and private business sponsorship.

### 3.7 **Crown Street Community Market**

Bid funding of £2,000 was given to Crown Street as part payment of 8 smart and uniformed gazebos to offer a weekly Saturday Crown Street

Community Market, operated by McCarthy's, which will complement the High Street Market. Markets have been trialled in Crown Street previously at events such as Independents Day and Lighting Up, however trade remains challenging for retailers and a regular market for local producers and crafters will improve footfall and trade and provide employment for local people unable to afford shop rents and rates.

As the market is planned to be weekly and regarded as permanent, it is therefore subject to planning permission. The market may be run on 28 occasions before this is required, i.e. on each Saturday for over 6 months, by which time planning permission will have been applied for and obtained. Permissions for market usage in the pedestrianised area are also being sought from Essex Highways.

### **3.8 Events**

Bid fund applications are already being received for promotional activities and entertainment in the Borough to support Small Business Saturday on 6 December and more will be encouraged as the Business Trade Clusters continue to be formed.

A revised bid is also expected to support the Shenfield Christmas Lighting Up Event and a new bid for Ingatestone Christmas Victorian Evening now being organised by local traders and businesses, led by the Ingatestone and Fryerning Business Club, as the Parish Council are no longer arranging the event.

### **3.9 Business Support**

The group is funding the venue and promotional costs for three business support workshops at Merrymeade House, supplied by Pro-actions Business Improvement Specialists. The first topic is Marketing for Growth and an Introduction to Social Media on 11 November, followed by Business Planning and finally How to Move Your Business to the Next Stage in early 2015. This is being promoted widely including through the new Business Directory contacts.

## **4 Issue, Options and Analysis of Options**

- 4.1 An updated bid form was agreed at the Business and Town Centres Committee 16 July 2014 to meet the increased scrutiny and accountability of funding. This requires the applicant to demonstrate how the project for which funding is requested will meet the Corporate Priorities and provides accountable project leaders and is now being used successfully to submit bid funding applications by the new Cluster Groups.
- 4.2 In addition to the budget for 2014/15 of £30,000, the Council resources the delivery and support for this plan.

#### **4.3 Current Budgetary Position**

Final allocation of the remaining £57,849 balance for 2014/15 will be carried out shortly as bids continue to be submitted and evaluated for agreement by Renaissance Group.

A budget bid for 2015/16 has been submitted to the Council by the BB Renaissance Group Chair as requested at the Business and Town Centres Committee Meeting 16 July 2014.

### **5 Reasons for Recommendation**

5.1 To update the Committee on progress of the BB Renaissance Group Workplan and budget to provide greater transparency, access and accountability for the Group.

### **6 Consultation**

6.1 The revised BB Renaissance Group Terms of Reference and Workplan were discussed and agreed at the Business and Town Centres Committee 16 July 2014.

6.2 All bid funds will undergo appropriate scrutiny and accountability and require approval by the majority of members and by an authorised signatory, i.e. the Chair and Head of Service. For high profile projects, agreement is also obtained from Brentwood Borough Council Members.

### **7. References to Corporate Priorities**

7.1 The BB Renaissance Group Workplan supports the Council's Corporate Priorities for:  
***A Prosperous Borough***- Promoting a mixed economic base across the borough, maximising opportunities in the town centres for retail.

### **8. Implications**

#### **Financial Implications**

**Name & Title: Jo-Anne Ireland, Acting Chief Executive**

**Tel & Email 01277 312712; jo-anne.ireland@brentwood.gov.uk**

8.1 Brentwood Borough Council has funded the Renaissance Group £30,000 (revenue) for 2014/15.

8.2 The Town Centre Development Coordinator is the lead officer who supports the Brentwood Borough Renaissance Group

**Legal Implications**

**Name & Title: Chris Potter, Monitoring Officer**

**Tel & Email 01277 312860; christopher.potter@brentwood.gov.uk**

8.3 None

**9. Background Papers** (include their location and identify whether any are exempt or protected by copyright)

9.1 None

**10. Appendices to this report**

- Appendix A - Workplan 2014/15

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