

West Ealing Business Survey

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Executive Summary

The West Ealing Liveable Neighbourhoods (WELN) Programme aims to transform West Ealing by delivering a pioneering programme of transport and radical urban realm improvements and bring about modal shift to active travel, sustainable transport and Healthy Streets.

The council's vision for West Ealing is a resilient, prosperous and healthy neighbourhood where residents and workers feel safe and more likely to make sustainable travel choices.

Ealing Council commissioned a business survey to understand the needs and issues facing businesses and their customers in West Ealing and to gather their aspirations for the future of West Ealing. The results of this report, conducted by Retail Revival Ltd., will inform future WELN interventions and serves as 'baseline' so that any improvements and schemes that are implemented can be better measured.

Methodology

The research was conducted through personal visits to 203 businesses, all those with ground floor businesses in the geographic target area. The owner or manager of the business was invited to complete the questionnaire face-to-face with the researcher or to complete a hard copy of the questionnaire in his or her own time.

Some respondents chose not to answer some of the questions because they did not want to share the data or because they did not know the data.

There was a 61% response rate and 124 questionnaires were completed between June 8th and July 6th 2018. The researchers returned to each business up to six times to secure participation.

Key Findings

The key findings were as follows:

About the business

- 66% rented their business premises
- 62% were independent businesses, 8% were charities or social enterprises and 4% were part of a small chain.
- 50% employed between 0-2 full time staff members and 20% employed 2-3 full time staff members, only 3% employed more than 11 members of full time staff.
- 61% employed between 0-2 part time staff members and 20% employed 2-3 part time staff members, only 3% employed more than 11 members of part time staff.
- The majority of respondents used the Internet (75%) and Email (71%), 58% had a business website and Facebook was the most used social media platform (40%). Over half of respondents didn't use any form of social media to promote their business.

- 38% said turnover had decreased in the past 12 months, 19% said it has increased and 22% said it has stayed the same.
- 30% felt their turnover would increase moderately over the next 12 months, 18% felt it would decrease moderately, 22% felt it would stay the same.
- 77% of respondents said they had no plans to change their business premises and 15% said they would re-fit, extend or improve their premises. 4 Businesses were planning to close or relocate from the area.
- 37% believed their staff levels would stay the same in the next five years, 28% said they would increase moderately and 12% said they would decrease moderately.

Barriers to Business Growth

- Businesses prioritised the following barriers to business growth: Business rates (48%), Increased business costs (38%), Security issues (30%), Business rent (30%), Staff retention (20%), Staff recruitment/skill levels (19%)

West Ealing – The Place

- Businesses felt the following issues were poor: availability of business parking (62%), anti social behaviour (57%), lack of interest shown by landlords (43%)
- Businesses felt the following issues were good: public transport for visitors (82%), accessibility on foot (78%), selection of cafes, bars and pubs (72%)
- 46% felt West Ealing has become a worse place to do business in the past four years and 10% felt that it was a better place to do business.
- 53% of respondents had either not heard about the BID and were not familiar with the function and activities of the BID or they didn't know if the BID had helped the town. 23% felt that west Ealing would be a worse place without the BID.

Future Projects and Initiatives

- Businesses prioritised the following measures in terms of helping their business in the future: more CCTV (74%), extra police at night (72%) more side street cleaning (73%), physical enhancement of the town (65%), more marketing (59%) and regular promotions (56%). Least important to them was travel planning (37%).
- 72% of respondents would like to receive business support; they prioritised shop front improvements (33%), preventing retail crime (29%), marketing, (27%) and social media (22%).
- Many businesses currently offer toilets (50%), drinking water (41%) and seating to existing customers (46%).
- 43% of businesses would not consider offering toilets to non-customers in the future, 35% would not considering offering drinking water to non-customers the future and 31% would not consider offering seating to non-customers in the future.
- 79% of businesses do not have a staff travel plan.
- 38% of businesses have staff that travel to work by car, 36% by public transport and 13% have staff that walk to work.

- 22% of businesses could think of nothing they do which contributes to making the area a liveable neighbourhood, 63% however sweep and clean the pavement in the front of their business and 35% remove rubbish and weeds from the pavement
- 11% do other things to contribute to making the area a liveable neighbourhood including: providing excellent customer service, planting, clearing up fly tipping, cleaning the car park, cleaning up syringes and human faeces, keeping an eye on unwanted activities, getting involved with charity events and the community, notifying authorities regarding leaves dropping from the trees, by being involved with the BID and by reporting anti social behaviour.

Deliveries and Service Provision

- 24% did not receive goods or service deliveries or were unable to describe the pattern of deliveries. The remaining 76% had a varied delivery pattern. Every weekday between 42% and 49% of businesses receive deliveries, 31% of businesses receive deliveries on Saturdays.
- The busiest time for deliveries was 9am-12pm (34%) and 12pm-4pm (31%).
- The suppliers' delivery timetables dictated 30% of deliveries and 28% were dictated by trading patterns.
- 60% have onsite storage, 62% did not have spare storage space on site.
- 17% have specific onsite loading bays, 54% need their delivery vehicles to stop on the street at the kerbside.
- 56% receive deliveries by vans, 19% by rigid lorries, and 17% by cars.
- 43% of deliveries are moved from the delivery vehicle to the business by hand, 40% by trolley and 10% by Pallet Jack.
- 21% of businesses receive deliveries where loading/unloading is prohibited.
- 10% select delivery companies who can demonstrate their commitment to best practice.
- 23% proactively manage deliveries to reduce the number of delivery and service trips.
- 6% work collaboratively with neighbouring businesses to procure the same suppliers for the same products.
- 11% use an onsite waste compactor.