

Eric Leach

Chair
Interim West Ealing Centre Neighbourhood Forum
c/o 39 Manton Avenue
Hanwell
London
W7 2DY

Ealing Council
Perceval House
14-16 Uxbridge Road
London W5 2HL

t 020 8825 5000

Date
27th March 2013

Dear Eric,

1. On 29 October 2012 the council formally designated the neighbourhood area for West Ealing Centre following a consultation during the summer. On the same day, in accordance with Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012, the Council published for consultation the plans to designate a neighbourhood forum for this neighbourhood area. The consultation lasted for six weeks and closed on 10 December 2012. I promised to write to you again once the consultation had closed and after I had sufficient opportunity to reflect on any representations received and make a considered response on behalf of the LPA.

2. Only one formal written representation was received from Natural England who wishes to be consulted on the any future plans or proposals. This is duly noted and did not propose any changes or alterations to the proposed forum. The written representations will be available to inspect and download from the Council's web pages at:

http://www.ealing.gov.uk/info/1004/planning_policy/1377/neighbourhood_planning/4

3. As well as taking on board comments received from the consultation the LPA must also consider a number of other factors including whether a group to be designated as a neighbourhood forum meets the criteria set out in the Localism Act 2011 and the Regulations. This includes having an open membership policy and the extent to which a prospective forum has included residents, business and local elected members from across the neighbourhood area. An application for neighbourhood forum designation must also include a copy of the forum's written constitution and a statement of how they will meet the conditions for designation as a neighbourhood forum set out in the Localism Act.

4. I understand that officers from the Council hosted a very productive meeting with you and colleagues on 8th January 2013 and that a number of helpful suggestions were made about how the interim forum could revise its membership policy and written constitution to ensure greater inclusivity and help gain the Council's formal seal of approval.

5. I am grateful that many of these suggestions have been taken on board. In particular, I am pleased that you have now come forward with a revised model for decision making that ensures that the interests of both the local community and the local business community are reflected in the forum membership as equal partners in plan preparation. In my opinion this is vitally important as the Local Planning Authority have also formally designated West Ealing Centre as a “business area.” I also understand that you are in active discussion about how best to secure the widest possible engagement in plan preparation of both the wider local community and businesses and I will look forward to seeing your formal plans and proposals in due course.

6. I note that you have agreed in principle that in future the forum membership should include representatives from each of the three main political parties. Again it is important that plans are prepared so far as possible on a non-partisan basis and reflect the necessity to eventually submit any proposed plan for a referendum before it can be adopted. I would be grateful if you could confirm your amended forum membership to reflect this please.

7. I also note that some further technical amendments have been suggested in relation to Schedules C and D. I am advised that Schedule C which explains that the organisation is a relevant body under the Act should now be amended to make clear that as well as being a statement in relation to the area application (61G), it is additionally a statement confirming that the proposed neighbourhood forum meets the requirements of 61F(5) (as it is the same information required, there is no need to do an extra statement). Furthermore, in relation to the written constitution (Schedule D) some suggestions were made in relation to a code of conduct for management committee members and regarding the management of any accounts. It would be helpful if these matters can be further clarified and a final revised constitution is provided.

8. Subject to confirmation the matters raised in Paras 6 and 7 above and receipt by the Council of the revised membership details, a statement explaining the organisation is a relevant body (Schedule C) and a revised written constitution (Schedule D), I have therefore concluded that the proposed forum of the neighbourhood area for the West Ealing Centre is acceptable and I am pleased to inform you that on behalf of the LPA I will be happy to formally designate it as such.

Finally, I look forward to working with you and your colleagues in the coming months regarding an emerging neighbourhood development plan for the area.

Yours sincerely,



Pat Hayes
Executive Director- Regeneration & Housing