

Notes FOR the meeting SWBF 13 July 2023

WELCOME

Plan:

- Short intros of who we are.
- Minutes, Actions and Matters arising
- Additional items
- Longer networking slots for our businesses.
- AOB
- Date of next meeting

Apologies: Mehvish and Saqib (Heron's Nest), Atkins Physiotherapy Consultants, Cllr Lloyd Duddridge, Cllr Rosa Gomez, Cllr Joe Hehir and Cllr Saiqa Qayum.

Present: Short intro of who... return later for further updates.

ACTIONS from previous minutes

- Cllr Saiqa Qayum: **Galleria rubbish** – Re the Biffa bins near Zizzi's, the senior enforcement officer did notify me that Biffa (whose bins should now be removed from that area) confirmed that the contract was with Noir. A notice was issued to Sainsbury's as owners of the land to clear the waste which they complied with and cleared the waste. Noir will be visited along with any other businesses in the area to check their waste service agreements / to ensure they are compliant. I will update you if I hear any more on this.
- **Turnaround plan** sent to the SWBF.
- **Christmas Light costings** –Uplighters on central reservation. ? to have the market on the Fourth Sunday in November and combine with the Switching on. Elaine has discussed this with the market organiser who is thinking about the ramifications.
- From Cllr Hehir **Notice Boards**: Noticeboards- this is very frustrating. I have been regularly chasing Officers down on what is happening. My last update was about partial electronic notice boards. I have chased again. I suspect the issue is funding.
- **Networking Event** – was due to be held this evening but Rajesh is having work done at the Grand Trunk Road restaurant and we needed to reschedule to October. The date will be confirmed and it's likely to be from 3.30 or 4pm to be before the restaurant opens to the public.
- **Networking for Health Care Professionals**: Fiona Flaherty has been coordinating this – any update?

MATTERS ARISING

Post Office – They are still conducting their due diligence on prospective post masters. A building has been located. I am in regular monthly contact with the PO.

High Street Rental Auctions – Links to Rena asking if there is a plan to help shape and support the high street in light of the changing landscape and increasing number of empty shops:

There's been a consultation on this.

Officers have reviewed various documents issued by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities relating to the High Street Rental Auction Consultation.

The Consultation is technical in nature and primarily aimed at commercial landlords, tenant business, community groups and local authorities. The proposal is to tackle the prolonged vacancy of shops and building on the “High Street”.

The leases to be offered, according to the Consultation, are not to be less than 1 year but no more than 5 years. The tenant would not have a right of renewal at the end of that period. The proposal is to have a standard Agreement for Lease (to enable works/ fit out) and formal Lease to speed up the process.

The landowner would be involved in the rental auction, preparation of auction pack and the lease preparation. To ensure the property was marketed properly, the marketing time would need to be a reasonable length (6 weeks) to ensure the best rent is being achieved. The timeline does include a short appeal period for the landlord.

The time frame from when the local authority serves notice on the landlord to assessment to complete the auction process will be around 12-14 weeks. The proposal is for the auction to be via sealed -bids.

The view Officers have is that given the investment that may be required in some properties, the proposal may not be viable in a number of cases. This is particularly where a property may not meet current Energy performance requirements. These are due to be more onerous in the next few years – I can echo this relating to my day job. Planning permission will still be required where premises move from one use to another if there was to be any material change from the existing lawful use.

They are also concerns.

- Will LBR have sufficient resources available to deal with this additional work and landlords being prepared to engage in the process.
- We would not want the proposal to be used as a tool to slow down any redevelopment / regeneration proposals of the landlord or to promote uneconomic, or over concentrated use by one sector of shops who might specialise in short lets such as take away food retailers or betting shops.

Hope this gives you some further information. To me on paper it looks a good idea, but there appears risks and pitfalls, not least funding, concentration of types of business risk, and onerous costs – EPC’s. Let’s see what comes of the consultation.

Leading on to...

From Maria Gerring – Business Enterprise Team

I would like to use this email to introduce you to Natel Allen who has recently joined the business team as an Enterprise Officer and will be attending the meeting on Thursday.

‘We have made some changes to our business support service and have included more business support activities to our programme.

I have attached an update regarding the work that will be delivered by the team over the next 2 years. I have also listed some of the activities planned between September- December 2023:

- Redbridge Business Forum - 14 September 2023
- Google Garage – event to support businesses with digital skills - 29 September 2023
- Women in Business network October 2023 (Date and Venue TBC)

We will also be publishing some resources online before the end of July, but I will send you the link to the information as soon as it's available.

I am working on the enquiries from your previous email, and I hope to be able to get back to you before the end of the week.

Krisztina Vamos – Redbridge Neighbourhood Engagement Manager

Red Bag Scheme

I've mentioned about our **Red Bag scheme** before, for people who live in flats above shops in the borough, including George Lane. George Lane has been selected as one of the 3 trial areas for this summer to do engagement with residents in flats above shops aiming to promote correct waste presentation.

As you probably know, these residents receive red bags to present their waste outside their front door 5 days a week (unlike houses that have space in their front garden for wheelie bins). We are currently looking for shops, businesses on George Lane who could be distribution points, which means where residents can go in and pick up rolls of red bags when they run out of them. This would potentially bring more customers into their businesses and would only involve storing a few boxes of bags at a time. It would be great to flag this trial up for businesses and see if they're interested. We only need a couple of them participating, one on each side of the tube station. I'm happy to explain this in person in more details if that's still ok on Thursday.

Please let Krisztina know.

Reasonable Outdoor Seating rules for businesses

Reasonable Outdoor Seating Rules – I suspect there are certain rules that needs to be followed here. The guidelines and application process is detailed here;

[Redbridge - Pavement trading: temporary tables and chairs licence](#)

<https://www.redbridge.gov.uk/business/licensing-including-street-trading/pavement-trading-temporary-tables-and-chairs-licence/>

FINES

Re outdoor seating / rules, I have requested information from council officers for details of the FPNs issued to businesses in South Woodford and Churchfields to aid discussions on specific points. Again, I will update you with information as advised.

From Peter Hughes – Enterprise Adviser to Woodbridge High School

Schools have to hit a set of targets relating to careers ('The Gatsby Benchmarks' - a stable careers programme; learning from career and labour market information; addressing the needs of each pupil; linking curriculum learning to careers; encounters with employers and employees; experiences of workplaces; encounters with further and higher education).

Teachers face particular challenges in engaging with businesses (by and large they've spent their lives in education), so the London Mayor has established a voluntary scheme involving 'Enterprise Advisors' who are assigned to specific schools in order to help them meet these benchmarks.

Peter is the 'EA' to Woodbridge High School; there are likely to be other EA's attached to other local schools (I will find out!) and he is looking for businesses to help meet these benchmarks.

Much of this involves actually getting businesses into the schools for a variety of interactions, from simply explaining their business, careers prospects and apprenticeship schemes, to mock interviews and workshops. The number of external 'school trips' is highly limited because of the costs involved.

Peter believes there is a real 'win-win' opportunity here, as well as fulfilling an important contribution to the community.

Business Updates

Each business present provided an update.

Any Other Business

There was none.

Date of next meeting

To be confirmed – aiming to have a business networking event.