

Covent Garden Community Association

Deputation Request to 26/2/24 Culture & Environment Scrutiny Committee Agenda Item 6 – Camden Evening & Night-time Economy Report

I am David Kaner. I chair the CGCA's Licensing Sub-Committee and have been involved with Licensing since 2005. Our area of interest includes parts in both Camden and Westminster. The part of our area in Camden contains **361 licensed premises**, or **21% of all the licensed premises** in Camden.

Residents in our area, like other ENTE hotspots, suffer from the negative impacts of the ENTE. These impacts are usually not from what happens in the premises but what happens when people leave them. There can be noise, street fouling, litter and fights. People leaving also attract beggars, pedicabs and criminal activity.

The ENTE is therefore a topic on which the CGCA has some considerable experience.

The ENTE Strategy before you includes a Vision Statement and a set of themed actions. These are based on the results of a Citizen's Assembly which ended in March 2023.

The Strategy was published on 19/2/24 – over 11 months after the end of the Assembly. In between the end of the assembly and now there has been **no** discussion with **any** of Camden's Civic Society groups, including those which between us cover areas with more than 65% of the existing Evening and Night-Time Economy.

The Council did consult widely in advance of the Citizens Assembly but that was almost a year and a half ago. That consultation resulted in just 5 slides (see P83-87 of the Papers). They were presented at the end of a deck of 108 slides on the 1st day of the Assembly.

We are told that the Assembly recommendations are reflected in the final themes and actions. But they are **not**.

The Vision Statement in the Strategy **should** be consistent with the Mayor's 'Vision for London as a 24 hour City', with the Vision Statements discussed with the Citizens' Assembly and with Camden's own previous statements. All of these talk about the need for some sort of balance between the needs of businesses and residents. The Vision proposed is not consistent with these. It contains no sense of there being **a need for balance**.

If the Cabinet approves this Strategy then the Council will be able to ignore any impact that its decisions have on residents who live anywhere near the ENTE. The excuse will be "It is in-line with the Vision".

What about the rest of the Strategy?

The section on Community Safety and well-being that tells us that women feel unsafe, that Camden has a low level of noise complaints and that crime and ASB are falling.

It does not tell us that Camden doesn't collect data on noise complaints in the street, the type of noise which has the largest impact on residents in ENTE areas.

It doesn't tell us that the Police dispute the conclusions on crime and ASB and that 44% of **all** Camden's crime in the evening and night-time occurs in the ENTE hotspot areas.

This is not just my view. This is clear from the Cumulative Impact Review that was carried out by the Licensing Team.

The ENTE already results in high levels of both crime and disturbance to residents. This has real impact on people's lives. Go through Camden Town or walk along Charing Cross Road late on a Friday night to see it for yourself.

In the section on the theme of Liveability the Strategy states that the Citizens' Assembly said that: *The night-time economy impacts on residents' health: noise, lack of sleep and a clean environment.*

We agree. What is the proposed action to address this?

The only action in this section is to give people the opportunity to have exercise later at night. There is nothing suggested to help residents get enough sleep.

Perhaps other actions in the list on P23 will help? The only ones which could be seen to link to this issue are a Licensing Charter that has low expectations and no teeth and a review of the management of ENTE hotspots that is not a priority and doesn't promise that any action will result. Neither will address the issues we already face.

The Strategy tells us other things that the Citizens Assembly wanted to see. These include places for young people to meet, activities that are not focussed on alcohol, that cost less and are operated by local businesses that are diverse, grassroots venues, in an area that feels safe.

This is not what this Strategy will deliver. It, and the Licensing Policy proposal which has been withdrawn for further discussion, would **intensify** the night-time economy in Camden **without addressing** any of the existing issues. It will be easier to operate alcohol-led venues until later at night, and open new ones, in areas that are already saturated with them.

The report before you confirms this. P14 of the Committee Papers lists the risks in adopting the Strategy. One of the identified risks is:

Insufficient public engagement about possible contentious licensing or intensification of evening & night-time hotspots could lead to reputational damage.

If the Cabinet adopts this Strategy it will **intensify** the evening and night-time hotspots where residents are already suffering. It will have a real impact on the health and well-being of residents as well as increasing crime and public nuisance.

There are some good ideas in the Strategy, they just don't go far enough and they do not address the root causes of problems in the Evening and Night Time Economy.

As residents we want to "make Camden a welcoming, safe and inclusive place to spend time in the evening and night-time", for us and for others. The Strategy before you is not how to go about it.

Please ask Cabinet to delay the process of approving the Strategy to allow for consultation on the Vision statement and on the detail of the Strategy with all the Stakeholders.

This is what the GLA's Guidance on developing an ENTE Strategy says should have been done - and sequentially, not all at once. It is the failure of Camden to follow this process that has resulted in so many different residents' groups becoming concerned about it.

This Strategy is intended to be in place for 5 years. Getting it right for the people of Camden is more important than getting it done fast.

As well as the **CGCA** this Deputation is supported by:

Bloomsbury Association **Bloomsbury Residents Action Group** **Charlotte Street Association**

Seven Dials Trust **South Bloomsbury Tenants and Residents Association**

What has happened to the idea of **balance**?

From good night to great night – A Vision for London as a 24 Hour City – Mayor of London 2017

Likewise, **a balance must be struck** between work, rest and play for London's eight million residents. No matter what time we go to bed, we all need good sleep. Nothing we do must compromise that basic right.

