

## **THE BRENTWOOD BOROUGH RENAISSANCE GROUP**

### **TERMS OF REFERENCE AND GOVERNANCE**

#### **1. Introduction**

- a. These Terms of Reference govern the remit and operations of the Brentwood Renaissance Group. They are designed to support the Group members in understanding their role and ensure that the business of the Group is carried out in an effective, professional and transparent way.
- b. These Terms of Reference are periodically reviewed to ensure that Brentwood Borough Council enjoy efficient usage of resources provided to the Group.

#### **2. The Vision**

- a. In partnership with the community, The Brentwood Renaissance Group consults and delivers improvements to fulfil Brentwood Borough Council's vision for the Town Centre and shopping centres throughout the borough including amongst others:
  - i. The Brentwood Town Centre; and
  - ii. Kings Road, Brentwood; and
  - iii. Warley Hill , Brentwood; and
  - iv. Crown Street, Brentwood; and
  - v. Pilgrims Hatch; and
  - vi. Shenfield; and
  - vii. Ingatestone.

This is not an exhaustive list and other areas may be added as is deemed appropriate.

- b. The Renaissance Group is to assist in shaping the trade related vision of Brentwood Borough Council by feeding its collective view to the Council. This process includes engaging with the Council during the shaping of its Local Development Plan helping to inform the Council of the views of businesses and other stakeholders.
- c. The Renaissance group initiates, supports and co-ordinates collective decisions to improve the environment of Brentwood's Town Centre and shopping areas to maximise footfall and tourism, sustain economic growth and maintain and improve customer satisfaction. Added to this is liaison in respect of tourist attractions and organisations in the Borough that are not in the shopping offerings together with activities that are included in the Visit Essex marketing project.
- d. The Renaissance Group is an independent organisation, free of political influence, set up to achieve through social cohesion/capital and effective partnership arrangements, drawing on expertise and advice from national organisations and bodies as required. The aims of the Group align with the direction of Brentwood's Borough Council's Corporate Plans both present and future.

#### **3. Background**

- a. The Borough's Town Centre and neighbouring shopping Centres and high streets face significant changes and challenges alongside varying environmental and footfall issues. The Brentwood Renaissance Group is required to recognise the importance and contribution to community cohesion and social capital as well as the value from

the shopping offers of the Town centres and local shopping centres including high streets. This value is unavailable from out of town shopping centres and so every effort must be made to maintain their economic viability. The Brentwood Borough Council recognises that business rents and business rates are issues outside the official remit of the Brentwood Renaissance Group, nevertheless, the Council expects the Brentwood Renaissance Group to give assistance to traders/businesses to help with negotiations that are covered by the Vision in (2) above. The Brentwood Renaissance Group therefore supports the Council's guiding vision for the Town Centre and shopping areas by working with the Council and community, local businesses, public and voluntary sectors to enhance the quality of Brentwood and its trading environment – particularly the quality of public realm; shop fronts; addressing vacant unit issues; signage; lighting; safety and the day time and night time economies and marketing campaigns etc.

- b. In particular the Brentwood Renaissance Group must seek to ensure that all investment in the built environment of the Borough is of high quality and one that responds to the required rich and varied character of the Borough.

#### **4. Aim of the Brentwood Renaissance Group**

- a. The aim of the Brentwood Renaissance Group is to influence and help shape the vision for the town centre, shopping areas and other shopping parades of the Borough. The Group is to provide leadership for achievement of the Vision and for delivering a range of improvements to enhance the Borough's trading environment.
- b. Aligned to the Council's vision and aims for the Borough, The Brentwood Renaissance Group are required to deliver agreed projects that are designed to improve the Town Centre and other shopping/trading offerings, increase footfall, raise awareness and attract interest in the Town Centre and Borough-wide shopping areas.
- c. The Brentwood Renaissance Group has an overview on the progress of other Town Centre and shopping/trading area works, links to other projects and monitors progress on key projects, lobbying where appropriate. To this end the Brentwood Borough Council will grant reasonable access to it councillors; staff and other persons to enable the Brentwood Renaissance Group to fulfil this overview purpose.

