BRENTWOOD TOWN CENTRE RENAISSANCE GROUP
TERMS OF REFERENCE

1.0 Introduction
1.1 These Terms of Reference govern the operation of the Brentwood Town Centre Renaissance Group. They are designed to support the Group members in understanding their role and in ensuring that the business of the Group is carried out in an effective, professional and transparent way and are in line with the council’s policies.

2.0 The Vision
The Renaissance Group will initiate, support and co-ordinate collective decisions to improve the environment of the local town centres in order to maximise visitor footfall and customer satisfaction.

3.0 Background
3.1 Brentwood Town Centre and neighbouring shopping centres are facing significant changes and challenges. The Group provides an opportunity to create a broad vision for the Town Centre and neighbouring shopping centres by working with the community and local businesses to enhance the quality of the environment, particularly the quality of public spaces, shop fronts, signage and lighting that will enable the town centres to work successfully and create a viable and sustainable local economy.

3.2 The RG has been set up to establish and promote this vision.

3.3 In particular it seeks to ensure that all investment in the built environment is of high quality and responds to the rich and varied character of the county, with the necessary skills being made available to support project delivery.

4.0 Aim of the Renaissance Group
4.1 The aim of the Town Centre Renaissance Group is to establish the vision for the Brentwood Town Centre and other neighbouring shopping areas, providing leadership for achievement of the vision and for delivering/enabling a range of improvement projects to enhance the town centre environment.

4.2 The RG will identify key projects that will act as a catalyst in the continuing regeneration of the town centre.

4.3 The Group will steer the work for the town centre, with regular reports from Essex County Council’s Built Environment Team.

4.4 The Group will have an overview on the progress of other High Street works and links to other projects and will monitor progress on all key projects.
4.5 The Group will report to the Retail Community and Culture panel.

5.0 Membership
5.1 The membership of the Brentwood Town Centre Renaissance Group comprises the following:

- Independent Chairperson
- Independent Vice Chair
- The Chairperson of the Borough Council’s Policy Board
- The County Council’s Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation
- The County Council’s Director for Highways and Transportation
- The County Council’s Head of the Built Environment Team
- Representatives from The Chamber of Commerce
- Representatives from Federation of Small businesses
- 2 Conservative Councillors
- 1 Liberal Democrat Councillor
- 1 Labour Councillor
- 4 owners/managers from retail and leisure business within the Borough

5.2 The membership of the Brentwood Town Centre Renaissance Group will be kept under review and adjustments made from time to time, and other individuals will be invited to meetings of the Group, as necessary and appropriate, to assist with the Group’s work.

6.0 Chairperson and Secretary
6.1 The Group will be chaired by an independent Chairperson –The chairperson will lead the group for a period of 2 years. Elections will be held for a new chairperson bi-annually and the existing chairperson can reapply for a further 2 years. The majority vote will elect the new chairperson. In the absence of the Chairperson at any meeting, the Vice chair will chair the meeting.

6.2 Brentwood Borough Council will provide secretarial and administrative support to underpin the work of the Group.

7.0 Group Meetings
7.1 Bi monthly meetings of the Group will be held in accordance with a calendar approved by the Group.

Venue
7.2 Meetings of the Group, and any individual working group, will normally be held at the Town Hall, Ingrave Road, Brentwood unless otherwise stated. Meeting shall start and end at agreed times unless all those present agree to extend the meeting.

Agenda and Minutes
7.3 Agendas for meetings of the Group will be published at least one week in advance of the meeting electronically.
7.4 Minutes of Group meetings will be published within three weeks of the meeting taking place and a copy circulated to each Group member, and will also be published in the Borough Council’s Members’ Newsletter.

**Conduct at Meetings**

7.5 Every member of the Group will have the opportunity to make a 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.

7.6 It will be the responsibility of the Chairperson to ensure that every member is given opportunity for this to occur within the meetings.

7.7 The Chairperson’s ruling with respect to the conduct of discussion and business at Group meetings shall be final. Any member who brings the group into disrepute or refuses to comply with the terms of reference shall be expelled on a majority vote.

**Personal and Pecuniary Interests of Members**

7.8 Any member with either a personal or pecuniary interest in any matter before a Group meeting is required to declare this at the start of the meeting.

7.9 Any member who has a personal 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.

**Voting and Decision Making**

7.10 Decisions of the 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.

7.11 In the case of an equality of votes the Chairperson shall have a second or casting vote. Any member dissenting from a resolution shall be entitled on request to have his/her name recorded in the minutes as having so dissented.

**8.0 Support Group**

8.1 A support team of officers from the Borough Council will underpin the work and activities of the Renaissance Group and may comprise other partner and community representatives relevant to the work of the Group.

8.2 The support team will receive instruction from and report back to the Renaissance Group.

8.3 The support team will provide a progress report on activities and priorities to each meeting of the Renaissance Group.
9.0 Review Mechanisms
9.1 Evaluation and assessment of the Renaissance Group is fundamental to its effective working. It is important that all members on the Group are accountable for achieving results.

9.2 It is also important to ensure that the Group functions effectively and has a sustainable structure, meaning that regular reviews will be necessary. An annual review will be conducted, considering the way the Group is structured, its membership, its achievements and future projects.

9.3 The Group will prepare an annual report for circulation to all partner organisations.

10.0 Funding
10.1 Brentwood Borough Council will provide staff and budget to deliver agreed projects. Annual budgets will be agreed at the beginning of each financial year

10.2 Budgetary Control
Approval of projects which require financial expenditure must be agreed by the Renaissance Group. All requests for expenditure must be submitted on the appropriate application form. If approved by the majority of the Group, the form must be signed by the authorised signatory (The head of Environmental Health and Licensing).

The RG will allocate funds within the overall approved budget and will follow the financial regulations and standings orders of Brentwood Borough Council.

10.3 Budgets to be reviewed at each meeting

11.0 Governance
The chairperson of Renaissance Group will attend the Retail, Communities and Culture panel and report to the panel on the performance and delivery of the Group. Members and officers of the council who are also members of the Renaissance Group will represent the council and ensure that the delivery is in line with the Council’s objectives and values.

12.0 Equality and Diversity
All the operations of the Renaissance Group will be in accordance with the council’s policy of equality of opportunity. Any behaviour including racist, ageist or sexist remarks will not be permitted.
This Structure is underpinned and supported by Brentwood Borough Council

Z/LS docs/ Renaissance Group/ SL 15/08/12