

WORKSHOP 7: ENTERTAINMENT, ARTS AND CULTURE

Monday 27 July 2009, 7th Floor City Hall

Chairman: Councillor Astaire
 Facilitator: Lisa O'Donnell
 Officer Panel: Tom Kimber, Louise Francis, Bill Hodgson

Councillor Astaire	Welcomes and provides a brief introduction to the workshops.
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Lisa O'Donnell	Explains the purpose of the meeting.
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Part 1. Entertainment Uses

1. The UDP takes a 'matrix' approach to new entertainment uses (see table) which varies dependent upon location, size and type of entertainment use (as well as a number of individual policy criteria including impact on residential amenity).

- **Should the City Council continue with this 'matrix' policy approach, differentiating between the Stress Areas, Central Activities Zone and elsewhere, and size and type of entertainment use proposed?**
- **Should the size thresholds be changed?**

Cllr Astaire	Opened the discussion by asking if the policy balance was correct.
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Matthew Bennett (Soho Society)	Responded as a resident of Soho and as a restaurateur by informing the group that he thought the balance was correct.
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Brian Woodham (St James's Conservation Area Trust)	Expressed concern that St James's is outside the West End Stress Area – Cllr Astaire thought that the boundary was correct and no need to enlarge it.
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David Shaw (The Crown Estate)	Thought that the matrix approach could be more flexible and gave an example of expanding an existing A3 unit in to a neighbouring unit so long that it did not harm neighbouring residential.
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2. How should the City Council assess the impact of proposed entertainment uses upon residential amenity, health and safety, local environmental quality and character and function of the area?

Matthew Bennett (Soho Society)	Informed the group that the smoking ban causes problems. When one person wants to smoke a whole group will go outside. This causes a noise nuisance as well as highways issues.
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Amanda Squires (Royal Albert Hall)	They are surrounded by residential and want a balanced approach when dealing with tourist attractions and entertainment uses.
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Theatre Lobby	Believe that the Council is waited too much towards residents. Should be an acknowledgement of the comings and goings of audiences.
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Liz Frimstone (Victoria Interchange Group)	Wants a balanced approach aided by more background policies. Gave light pollution areas as an example and talked about the effects of the smoking ban/litter and the need for good house keeping policies as well as landlords taking responsibility themselves.
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Nimax Theatres	Wants the council to understand how the theatre industry works and
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Representative	operate. Communication between the council and theatres could be improved. Correspondence does not get sent to the correct representative. Felt that there had been a consistent approach by the council.
Pimlico Resident	Asked if there was an inter-council web site where there was shared information on how different authorities dealt with policies and impacts.
<p>3. How should the City Council manage the impact of late night entertainment uses? For example should the City Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continue to use planning conditions when granting permission to new entertainment uses to limit opening hours, number of people entering the premises, etc? • adopt the use of premises management plans? 	
Keith Hearn (CB Richard Ellis)	Believes Management Plans are a good idea to be submitted with planning applications but has no experience of how they work outside of Westminster.
Bill Hodgson (Licensing Policy Officer)	Informed the group that premises are now licensed and not the person as in the past. In theory operating schedules which are part of the licence are premises management plans.
Tom Kimber (Planning Policy Officer)	Advised that the management plans were more stringent.
Elizabeth Virgo (Paddington Waterways, Maida Vale Society and Safer Neighbourhoods)	Operators can't manage what happens outside of their premises and WCC shift patterns for wardens means that they can't manage what happens late on.
Brian Woodham (St James's Conservation Area Trust)	In St James's there are three pubs that cause problems. Planning and licensing don't seem to be joined up. Tables and chairs encourage vertical drinking and this issue should be dealt with by Licensing rather than Planning.
Bill Hodgson and Chris Wroe (Licensing Policy Officer)	Informed the group that Planning proceeds Licensing but Licensing do have the option of enforcement against problems with vertical drinking and can review a Licence where a premises is problematic.
Cllr Astaire	Clarified the difference between alfresco dining and vertical drinking and the impacts they have.
Christine Yau (Chinatown Arts Space/Chinese Community Centre)	Thinks there is a place for both alfresco dining and vertical drinking but told of the troubles that they cause for pedestrians.
Liz Frimstone (Victoria Interchange Group)	Extra tables and chairs on the street lead to extra income for the owners and the council should see this as a funding stream to help alleviate problems.
Matthew Bennett (Soho Society)	Soho has narrow crowded streets. Some occasions there are too many tables and chairs on the street causing highways problems and detracts from the area. Planning could look at this when

