

As a social Housing landlord with several hundred properties in the area I wish to make a deputation against the proposed Evening and Nighttime Strategy (ENTS). I have already submitted a deputation against the proposed new licensing policy and I am pleased to see that it has been withdrawn and would like to comment further on this strategy.

1. Soho Housing was not invited to be part of any consultation on developing this strategy, we were not invited to the citizens assembly nor were we included in any surveys. I would like to know if any other social housing providers were included formally in this process. This is very important as residents in social homes have a complete lack of choice about where they live, they are mainly people with a level of vulnerability, often families, who are made a single offer of accommodation. This results in their being dependent upon their local council to run the neighbourhood in a safe, clean and reasonable way, providing good facilities and balancing the needs of all in an area.
2. I would point out that Soho Housing also owns and manages 40 businesses in the west end area, both Camden and Westminster and appreciates the need for a thriving evening and nighttime economy, our own income depends upon this. However we also understand the need to balance this with the wellbeing of our residents. Many of our residents live directly above our commercial premises and so this careful balancing act is critical for us, we assume it will be as important, for Camden council.
3. Having read the proposed strategy it is immediately apparent that there is no reference to "balance" in the vision. The text itself refers to residents and accepts that it can be difficult to balance everyone's needs and indeed the Mayor's Night-time Vision clearly states "*a balance must be struck between work, rest and play for London's eight million residents.*" But the word balance is completely missing from the vision statement, it must be inserted or else it will not be prioritised and residents needs will be overlooked.
4. The ENTE hotspots are currently dark, dirty, under policed and under cleaned by the council. While marshals and volunteers are a good thing, nothing can make up for the gradual reduction of civic control and presence in the middle of the west end. Camden say they wish to support and grow the nighttime economy in an inclusive way, this can only be done if people feel safer going out at night into better lit, cleaner and safer streets with good safe transport home again. This can only be achieved by working with local partners and the police.
5. If the stated aim of increasing and diversifying night-time users is to be met there should be an explicit statement suggesting a reduction in alcohol related premises to allow something different to flourish.
6. Finally I would like to return to the consultation process. It feels rushed and almost deliberately so. I believe the Citizen Assemblies were held about a year ago and nothing has really taken place since. I have looked at the Mayors good practice guide which suggests that a nighttime stakeholders forum is created and a draft vision and statement is produced and consulted upon before a final strategy is developed. I do not believe any of this was done. Neither our residents nor anyone working at Soho housing has been involved in developing this strategy which, as your ward councillors will confirm, is a very important one for us. The amount of complaints we already receive about noise, anti-social behaviour, violence and crime in the Seven Dials area is considerable and the proposed strategy offers no hope for our residents that things will improve. It feels one sided (for business only)

unimaginative (no suggestions to reduce alcohol related venues and support other types of venture) and designed to be delivered on a shoe string with no partnership working (where are the thoughts on increased lighting, cleaning, different ways of working with the police etc).

In conclusion I would ask that this is withdrawn and a proper, full consultation process takes place to develop a strategy to manage the important but difficult balance between residents and business in the west end.

Barbara Brownlee
Chief Executive
Soho Housing