

Earls Court Business Forum Steering Group minutes

27th October 2020

In attendance:

- **Earls Court Businesses**
 - o Livvy Perry, Finborough Theatre
 - o Spencer, Hotel Boka
 - o Nicole Bernhardt, TLC Estate Agents
 - o Toby Brown, TLC Estate Agents
 - o Craig Bennett, Hotel Indigo
 - o Philip Chambers, KK Hotels (The George)
- **Apologies:**
 - o Caroline Tod, Earls Court Film Festival
 - o Anthony Hicks, MetroBank
- **Council**
 - o Ward Cllrs Ardourian, Wade and Spalding
 - o Cllr Catherine Faulks
 - o Antonia Hollingsworth, Business Initiatives
 - o Graham Hart, Head of Economic Development,
 - o Alben Karameros
- **Delancey, developer of the Earls Court Development Site**
 - o Clemmie Proctor
- **The means, Earls Court Business Forum consultants**
 - o Sam Knight (stand-in Chair)
 - o Susie Barlow

1) Minutes and Matters Arising

- Minutes accepted. Matters arising covered in other agenda items

2) Project updates

NCIL fund application and cleaning

Projects are awaiting an announcement of funding awards from the NCIL fund. Spencer asked for an update on the decision making process for this. The ward councillors updated that they have made their decisions and passed them to the officers to announce.

Food Festival

Susie Barlow updated on progress. The Food Festival is currently running as a remote promotional campaign of restaurants offering special dishes. The main conversation items were:

- A suggestion to post it on Earls Court Nextdoor. **AP: Spencer to share on this as well as on his resident forum**

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- A suggestion that Earls Court Business Forum should get its own account on Nextdoor
- To tag in businesses on social media
- Desire to see some featured stories about restaurants, pictures of the food or place etc.
- It was suggested RBKC can help with marketing. It was noted it is due to go out in K&C Life tomorrow (28th October)
- A question was raised about how impact is being monitored. Businesses have been asked to report on visits through the website and number of purchases. Masala Zone have provided a specific link so they can monitor what traffic came through the Food Festival promotion. Others may be more anecdotal
- Cllr Faulks suggested approaching the London Evening Standard

Branding approach

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

Cllr Wade reiterated the importance of strategic brand thinking for Earls Court, noting that the Local Plan highlights seven areas that all have something they're famous for and Earls Court isn't included. The Cllrs also noted that there is an expectancy of a cultural venue of national significance and thoughts about branding need to be aware of this but also to take into account the culture that is already present.

AP: All agreed it would be good to invite planners to a future Forum meeting to discuss what's going to happen on the site

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

It was noted that CapCo retained the neon lettering and the 30s panels from the exhibition site and suggested these could be incorporated into the branding look. Question of where these are now.

Christmas windows

Toby Brown, TLC, updated what is being organised for Christmas already. Delancey are funding christmas lights and the Earls Court Community Trust are hoping to hold a switch-on. This indicates the start of Christmas for Earls Court on the high street. They have also approached the garden squares to do a carol singing road-show – 15 to 20 minutes in each garden square, and are hoping to show a play upstairs at the Bolton pending restrictions.

Susie Barlow briefly presented an idea for a Christmas Window display. It was agreed that this should go ahead. The following was discussed:

- It was agreed there was no need to provide match-funding to organisations for their window displays, but that the forum could fund a prize for the best one
- It was agreed it would be good, if landlords can be persuaded, to do something in empty windows. Cllr Faulks offered some words of caution from elsewhere about potential difficulties.
- It was suggested to create some joint branding window stickers for businesses taking part to put up, along the lines of "Happy Christmas in Earls Court"

- A Christmas tree was discussed. There is one in Earls Court Square and Nevern Square, but one cannot be put on the canopy of the station for safety reasons.

3) Update from the Council

CLlr Faulks gave a brief update on key activities at the Council:

- The Council is acting as a joint applicant for small businesses who want to take part in the Kickstart scheme
- Celebrating some successes with local procurement through the supply chain scheme
- A reminder to check the RBKC site for business training and for information about how upcoming COVID grants will be administered
- A reminder that Brexit is still coming in January

AP: The forum should consider delivering business support related to Brexit – topic for discussion

4) Update from Delancey

- The new CEO is starting next month and Delancey hope to introduce him before Christmas
- There was reassurance that cultural venues are going to be part of the mix and that Steve will have a fuller update in due course
- Delancey have been consulting on the development plans for Old Brompton Road since April and are hoping to submit a planning application next month

5) Joint procurement

Meercat Support Services, joint procurement brokers, joined the meeting to present their services.

Afterwards the forum discussed:

- A question was raised about how some things such as deliveries and laundry has been tried in the past in Earls Court and hasn't taken off. It was suggested to start with something simpler, like utilities
- Seen as important for helping make savings for independents
- A big opportunity identified was coordinated trade waste collection to a) save money but also b) try to reduce the number of different times waste is left out. Concerns were raised about how to work with some of the larger companies. In particular PAULs were identified as having trade waste issues
- There was support for joint procurement, but concern about paying Meercats. 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 Piloting a few services in a branded booklet and focusing on getting independents signed up for savings. 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 trade waste
- Due diligence – seeing what other BIDs using Meercats or other options are saying

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Getting other businesses involved beyond these meetings and things like the Food Festival. It was agreed to pick this up outside of the meeting.