

RE: Castlehaven Community Association - deputation to 26 February 2024 Culture and Environment Scrutiny Committee

Good evening. My name is Tricia Richards, CEO of Castlehaven Community Association for the past 5yrs. Castlehaven lies between Kentish Town Road and Chalk Farm Road. Castlehaven is surrounded by several council-owned housing estates and properties whose interests we aim to serve. We also manage two community parks to the north and south of our buildings.

Residents in the area are already badly affected by the evening and night-time economy - particularly by revellers and drinkers – especially late at night - and by the vomit, defecation, urination and litter left behind in our parks and the surrounding streets by night-time visitors to the area, - an area which some Councillors have in the past referred to as ‘The Strip’ or ‘The Wild West’.

In reviewing the output from the Citizens assembly there are several ideas that we would support and that would benefit our residents and area. However, in reading the ENTE strategy being put to you this evening we are shocked that resident needs are being ignored and the focus is primarily on business and expansion.

It is not a safe area for residents. I have had many conversations with the police about resident safety and they are as exasperated as I am. We at Castlehaven, and our residents, were shocked and appalled when we learned of the draft licencing policy (currently withdrawn) at the suggestion that pubs and other venues may be encouraged to extend their late hours by a change in framework hours and the loss of what limited protections we have with the possible removal of the cumulative impact areas.

Many of those leaving local pubs at 2 or 3am may crash out in our parks or - even worse - continue to party within them. How can this be balanced with the strategies desire for diversity and more use of our community spaces in the evening and night-time?

This will only make Camden Town less safe for residents. The proposal before you can only make a dire situation worse. Many of the proposed actions can only be bad for local people, but the fact that they are threatened with having these changes thrust upon them with no notice, no proper consultation, and no thought for the consequences, makes us worry for the future of local democracy in Camden.

If such an unpopular move can happen without consulting those most badly affected, what is next? On behalf of the residents who live all around us, and especially those who live and work in the Camden Town, Chalk Farm, Kentish Town areas, we ask you to consider the consequences of the proposed changes.

We also ask that you recommend the ENTE Strategy be withdrawn until it can be reviewed with key local stakeholders and a revised document can be agreed on. For the sake of the wellbeing of your constituents and those who made it possible for you to sit as Camden Councillors please listen to our views.

Thank you.
Tricia Richards
CEO