

# EARLS COURT BUSINESS FORUM

## Earl's Court Business Forum Steering Group Meeting minutes

Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2022  
K+K George Hotel, 1-15 Templeton Place

### Attendees

Philip Chambers – K+K George Hotel (Acting Chair)  
Jamie Hodge - Earl's Court Development Company  
Jamie Wilks – Marks & Spencer  
Caroline Todd – Earl's Court Film Festival  
Cllr Linda Wade - RBKC  
Cllr Malcolm Spalding - RBKC  
Susie Barlow – The means/Earl's Court Business Forum  
Sam Long - The means/Earl's Court Business Forum

### Apologies

Matilda Russell – Finborough Theatre  
TLC Estate Agents  
Spencer Parsons – Boka Hotel  
Richard Hardeling – The Troubadour  
Anthony Hicks - Metro Bank

#### 1. Welcome, introductions and agenda

#### 2. Earl's Court brand - Website development and forward marketing budget (for decision)

##### 2.1 Website

- SB explained there is approx. £40,000 of funding underspend from the original Capco S106 funds allocated to the project, which is due to finish end of March 2022. Much of this is due to projects and events being put on hold during the pandemic
- Review of the chosen brand resulting from November/December business consultation and public vote. The final favourite concept was the one favoured by local businesses.
- Website options presented by Crowd ranging from £5k to 15k – see ppt for details. This would include resource for ongoing content creation
- Question raised around the reason/aim of the website, why invest in creating a website if there is no resource employed after this year to keep it updated. Will there be a BID feasibility study as discussed in November?
- Caroline: Can we link it with *The Court* magazine.

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- PC: why not just create an Instagram page. JW agrees, conversation around who would populate it on an ongoing basis. Repetition of the point around continuity of the business forum.
- Cllr Spalding suggests an interim solution which may be eventually superseded by a BID.
- SB explains that currently there is no channel for communicating B2C content such as local events. This was the purpose of developing a brand for Earl's court as discussed in previous meetings.
- Conversation around having a directory of local businesses – in *The means* experience, listings take a lot of frequent updating. Also are we duplicating resources already available online?
- PC: LinkedIn page for the business forum where all local businesses can join – can then use this contact as a way to help establish a BID. Engagement work will be done to raise awareness of it.
- The group asked for clarification on whether the funding will need to be returned to RBKC. Can spend it better on other things rather than a website.
- Malcom: Businesses can pay to be on the website. The website can build towards a BID.
- Decision to put the website on hold.

## 2.2 Lamp post banners

- A lot of through-traffic – opportunity for people to see Earls Court identity. SB is liaising with TfL through Andrew Hatch. He has directed to the licensing department who have informed this will need to go through official application process, but SB was under the impression that permission had been sought prior to pandemic?
- The funding can also be used to place the brand in vacant shop fronts.
- Need to make sure the imagery in the banners is relevant. Can have key buildings of Earl's court e.g. tube station, Tardis, Brompton cemetery.
- Lamp banners – 'purdah' rules might mean these cannot be installed until after elections.

**Action: SB to check with Robert Sheppard, RBKC Head of Governance whether banners can be installed during Purdah**

(Short conversation regarding freeholder engagement)

- Cllr Wade: Important to know who on Earls Court Rd are freeholders – need to fund the research. Get them to liaise with the forum and potentially contribute towards a BID? If freeholders increase rent it can lead to vacant shops. Education and marketing to

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freeholders/leaseholders about what change is happening, and an opportunity to engage with ECDC.

- Cllr Spalding: Need to promote the greenspaces.
- JH: Businesses worried about future footfall and thinking of closing – need to be aware of the number of new residents and workers the new Earls Court development will bring.

**Action: Mapping of freeholders along High Street and convene a meeting with key landowners**

### **3. March engagement event for wider Earl's Court business community**

- SB explains this is an event to 1. Unveil the new brand and 2. Update from ECDC consultation and 3. Introduce and discuss the Business Improvement District concept. Need to agree a budget and venue so that the invite can be circulated
- We need to engage further with businesses beyond this group to see what the appetite is for continuing the business forum in some form. Susie and team will visit businesses in person to invite them to an event where we present the projects we've delivered and discuss the future of business in Earl's Court, especially in context of the exciting developments
- SB suggests we discuss what the event will look like, budget and venue?
- Businesses raise the point that there hasn't been clarity on whether the council intend to fund a BID feasibility study. Can we not use the remaining funding for feasibility study?

### **4. Project and Partner updates:**

#### 4.1 Earl's Court Food Festival 2022

- SB updates that the food fest is an online promotion. It has been postponed and will now run February 12<sup>th</sup> -20<sup>th</sup> to benefit from *The Court* magazine circulation, and to use Valentine's day as a theme for promotion. Despite in person visits and telephone/email follow up, only seven restaurants have so far sent through their offer to be included. May need to consider a different format in future as there doesn't seem to be appetite.

#### 4.2 Earl's Court Development Company consultation events

- Exploring taking over a vacant shop on Earl's Court Road to host a drop in exhibition. Going to the people rather than they come to us.
- Masterplan – creating an area of conservation and heritage for the future.
- Phase 4 consultation – working with young people and youth sessions.
- Key feedback: increasing *publicly accessible* green space. Pedestrian access through site. Don't want a new town centre. Traffic is a big concern – new site largely car free. A mixed-

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use development – outdoor public square that are vibrant/have cafes etc. More art, culture, food, music – particularly important for young people. Flexible event space.

- Empress Yard new pop-up event space – free to use for the community. Caroline: we need music in these spaces. ECDC want flexible use of the space. Linda: Site isn't load bearing so more difficult.
- Trying to get longer planning application to use the Warwick Road Apron Space. Plan to retain the original Exhibition Centre steps and get artists involved. ECDC looking for proposals from the community about how we activate this space.
- A flexible outdoor event space is important.
- Earl's Court Food Festival could have a physical event in the summer with stalls, live music.
- Potential 2022 events such as meanwhile use in partnership with ECDC