#### **5. Membership**

- a. Members of The Brentwood Renaissance Group will observe at all times the reputation of Brentwood Borough Council's and will not do or undertake anything that will damage this reputation. If there is any element of doubt about an action/activity that is likely to bring about reputation damage to the Council the Renaissance Group Chairman and Deputy Chairman must be consulted first before any action/activity is commenced.
- b. The members of the Brentwood Renaissance Group shall comprise of independent organisations, individuals, public sector organisations and local businesses including the following:
  - i. Independent Chairperson;
  - ii. Independent Vice Chairperson;
  - iii. Brentwood Chamber of Commerce;
  - iv. The Federation of Small Businesses;

- v. A representative from a local Trade Clusters where the matter arising warrants attendance at a Renaissance Group Meeting;
- vi. The leaders or their nominated Member from the Brentwood Borough Council parties and Lead spokesperson for this remit;
- vii. A representative from Essex County Council;
- viii. Brentwood Renaissance Group to appoint a media person, which needs annual funding, to look after the Groups interest in:
  - 1. Its website;
  - 2. Press and media relations in liaison with Brentwood Borough Council Communications;
  - 3. Communication services like Twitter etc.
- c. Support from the Brentwood Borough Council underpins the work and activities of the Brentwood Renaissance Group who will work together to maximise the impact of the Vision.
- d. The membership and roles of the Brentwood Renaissance Group will be kept under review by the Brentwood Borough Council and adjustments made as required. Other groups and individuals drawn from outside the members of the Brentwood Renaissance Group can be invited to meetings of the Group, when appropriate expertise is required, to assist with the work of Brentwood's Renaissance Group.

#### **6. Chair and Vice Chair**

- a. The Brentwood Renaissance Group is to be chaired by an independent Chairperson – The Chair will lead the Group for a period of two years. Elections will be held for a new Chair bi-annually and the existing Chair can reapply or be re-nominated for a further period of two years. The majority vote of the Brentwood Renaissance Group will elect the new Chair. In the absence of the Chairperson at any meeting, the Vice Chairperson will chair the meeting from amongst the attendees.
- b. The Vice chairperson of the Brentwood Renaissance Group will be elected biannually by its members.
- c. The Brentwood Borough Council will provide the support to underpin the work of the Brentwood Renaissance Group, within existing resources. This Council must agree to deliver/support aspects of work before approval is given.

#### **7. Brentwood Renaissance Group Meetings**

- a. The Brentwood Renaissance Group shall hold an annual general meeting based on a written annual report of activities. The purpose of the annual general meeting is to permit discussions based on the annual written report, discuss the Brentwood Renaissance Group's financial position and look at proposals for the ensuing year.
- b. The Brentwood Renaissance Group shall hold bi-monthly meetings of the Group and held in accordance with a calendar approved by the Group.
- c. Meetings of the Brentwood Renaissance Group and any individual working groups will normally be held at the Town Hall, Ingrave Road, Brentwood, Essex unless otherwise stated. This does not apply to the Local Traders Clusters as their meeting are designed to be based in their local environs.
- d. To improve the Town Centre, local trade, high street and other shopping area facilities and to manage the Vision and delivery of improvements the Brentwood Renaissance Group will appoint Local Trade Clusters who will meet bi-monthly to

deal with matters and issues at a local trade level using the normal agenda and minutes requirements of the Brentwood Renaissance Group. Local Trade Clusters are to be set up to localise and facilitate projects at this level. Each Local Trade Cluster will operate under overall terms of reference.