	granting tables and chairs applications.
Chris Wroe (Licensing Policy Officer)	The council had taken action against premises in terms of limiting the number of vertical drinkers.
Design Officer (Met Police)	Commented on receiving and advising on table and chairs applications. Advised on restricting the curtilage by just having one exit and entrance so that crime is reduced.
Cllr Astaire	Responded to a question about the licensing of free newspaper vendors and the nuisance they cause on the highway: That no council entered into a voluntary agreement with the free newspapers to provide recycling facilities and the point was noted.
Carol Joyce Walsh (Bayswater Neighbourhood Watch)	Public notices have details of the number of tables and chairs permitted relating to planning applications. Problems with premises running salsa classes in hotels in her area. Noise team seem to log calls but do little else.
Chris Wroe (Licensing Policy Officer)	Informed the group that the Council does charge a licensing fee for alfresco dining. The charge is limited by Parliament which governs the income to the council and is dependant upon the number of tables and chairs outside.
Heart of London Business Alliance	Felt that there was no consistency over enforcement of tables and chairs regulations. Leicester Square is constantly monitored by WCC wardens who admonished a family group for moving tables and chairs to sit together.
Cllr Astaire	Responded to the above noting that the Council has finite resources and couldn't police the whole borough equably. Leicester Square and the West End has a high concentration of premises with tables and chairs.

Part 2 ARTS AND CULTURAL USES

4. We want to continue to protect and support arts and cultural uses.

- ***Should we have a stronger policy to protect music venues?***
- ***Should this protection be subject to any specific criteria (e.g. the length of time it has been a music venue, the size of the venue, location)?***

Tom Kimber (Planning Policy Officer)	Described how music venues are of international and national importance to Westminster and the country but also that smaller venues added to the liveliness and buzz of the city.
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5. In addition to the protection of theatres, how else should the City Council support theatres through planning policy?

6. Are any other policies required that will maintain and enhance Westminster's diverse arts and cultural facilities/ offer?

Cllr Astaire	Interested to know if we over protect uses and mentioned the Theatre Museum that has lain empty for years.
Arts Lobby	Temporary gallery space was good way for artists to start out and gives areas a buzz. There are problems with using shop units and having to apply for temporary planning permissions which take time to process. Alternative uses are a good idea to breathe life back into vacant property and help communities. Traditional museums are changing and have to be more innovative. Artists can help with this process.

Cllr Astaire	Asked if as a council do we create obstacles?
Amanda Squires (Royal Albert Hall)	They have problems with outside broadcasts and finding space on the highways for vehicles. Signage and way finding can be a problem. Council doesn't seem to work much with the GLA Mayors office.
Theatre Group	There is a perception that the west end is not safe. Okay in the day time but not in the evening.
Cllr Astaire	Backed this up by saying how crime figures have fallen in this area and point was noted.
Valentina Wong (Westminster City Council Arts Information)	Talked about the success of the street pianos scheme. Pianos placed in vacant shops in Church Street and elsewhere in the city. Council gave free rent for this arts project. Also noted difficulty in getting temporary change of use.
Christine Yau Chinatown Arts Space/Chinese Community Centre	Places need to be made available in Chinatown at affordable cost for arts space.
Community Arts Space	Made point that artist's space has been lost in Westminster and residents don't get the benefit of the cultural offer.
Theatre Lobby	Greatly supported by council especially through the theatreland project. Stressed the importance of the theatre industry bringing 11 million visitors a year. Each theatre has a contact and the council should have a data bank for better communication between the two. The Council should give the theatre industry special consideration with possibly dedicated officers to deal with theatre planning applications.
Liz Frimstone (Victoria Interchange Group)	Residents would like arts space from section 106 money. A better placed library is needed on Victoria Street.
Keith Hearn (CB Richard Ellis)	Pointed out that there are already conflicting interests that section 106 money is used for such as affordable housing, employment opportunities etc.
Arts Lobby	Asked if we can ring fence particular land uses for the arts and could community uses be funded by section 106 process.
Louise Francis – Development Planning Services	Section 106 agreements have to be dealt with on a case by case basis.
Liz Frimstone (Victoria Interchange Group)	Recommended that developers need to go direct to community groups to find out what they need.
Pimlico Resident	Stated that there is a great shortage of orchestral rehearsal space in Westminster.
Arts Lobby	Temporary rehearsal space could be used in vacant shop units and run on a roster. Vacant units affect neighbourhoods and it would be better if they were used.
7. Are there any other issues that have not been covered above?	
Disability Arts Group	stated that there are some good venues and some bad venues that address the needs of disabled people. There needs to be a retrospective review to see what premises comply with regulations.

Lisa O'Donnell	Advised that people can make further comments by emailing in their comments or by talking direct to the LDF Team.
Liz Frimstone (Victoria Interchange Group)	Acknowledged this opportunity to make comments and that this and other workshops was a good process.
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