Camden Evening and Night-Time Economy Report – Strategic Context *(Committee Bundle P7)*

We will **seek to balance** the needs of visitors and businesses with those of local people who may be negatively impacted

Camden's Evening and Night-Time Citizens' Assembly Report 2023 – Draft Vision Statements *(Committee Bundle P60)*

Our vision for the evening and night-time is one where the people, places and spaces that give Camden its unique and vibrant night-time character can be creative, rebellious and can flourish. People of all ages and backgrounds feel welcomed, safe and that they belong and **the wellbeing of those who live or work in Camden is protected.**

Our vision for the evening and night-time economy is one that celebrates creativity, embraces diverse spaces, and places, and welcomes people of all ages and backgrounds. We strive to **enhance the quality of life for everyone** by providing a safe and vibrant atmosphere that showcases the character and heritage of our community

We are Camden, and we will work together to enable a night-time experience that has something for everyone, continues to lead iconic cultural production **whilst being a safe, respectful and enjoyable experience.** A night-time that everyone belongs in, whether living, trading, working or visiting.

Camden ENTE Strategy Vision Statement – as submitted *(Committee Bundle P21)*

Guided by our residents, businesses, visitors and workers, we will make Camden a welcoming, safe and inclusive place to spend time in the evening and night-time.

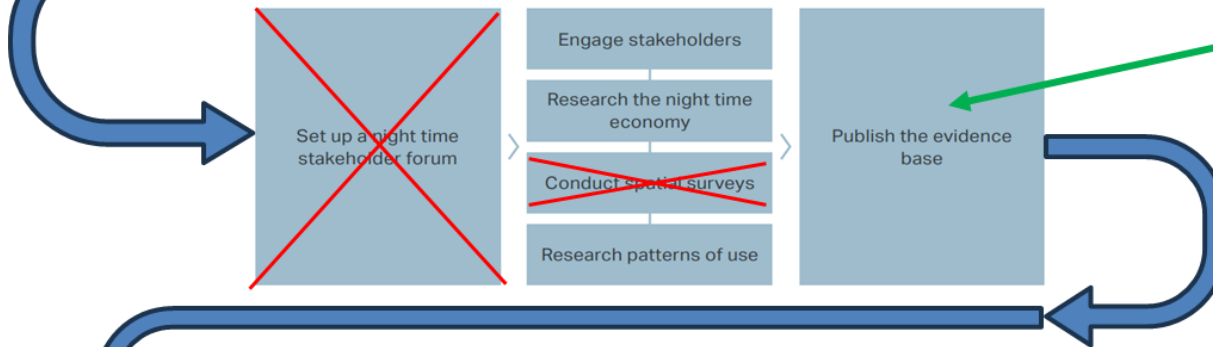
We believe that by working together we can do more to support our creative and rebellious culture, nurture and protect community heritage, grow the economy and create good work opportunities which are accessible to all.

Guidance on Developing A Night-Time Strategy – Mayor of London December 2020

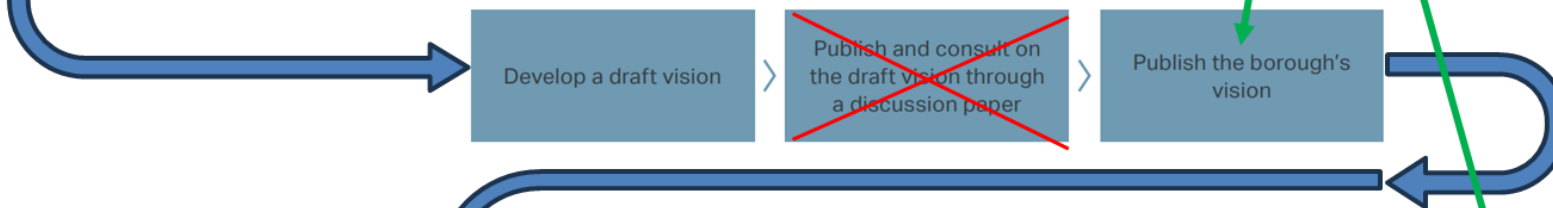
Stage 1: Project inception



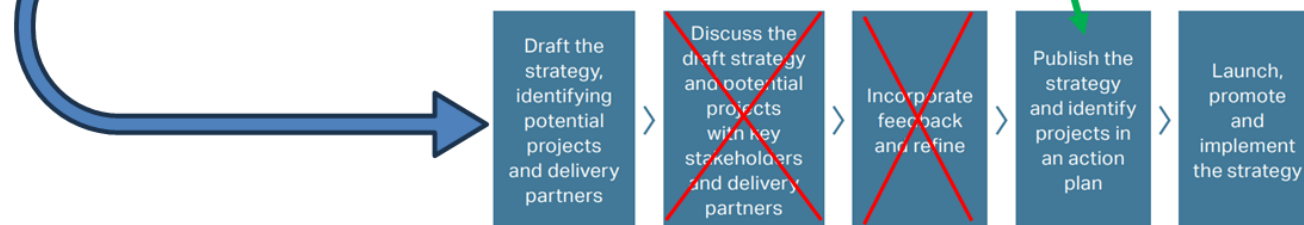
Stage 2: Establishing a baseline and building an evidence base



Stage 3: Creating a shared vision and objectives



Stage 4: Developing a strategy and action plan



Camden is doing all these steps at once and only at the END of the process