

Westminster City Hall
64 Victoria Street
London
SW1E 6QP

Mr. Forest
Campaigns & Education Officer - Equity
gforest@equity.org.uk

By-Email

Dear Mr. Forest,

I write further to the petition submitted by Equity with the support of residents, businesses, visitors and performers.

I would like to thank you for taking the time to collate and express the views of so many, and for sharing these with Council as it considers its review of street entertainment.

This Council has been clear in its reports that it does not wish to stop street entertainment – this is consistent with its existing policy, that permits licensed street performance in designated areas. Our future considerations are not proposing a prohibition on street entertainment.

The Licensing Committee have now invited residents, businesses, and stakeholders to contribute to a consultation on its proposals to modify the existing approach. The proposals seek to balance the aspirations of street performers, support the cultural offer across the city, and at the same time to ensure there is adequate protection to prevent nuisance and promote public safety.

I note you have expressed a view on the licensing conditions, which we would welcome discussing with you. For clarity, we are proposing only one change to the conditions for licensed performers, and this relates to conduct and behaviour towards police officers and city inspectors. Against the backdrop of increased provocation and non-compliance in some areas, we believe this is a proportionate expectation of those who seek license or hold licenses. We believe that this is a reasonable requirement.

In the interests of openness and transparency and for completeness in response to your petition, the Council is considering whether or not to limit the use of amplified music in one of the designated performance spaces in Leicester Square, and we are suggesting that children under the age of 14 should not be granted licenses, and only to grant to those aged 14-18 to with the support of a recognised responsible adult.

Finally, whilst the Council provides and regulates a street performing licensing scheme, it is only right that those who do not comply with are subject to enforcement. This approach ensures a fair environment for those who do comply with the law.

A decision as to any changes to the licensing arrangements will be taken at the end of the consultation period.

This response is consistent with that of our conversations when we met with representative street performers and Equity last week, at which my colleague gave a commitment to provide further information to you. We have agreed to ongoing dialogue and therefore please do not hesitate to reach out to me if I or any member of the team can help further.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. Wiltshire". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Mark Wiltshire
Director, Public Protection & Licensing

cc. Cllr A Less, (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Communities & Public Protection)