#### **8. Agenda and Minutes**

- a. Agendas for meetings of the Brentwood Renaissance Group and Local Trade Cluster will be published at least one week in advance of the meeting and published on both the BBC website and the Renaissance Group website.
- b. Minutes of the Brentwood Renaissance Group, any working group and the Local Trade Clusters will be published within three weeks of the meeting taking place and a copy circulated to each member of the Brentwood Renaissance Group and will be published on the websites of the Brentwood Borough Council and the Brentwood Renaissance Group.

#### **9. Conduct at Meetings**

- a. The Brentwood Renaissance Group shall be quorate at its meetings where one third of its members are present.
- b. Every member of the Brentwood Renaissance Group will have the opportunity to make comment and to contribute to the discussions at meetings. Every item will be discussed openly and in a professional manner before a decision is made.
- c. It will be the responsibility of the Brentwood Renaissance Group Chairperson to ensure that every Group member is given opportunity for this to occur within the meeting.
- d. Where it is deemed necessary the Brentwood Renaissance Group may invite external experts to give a presentation on specialist subjects to facilitate better quality decisions from the Brentwood Renaissance Group.
- e. The Chairperson ruling with respect to the conduct of discussion and business at the Brentwood Renaissance Group meetings shall be final.
- f. The meeting agendas shall have the minimum items:
  - i. Welcome and Introductions;
  - ii. Apologies for absence;
  - iii. Declaration of members pecuniary and non pecuniary interests;
  - iv. Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising;
  - v. Local Trade Cluster reports and matters arising;
  - vi. Updates on the current Work Plans, Budgets and Project leads;
  - vii. Street Audit updates and matter arising;
  - viii. Project reports/updates;
  - ix. Media/website updates and matters arising;
  - x. New agenda items/presentations;
  - xi. Fast track voting decisions;
  - xii. Any other business;
  - xiii. Date and venue of next meeting.
- g. Voting – Decisions at any RG meeting will be carried on the basis of a majority decision on a show of hands. In the event of a tied vote the Chairman of the meeting shall have a casting vote.

## **10. Street Audits**

- a. Where deemed necessary and under the direction of the Chairperson or the Vice Chairperson Street Audits shall be undertaken to ensure that improvements that are needed to the Town Centre, local trade, high streets and other shopping areas are identified for action by the Brentwood Renaissance Group, Brentwood Borough Council and Essex County Councils.
- b. Written reports of Street Audits will be given by the Brentwood Renaissance Group for appropriate action.

## **11. Pecuniary and non Pecuniary Interests of Members of the Brentwood Renaissance Group**

- a. Any member of the Brentwood Renaissance Group with either a pecuniary or non pecuniary interest in any matter before a Group meeting is required to declare this interest at the start of a meeting. Such declaration must be recorded in the meeting minutes
- b. Any member of the Brentwood Renaissance Group who has a non pecuniary interest in any matter shall disclose that interest, and the precise nature of that interest, but may remain at the meeting and speak and vote on the matter concerned. If however the interest is pecuniary the member shall declare the precise nature of the interest and withdraw from the meeting whilst the declared matter of interest is discussed and/or voted upon. Such withdrawal and subsequent re-joining in a meeting must be recorded in the meeting minutes.
- c. For the avoidance of doubt the definitions of pecuniary interests will be as set out in the Brentwood Borough Council's Code of Conduct for Members.

## **12. Voting and Decision Making**

- a. Decisions of the Brentwood Renaissance group shall be made by the members meeting collectively. Decisions will therefore be taken democratically through a system of voting in respect of items needing a decision or agreement. This will be done through a simple majority on a show of hands with the acting Chairman having a casting vote if the case arises.
- b. The Brentwood Renaissance Group is authorised to fast track certain decisions where there is an urgent matter to decide upon. This matter will simply require an email vote from the members of the Group within seven days of a fast track decision email request. The decision will be taken based on a simple majority of email votes received at the close of business, for this purpose 5pm, of the seventh day post the fast track email vote request. All fast track decisions must be recorded in the minutes of the next meeting of the Brentwood Renaissance Group from the date of the fast track vote.
- c. For urgent bid funding agreement for smaller amounts up to £500.00, that the decision is delegated to the Chair and Vice Chair to make the decision.
- d. In any case of equality of votes the Chairperson shall have a second or casting vote. Any member of the Brentwood Renaissance Group dissenting from a resolution shall be entitled on their request to have their name recorded in the meeting minutes as having so dissented.

