

Busking and Street Entertainment Policy Consultation: analysis of digital and physical surveys



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Introduction

This report presents the quantitative and qualitative data analysis of the Busking and Street Entertainment consultation results, conducted by Westminster City Council from the 14th of January until the 24th of February 2020. This consultation and the proposed licensed areas follow the increase of complaints across the West End and St James’s wards from 2017 and 2019, as reflected on the hotspot map below.

The completion rate was high, with 712 completed surveys: 274 residents, 190 people who work in Westminster, 161 visitors, 63 street entertainers and 25 people who identified as others.

The locations covered by the policy the consultation refers to are:

1. Trafalgar Square (no specific question about these pitches, but respondents left comments about them)

- Pitch 1: Trafalgar Square North Terrace Zone
- Pitch 2: King Charles Statue, Pitch 3: Northumberland Avenue

2. Oxford Street

- Pitch 4: Marble Arch
- Pitch 5: Old Quebec Street
- Pitch 6: Vere Street

3. Piccadilly Circus

- Pitch 7: Glasshouse Street
- Pitch 8: Eros Statue

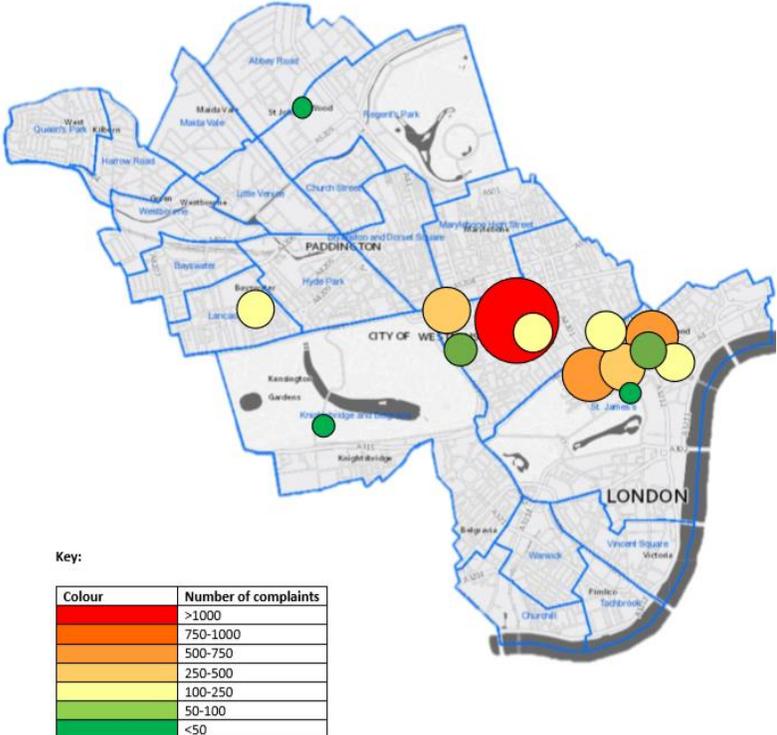
4. Chinatown

- Pitch 9: Gerrard Street

5. Leicester Square

- Pitch 10: Leicester Square North West Terrace
- Pitch 11: Leicester Square North East Terrace

Hotspot map of Busking and Street Entertainment complaints received across the City of Westminster, April 2017 to November 2019



Key:

Colour	Number of complaints
Red	>1000
Orange-Red	750-1000
Orange	500-750
Yellow-Orange	250-500
Yellow	100-250
Light Green	50-100
Green	<50

Only streets which have received at least 25 busking complaints during this period are included in the calculations for this map

Executive summary

Half of respondents to the consultation feel that the policy does not strike the right balance, with residents and businesses generally believing that measures do not go far enough to protect them from amplification and displacement and address the challenge of enforcement. Conversely, entertainers and visitors feel that current legislation could solve most issues and this policy hinders busking's cultural contributions.

