Leader’s comment

“... in our borough. In spite of the financially challenging times, we are attracting and retaining business and making Bromley a place where people want to live, work and spend their leisure time.”

Achieving a balanced budget for 2015-16 meant some difficult choices and, regrettably, a small increase in Council Tax was necessary, as well as making around £9m savings. Residents will see a net increase of 1.2 per cent in their Council Tax bills for 2015-16. This is made up of an increase of 1.99 per cent in the Bromley element of the Council Tax and a 1.3 per cent reduction in the GLA element. The combined effect of both equates to a £16 increase a year on a band D property.

The need to identify a further £50 million savings over four years from a net budget of around £200 million will involve changes to the way we deliver services, as well as taking more responsibility and accountability within our families and communities. Be assured, we are doing everything in our power to ensure long-term stability of the Council’s finances.

Despite these challenging times, we have much to be optimistic about in the borough. The improvements at Bromley North Village are finished. Work continues on the Bromley Business Improvement District to give businesses more control over their town centre. There are plans for a showpiece boutique hotel and restaurants at the Old Town Hall and for street improvements in Beckenham, while Orpington is looking forward to a new cinema in the summer.

Councillor Stephen Carr
Leader, Bromley Council

Beckenham improvements – your views welcome

The Council is seeking views on proposals for a £3.2 million improvement scheme for Beckenham, funded in partnership with Transport for London.

Working with representatives from the local community – including the Beckenham Town Centre Working Group – concept designs have been produced and refined to reflect the aspirations of people and businesses in the area. Now there is a chance for everyone to comment on the ideas up until 27 March.

The scheme aims to help improve traffic flow and provide better pavements and parking as well as increase opportunities for markets and other community events. Reducing clutter in the street and installing new seating and lighting through a co-ordinated, harmonious design should emphasise the ‘village’ identity.

Proposed designs are on the Council’s website along with information about how you can get in touch.

Visit www.bromley.gov.uk/beckenhamimprovements

Save time, do it online

MyBromley Account is a safe and secure way to do business with the Council, at a time that suits you with no queues and no fuss. Look out for details on how to register in your Council Tax envelope or visit our website. And what’s more, when you complete your registration before May you could win an iPad in our prize draw. www.bromley.gov.uk/MyBromley

www.bromley.gov.uk
Be ready to vote

Residents who are not currently on the electoral register or who have moved recently have until Monday 20 April 2015 to register to have their say in the General Election on 7 May. The way you register to vote has changed. The new system means that you can register online at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote Fill in your name, address, date of birth and a few other details. You’ll also need your National Insurance number. If you don’t have access to the internet or can’t use it, a form can be posted to you. Once registered, you can vote at a polling station, by post or by proxy. If you want further information please email electoral@bromley.gov.uk

Bromley North Village

The new-look Bromley North Village is open for business following completion of the £5.5 million ‘public realm’ improvement scheme to provide an economic boost to the historic area. The improvements to the historical core of Bromley, which includes East Street, High Street and Market Square, have been completed with brand new granite paving, lamp columns, trees, planters and new bus shelters. The area, which has many listed buildings, restaurants and independent shops, has witnessed a fall in empty shops and has more people visiting it.

Your Future Care

You may have heard about the Care Act 2014 that changes the way adult social care is funded – this comes into effect from April 2016. It introduces other changes that are already our Council’s policy like deferred payments and levels of eligibility criteria – these come into effect from April 2015. We are working hard to tell existing users and residents who might want care in the future about what this means to them. If you would like further information about the Care Act visit www.bromley.gov.uk/CareAct2014

Biggin Hill Airport decision date

The application by Biggin Hill Airport Limited to increase operating hours at the airport will be considered at a special full Council meeting on Wednesday 25 March, with a decision made by the Executive. The meeting at 7pm in the Council Chamber will be immediately followed by a meeting of the Council’s Executive in the Great Hall when a decision will be taken.

More than 36,000 individual responses have been received to the Council’s consultation on the matter along with other letters and representations - the largest response received by the Council.

www.bromley.gov.uk/bigginhillairport

Caught out

Around 160 fraudulent benefit claimants have been brought to justice over the past five years which brings the total prosecutions to 390 since Bromley Council and Royal Borough of Greenwich started working in partnership in 2002 to track, trace and prosecute benefit fraudsters.

- In a recent case, a resident who fraudulently claimed more than £36,004 of Council Tax benefit was given a nine-month prison sentence, suspended for 18 months, a 12-month community order including 80 hours unpaid work, was ordered to pay £500 costs and £100 victim surcharge.

If you have any information about a suspected benefit fraud, contact the Fraud Hotline in strictest confidence on 0800 169 6975 or email audit@bromley.gov.uk

Report, apply, pay at www.bromley.gov.uk
New year’s resolutions – still going strong?

The Smokefree Bromley team can help with a new website designed to give Bromley smokers all the information they need to kick the habit.

It’s simple to look for support – just enter your postcode in the search box and you can find out where your nearest clinic is. On offer are group sessions and one-to-one chats and a mobile van clinic, GPs and pharmacies.