## **13. Funding and Accountability**

- a. The Brentwood Borough Council grant funds and provides staffing resource time to assist in the work of the Brentwood Renaissance Group to deliver agreed projects. In

light of current financial circumstances, the Brentwood Renaissance Group may seek to increase its financial independence by sourcing support, income and funding from other sources and by exploring new ways of working and operating models on the proviso that the taking of such support, income and funding is not taken from any person or entity that has a pecuniary or non pecuniary interest in the granting of same.

- b. The Brentwood Borough Council grant funding to the Renaissance Group involves the following process for project bid funding:
  - i. Any bid must demonstrate how any funding will meet the Brentwood Borough Council's priorities within the Corporate Plan such as a thriving local economy;
  - ii. Any bid must contain a high level breakdown of how the funding will be spent to meet these priorities. 80% of how the budget will be pre-determined by the Brentwood Borough Council allowing 20% to be allocated on unforeseen items provided this aligns with the corporate plan. Funding bids will be considered up to £5,000 but in exceptional circumstances higher bids may be considered.
  - iii. The Brentwood Renaissance Group will appoint one of its members or a member of a Local Trade Cluster to oversee any project that is agreed and funded who in effect shall act as a project co-ordinator for the Group. This appointed member shall report progress at each meeting of the Brentwood Renaissance Group until the project is completed or fully implemented.
  - iv. Updates to the Brentwood Borough Council as to progress in delivering the services it has commissioned.
  - v. A written annual report to the Brentwood Borough Council of the Brentwood Renaissance Group's achievements and direction.

#### **14. Budgetary Control**

- a. Approval of projects that require financial expenditure, of any kind, must be agreed by the Brentwood Renaissance Group. All requests for expenditure spends must be submitted on the appropriate bid application form. The Brentwood Renaissance Group is responsible for allocating funds, following the submission of a completed bid application form, within the overall approved budget, through a democratic voting system, this will be done through a simple majority of a show of hands or the fast tract email voting procedures outlined above.
- b. This bid form requires the applicant to demonstrate how the project for which funding is requested will meet the priorities within the corporate plan and work plan. If approved by the majority of the Brentwood Renaissance Group, the form must be signed off by an authorised signatory, i.e. the relevant the Head of Service. Any high profile projects will be consulted on prior to commencement through partners including the Brentwood Borough Council and representative members of the Brentwood Renaissance Group such as the Brentwood Chamber of Commerce, The Federation of Small Businesses, businesses in the Borough of Brentwood, residents of the Borough of Brentwood and trade representatives. Consultations with businesses in the Borough of Brentwood, residents of the Borough of Brentwood and trade representatives will be deemed to have taken place by the

project being placed on the website of the Brentwood Renaissance Group, combined with a Twitter or other media feed line and from feedback arising there from. Consultations with the Brentwood Chamber of Commerce and The Federation of Small Businesses may be conducted by email. It must be noted that in particular for high profile projects agreement will be obtained from the Brentwood Borough Council prior to project commencement. The Brentwood Renaissance Group will be expected to exercise their professional judgment and sensitivity in determining which projects are considered high profile. As the Brentwood Renaissance Group is attended by the Leaders of all political parties and senior managers of the Brentwood Borough Council there is sufficient expertise to make this judgement.

- c. The Brentwood Renaissance Group will follow the Financial Regulations and Standing Orders of the Brentwood Borough Council.
- d. The budget will be reviewed at each meeting.