Overall, there is strong agreement about a licensing policy applied to all areas: 68% Agree or Strongly Agree for Oxford Circus, 67% for Piccadilly Circus, 65% for Chinatown and 67% for Leicester Square.

Support for the prohibited areas achieved a majority in Oxford Street (56%), Piccadilly Circus, Chinatown, Leicester Square (54.5%), particularly among residents and workers, who tend to highlight across the consultation, written feedback and evidence statements the disruption and anxiety caused by loud noise and concerns about displacement, reflected in the support for locations without entertainment and licensing.

Qualitative analysis of the open-ended questions underlines that residents/workers tended to agree with most measures. Overall, they were in favour of more rigorous enforcement, particularly regarding noise levels and amplification. As the code of conduct attempts to preserve the status quo, they felt that the policy should be extended to avoid displacement issues. On the other hand, street entertainers and visitors tended to fear that the limitations on amplified pitches, joining the SPA and being restricted to certain areas will lead to a significant decline of busking and performers' livelihoods.

This division of opinions highlights the challenges of responding to the complaints and strong statements received, while safeguarding buskers' activities and the cultural legacy of street entertainment in London.

Policy conditions:

- 44% agree that the policy strikes the right balance and 50% disagree
- 49.5% support the proposed joint working with the SPA in Trafalgar Square
- 48% support the principles proposed Code of Conduct

Locations:

Oxford Street support for prohibited areas 56%

- Licensing Pitch 4: Marble Arch 53%
- Licensing Pitch 5: Old Quebec Street 50%
- Licensing Pitch 6: Vere Street 49%

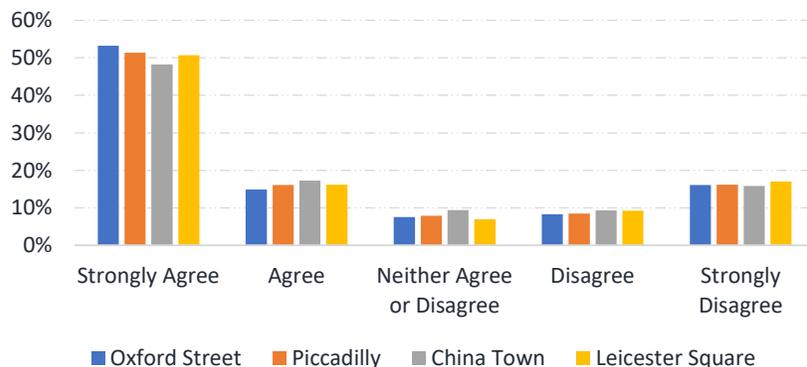
Piccadilly Circus, Chinatown, Leicester Sq. support for prohibited areas 54.5%

- Piccadilly Circus support for pitches 67.5%
 - Pitch 7: Glasshouse Street 50%
 - Pitch 8: Eros Statue 51%
- Chinatown support for regulation 65.5%
 - Pitch 9: Chinatown (Gerrard Street) 48%
- Leicester Square support for pitches 67%
 - Pitch 10: Leicester Square North West Terrace 51%
 - Pitch 11: Leicester Square North East Terrace 44%

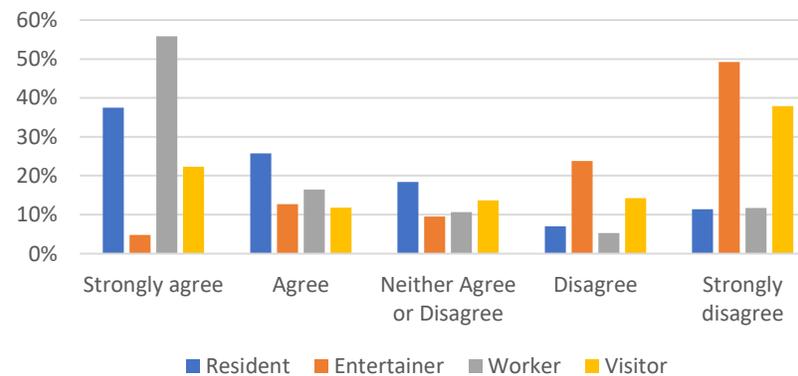
Licensing:

