

WECNF High Street Work Group

Report - 15 August 2012

Since last meeting Michael Sylvester and I from WECNF high street work group attended a meeting hosted by Ealing Council economic regeneration department. Carol Sam and Mathieu Rogers are the main contacts from this department. At present this group of interested parties that was brought together for the May Portas bid is referred to as the Town Team.

Date: 25.07.2012 at Location: OPEN, West Ealing

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss a number of projects that could be implemented in West Ealing over the next 18 months to improve the vitality and vibrancy of West Ealing in light of the high vacancy rate in the town centre (10%) and last Summer's disturbances.

£300,000 has been approved by Ealing Council's Corporate Board (25.04.2012) to be spent in West Ealing after receiving £100,000 from the High Street Innovation Fund and £200,000 from the Riot Recovery Fund. The fund is intended to "promote the development of new models of prosperous and diverse high streets" (DCLG), and help businesses in areas hit by the disturbances who experienced a fall in footfall and spending in their high street.

The DCLG (2012) highlights a number of requirements:

"The fund would provide an opportunity to catalyse innovative local approaches to managing and revitalising high streets, using the wide range of tools available to local partners – such as business rate discounts, planning and meanwhile uses – to tackle the challenge of empty properties, make the most of the unique experience high streets offer, support local enterprise, and adapt the high street to take on new roles...we want to focus on measures that are sustainable which address the underlying causes of empty properties and which incentivise and enable properties to provide an offer which fits demand"

Project Proposals

Each of the proposals below are to be reported on and at the next meeting in October a possible decision will be made as to the possible allocation of funds. West Ealing Traders Association and WECNF High Street Group will be involved with items 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7.

The projects discussed were:

- 1 Shop front Improvements (already being funded by Ealing's Economic Regeneration team)
Deliver shop front improvements in West Ealing £100k already allocated from the Economic Regeneration budget
- 2 Public Art – Develop an initiative that will have an impact on West Ealing or an identity.
- 3 Skills Share (mentoring)
- 4 Pop-Up Businesses
Run pop up shops targeted at young people and new enterprises
- 5 Vacant Shop initiative - Purchase the lease on vacant shops and sublet as multiple ownership sites.
- 6 Businesses Support, including website – We are waiting on Ealing College to come up with a proposals, in new college term September
- 7 Events and Promotion – Craft and Family Fair West Ealing 22 September 2012
- 8 BID feasibility
- 9 Other projects

Proposals need to be submitted by 14 September Next meeting in October.