

Earls Court Business Forum Steering Group minutes

8th December 2020

In attendance:

- **Earls Court Businesses**
 - o Craig Bennett, Hotel Indigo – Meeting Chair
 - o Livvy Perret, Finborough Theatre
 - o Spencer, Hotel Boka
 - o Ed Barry, Over Under Coffee
- **Apologies:**
 - o Caroline Tod, Earls Court Film Festival
 - o Nicole Bernhardt, TLC Estate Agents
 - o Toby Brown, TLC Estate Agents
 - o Anthony Hicks, Metro Bank
 - o Eric Bestebreur, The Bolton Pub
 - o Philip Chambers, K&K Hotel George
 - o Clemmie Proctor, Earl's Court Development Company
 - o Sam Knight, The means
- **RBKC**
 - o Ward Cllrs Wade and Spalding
 - o Cllr Catherine Faulks
 - o Antonia Hollingsworth, Business Initiatives
 - o Alben Karameros
- **Delancey, developer of the Earls Court Development Site**
 - o Steve Burgin
- **The means, Earls Court Business Forum consultants**
 - o Susie Barlow, The means

1) Minutes and Matters Arising

Minutes accepted. Matters arising covered in other agenda items

2) Increasing business engagement and ownership of the forum

SB introduced and thanked Craig for agreeing to chair the meetings. Explanation that appointing a chair is part of our objective to ensure the forum is business led and will focus on relevant priorities.

The second aim is to attract further participation in the steering group. Some invitations have been made to potential new members who have expressed interest. Thanks to local ward Councillors for email introductions to encourage this. A discussion took place about how Earl's Court Business Forum might attract more steering group members.

The third aim is to increase engagement with the wider business community beyond the steering group. Suggestion of potential networking event in the new year with relevant speakers, breakout

sessions etc. SB has consulted with North Kensington Connected Business Forum who have had some success with this, with over 50 online attendees at their last online event, to see what is working well.

The council can assist by making introduction to businesses who have recently taken up the support grants as they are likely to be engaged.

3) Update from Delancey

Steve Burgin of Delancey gave an update on behalf of the Earl's Court Development Company.

- New CEO Rob Heasman has just joined the Earls Court Development company from Lendlease.
- With Rob on board, ECDC's priority is now kick-starting a series of engagement activities over the next few months. ECDC will introduce the new team, get to know the local community better, and gather people's ideas and thoughts on what they want to see from the team on site as they start to develop a plan.
- Refreshed temporary hoardings can be seen at Old Brompton Road, showing new graphics and design.
- A planning application will shortly be submitted for 51 new homes plus retail units at 344-350 Old Brompton Road. This will form a gateway to the wider masterplan for the former Earls Court Exhibition Centre site.
- Meanwhile use of the site was raised. The meanwhile use will need to be integrated within the wider master planning process. Whilst stakeholders appreciate the complexity involved, it was expressed that there is a strong appetite to establish a variety of meanwhile uses for the site.

4) Update from RBKC

Antonia Hollingsworth introduced the opportunity for businesses to be featured in a new printed and online business guide, including free listing on an interactive digital map. The platform will launch next year and details will be circulated in the ECBF newsletter.

Cllr Catherine Faulks gave an update on key activities on behalf of RBKC

- Local restriction support grants are now open for applications and information about discretionary grant funding (for businesses who were ineligible for other grants) should be available by the end of this week.
- If funds are remaining following the exercise, there will be a relaunch
- Christmas tree competition is open to businesses – use the hashtag #BestChristmasTreeinKC to post photographs
- Reminder about one to one business advice provided by Portobello Business Centre and funded by RBKC
- Reminder about the opportunity to employ young people, funded for the first six months through the Kickstart programme – for which RBKC is an intermediary
- Reminder about the 24hour business opening opportunity

5) Project updates against the programme

NCIL funding application

Projects are awaiting an official announcement of funding awards from the NCIL fund. The ward councillors were able to confirm that although the official announcement has yet to take place, there is likely some good news ahead.

The three NCIL applications made by the Earl's Court Business Forum in August 2020 were for:

- Additional deep cleaning of pavements on Earl's Court Road
- Lamp post banners and window vinyls
- Installation of appropriate planters outside the health and wellbeing centre

Food Festival evaluation

Susie shared some statistics from the campaign which took place during October and November with 10 local eateries participating. The restaurants each promoted a special offer which featured on *The Court* website and were promoted through dedicated social media channels set up for the event, and a door drop of approx. 4,000 printed flyers to local residents.

The emphasis of the promotion shifted to encouraging takeaway sales due to the lockdown restrictions. This was part of the initial contingency planning in expectation of potential covid restrictions.

It was reiterated that the Food Festival was a trial run with limitations on resource and lead-in time. Therefore plenty of scope for improvement if the group decide to allocate funding to deliver a similar event in 2021.

Feedback was that consumers would like to see a physical 'event' taking place which could not happen this autumn due to social distancing measures but might be possible in 2021.

Branding approach

Susie Barlow updated on conversations with *The Court* following the last meeting and a proposal of how to move the branding forward.

AP: Marketing sub-group to convene a session to define the brief for developing the brand

Christmas activities

Delancey have kindly contributed funding for christmas lights coordinated by the Earls Court Community Trust. No event took place due to pandemic restrictions this year. However there will be some socially distanced neighbourhood carol singing.

EARLS COURT BUSINESS FORUM

The business forum have launched a festive window display competition. Business and residents can post their favourites using the hashtag #EarlsCourtChristmas and there will be a hamper prize for the winning business.

AP: All to post and promote the competition – SB to circulate details

6) Joint procurement

- There was support for joint procurement, but concern about paying a fee to a third party such as Meercat Associates. There was a feeling that the service should be provided free or cheaply because it is in their interest to get a commission.
- It was suggested to focus on
 - o Suggestion to call businesses first to generate interest and understand appetite. Noted that it was asked about in the initial survey so there is already some idea.
 - o Piloting a few services in a branded booklet and focusing on getting independents signed up for savings.
 - o trade waste
- Due diligence – SB has spoken with BIDs who use Meercats and other alternatives. Will present findings and recommendations at January meeting for decision.

AOB

Ed Barry thanked RBKC for the support that has been made available during the COVID crisis, commenting on the helpful communication and assistance outdoor seating licensing and government funding eligibility.