- Support for license Conditions 50% and license fee 42%

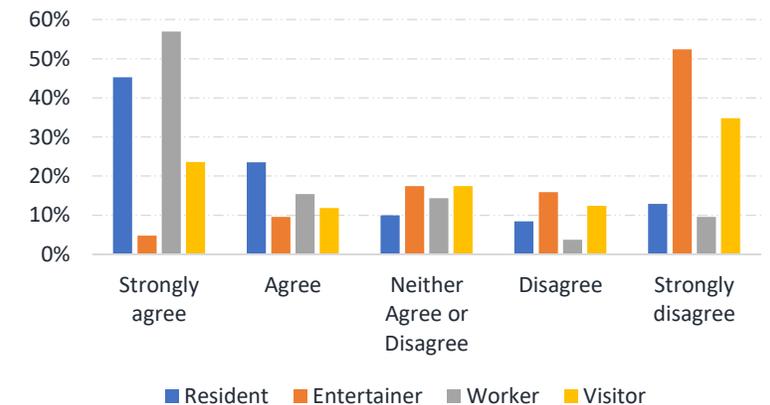
Introducing Licensing in Oxford Street, Piccadilly Circus, Chinatown and Leicester Square



Prohibited areas in Piccadilly Circus, Chinatown and Leicester Square



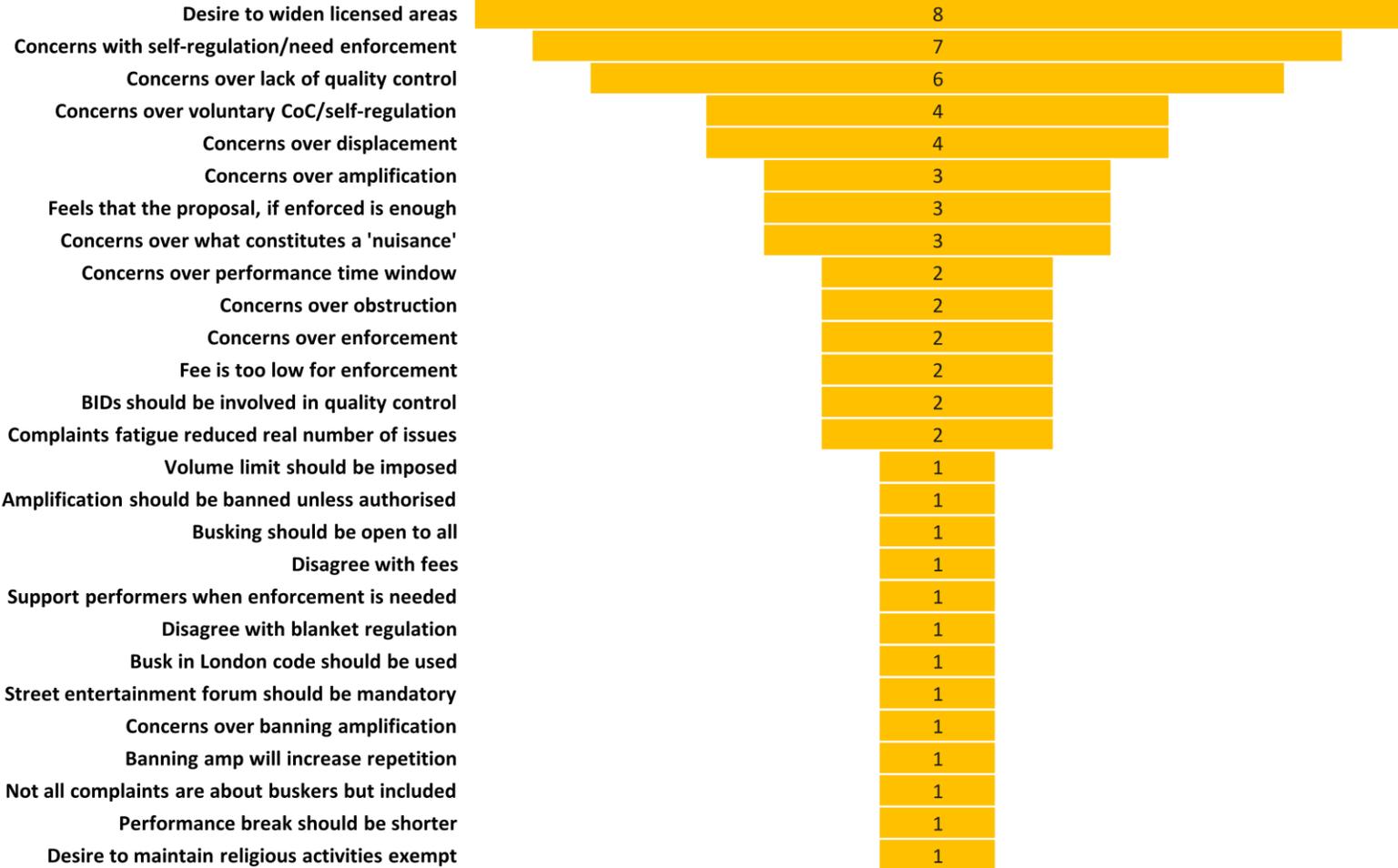
Prohibited areas in Oxford Street



Executive summary cont.: themes that arose from written consultation feedback

During the consultation process, Westminster City Council received 14 written communications from diverse stakeholders across the borough. These included BIDs, community associations, a street entertainer, a pan-London organisation, a councillor, a religious charitable organisation, cultural institutions and investment bodies.

The most mentioned themes are listed below, including the number of stakeholders who mentioned them, while a written summary of their responses split by geographical area where the stakeholder operates or is most preoccupied by, can be found in the next slide.



Executive summary cont.: themes that arose from written consultation feedback

Covent Garden – 2 stakeholders:

- Overall desire that licensing be extended to Covent Garden, Seven Dials and one to Long Acre
- Two state that self-regulation does not work and that the voluntary nature of the Code of Conduct will not be enough, particularly to control ASB (mentioned by one body)
- One stakeholder mentioned that the time window should match what is currently practiced in Covent Garden and voiced concerns that the SPA only covers one pitch and there is no admissions or complaints procedure