Visit www.smokefreebromley.co.uk or call 0800 587 8821 or text QUIT to 88010.

Don’t just go to A&E

NHS England says there are many ways to get help when you need healthcare treatment including your GP and local pharmacist. If your GP is closed you can get advice from NHS 111. If you have an urgent and severe but non-life threatening illness or injury you can visit one of the two urgent care centres in Bromley – at Beckenham Beacon or at the Princess Royal University Hospital.

Find your nearest service by visiting the website below and entering your symptoms and postcode, download a local services guide for Bromley, or find your nearest GP practice. www.nhs.uk

BR6. Restaurant now open

Bromley College’s new commercial training restaurant BR6. is now open for bookings following the launch last year of the College’s prestigious Hospitality, Food and Enterprise Career College.

The restaurant will be open for business on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays until July 2015 for lunch and afternoon tea.

Why not support the students by booking a table to enjoy beautiful cuisine at affordable prices. Contact 0208 295 7096 or visit www.bromley.ac.uk/br6-restaurant

Book your NHS Health Check

Having an NHS Health Check if you are aged 40 – 74 could give you the chance to take control of your health and potentially live a longer, healthier life. See if you have underlying risks of developing heart disease, stroke, diabetes, kidney disease and some forms of dementia. Find out if you are eligible and how to book at Bromley MyLife

Orpington and Penge get new look in town centre

Bromley Council has secured more than £1.8m of external funding for improvements to the street scene in Orpington and Penge and to take forward employment growth initiatives in Biggin Hill and the Cray Corridor.

Orpington Town Centre developments at the Walnuts Centre are now well under way and due to open later this year. Anchored by a seven-screen Odeon cinema, the area will boast modern new shops and restaurants as well as a gym. This will deliver an exciting new retail and leisure complex to the heart of Orpington, regenerating the town and transforming it into a major destination shopping and leisure centre.

The environmental improvements around the Walnuts Centre will include a new public square with smart paving, modern seating and lighting to enhance the area.

Penge High Street is also due to get a major facelift, with similar improvements to the street scene – new seating, lighting and pavements, as well as new shop fronts, smart new signage and better parking.

Plans are moving forward with a Technology Enterprise Centre in Biggin Hill, creating local employment. Also a range of affordable work spaces in the Cray Corridor will accommodate industrial businesses helping to grow the local economy.

Report, apply, pay at www.bromley.gov.uk
Gutter scam foiled

Bromley Trading Standards are warning residents to be alert to rogue traders and scams in the borough.

An 80-year-old resident was almost tricked into parting with £600 after returning home one evening to find a man offering to clean his gutter for £10. Having agreed, the resident received a call from the trader to say he had removed the guttering and fascia because it was rotten and it would cost £1,500 to replace. The victim reluctantly settled on £600, but discovered no evidence of the guttering having been removed at all. On the advice of his family he ignored a call at the door later that evening. You can find more advice at: www.bromley.gov.uk/roguetraders

Step into fostering

Bromley is recruiting foster carers right now. So if you think you have what it takes for a great career that really puts something back into your community, why not check out the new fostering website and come along to one of our friendly information sessions. You’ll be one step closer to a fulfilling career with good rewards and training and support from our expert team to help local children stay local.

Visit Bromley MyLife

Say YES to employment

Bromley Youth Employment Scheme is seeking young people aged 17-24 who live in the borough who want help with employment, as well as employers who have opportunities and apprenticeships or would like advice on how to create them for young people.

Get in touch at: ebp.admin@bromley.gov.uk or visit the Bromley Education Business Partnership website for more information: www.bromleyebp.org.uk

Youth Employment Scheme

Spring into action

As the weather improves there’s always plenty of garden waste to deal with. An easy way is to join our Green Garden Waste Collection Scheme. For an annual membership fee of £60 you’ll receive a large wheelie-bin and fortnightly collections from March to November, then monthly from December until February. Visit www.bromley.gov.uk/gardencollections or call 0300 303 8658. Membership is exclusive to Bromley borough residents.

Community hub opens

An exciting new up-to-the minute community venue has opened in Beckenham. Venue 28 is the perfect setting for community and corporate events and receptions and – true to its former guise as the Studio – is the place to join in classes from dance and fitness to relaxing baby massage.

Once a school at the turn of the century, the beautiful historical listed building has been returned to its former glory with a modern twist by the tireless commitment of Julian Melfi and his congregation at Citygate Church. Though it will not be used for religious purposes, the church felt it was an important hub that needed to be returned to the community’s use.

Julian said:

“When we embarked on this project three years ago we knew what we wanted to achieve and I am thrilled that we are now at the point of opening Venue 28 for our local community. So many people will benefit from this amazing facility, which makes the huge expense worth every penny.”

See for yourself: Grand Open Day, 10am - 3pm Saturday 28 March, 28 Beckenham Road BR3 4LS or email info@venue28.com

Report, apply, pay at www.bromley.gov.uk