#### **15. Governance**

- a. Governance by the Council of the Brentwood Renaissance Group is primarily controlled under Paragraphs thirteen and fourteen above. It will also follow the Brentwood borough Council protocols in respect of Council funded external groups.
- b. Consultation and updates to Brentwood Borough and Essex County Councils is undertaken via the Member's Portal and Newsletter and to the relevant Committee where a decision is required.
- c. The Brentwood Renaissance Group can fully expect the support, co-operation and lobbying of Brentwood's Borough and County Councillors in respect of formally signed off projects and improvements to the Brentwood Town Centre, other shopping/trading offerings, increasing footfall, and raising awareness and attracting interest in the Town Centre and Borough-wide shopping areas.
- d. The Brentwood Renaissance Group will publish an annual report on budget and achievements.
- e. Members of the Brentwood Borough Council and Essex County Council who are also members of the Brentwood Renaissance Group and support officers provide advice to the Brentwood Renaissance Group on both Council's Corporate Plans so that informed decisions are made that align with the community vision and highway controls.

#### **16. Communication and Consultation**

- a. High profile projects undertaken by the Brentwood Renaissance Group are consulted on amongst the community, the Brentwood Borough Council, businesses, groups and individuals, who are able to suggest new projects as well as provide input into projects currently underway, The Brentwood Borough Council's contact database and existing relationships are fully available and are to be utilised to ensure wide coverage and awareness in addition to the media output of the Brentwood Renaissance Group. On occasions, specific consultations are displayed in public buildings and information notice boards to provide additional opportunity for public and other feedback.
- b. From time to time the Brentwood Borough Council may pursue a policy that involves input from the Renaissance Group (e.g. business planning applications) as part of a consultation process. The Brentwood Renaissance Group as a recognised trade and

business body is expected to play a full and active role in this process and feedback its findings. The Brentwood Renaissance Group must put in place procedures that ensure project confidentiality and this will normally be done by confidential consultation with the chairperson and/or the Vice Chairperson only who will not be permitted to brief the Brentwood Renaissance Group members until sanctioned by the Brentwood Borough Council.

- c. Branding and marketing materials are developed to create recognition, raise awareness and generate interest in Brentwood and its retail and tourism offering.
- d. Media releases are distributed relating to key issues, projects and events. The websites of The Brentwood Renaissance Group and the Brentwood Borough Council along with the Love Brentwood and partner organisations are utilised and linked to ensure maximum awareness of the work of the Brentwood Renaissance Group and opportunities to consult are available.

#### **17. Consultation Links**

- a. The Brentwood Renaissance Group is enabled to consult with groups and have links to and consults with:
  - i. Essex County Council through councillors and The Brentwood Borough Council; and
  - ii. Members of the Brentwood Renaissance Group; and
  - iii. Members of the Local Trade Clusters of the Brentwood Renaissance Group; and
  - iv. Brentwood for Growth; and
  - v. The Private sector (retailers, businesses, the market operator, street traders etc.); and
  - vi. The Community (residents, voluntary organisations, public sector (Borough Council etc.); and
  - vii. Organisations (The Brentwood Chamber of Commerce, The Federation of Small Businesses, other trade groups etc.); and
  - viii. Media contacts through the website of the Brentwood Renaissance Group and Twitter and other media sources like the local and national press.

#### **18. Equality and Diversity**

- a. All the operations of the Brentwood Renaissance Group will be in accordance with the Brentwood Borough Council's duties and responsibilities in respect of equality of opportunity.

#### **19. Health and Safety**

- a. All the operations of the Brentwood Renaissance Group will be in accord with the Brentwood Borough Council's duties, responsibilities and accountabilities in respect of Health and Safety Law, Regulations and Procedures.
- b. The Brentwood Renaissance Group is a reporting body to Brentwood Borough Council on health and safety issues that affect the Brentwood Town Centre, other shopping/trading offerings of the Borough.