- Feeling that amplification guidelines are not enough - one wishes to see a defined limit on volume of amplification, while another wishes it is banned unless specifically authorised
- One stakeholder included an attachment demonstrating the obstruction to footfall – including to a disabled access ramp - when all pitches on James St are used at once. They desire to move the magician's pitch to a spot with less impact (ex. West Piazza) and feel that complaints data doesn't accurately represent the amount of complaints as people 'gave up'

Chinatown and Leicester Square – 1 stakeholder:

- One body is concerned over displacement from Leicester Square to Chinatown particularly if there isn't enough enforcement, and adds that they wish enforcement should extend to illegal trading and begging
- North East pitch in Leicester Square should not be amplified as it impacts the businesses, residences and Chinese community centre

General West End (4) and Councillor (1) stakeholders:

- One stakeholder believes that buskers must join the Street Entertainment forum, which should have BID, council and busker representation and attendance should be tracked
- A councillor supports auditions, while one stakeholder feels that BIDs should be involved in a quality control process in the application phase and in training officers
- One religious organisation hopes that they will remain exempt from licensing and that they will abide by the Code of Conduct
- One company supports the proposals but proposes that the definition of 'premises' must be changed to 'property' to include street trading stall, mirroring the London Local Authorities Act
- A Councillor and another stakeholder feels that the proposal is balanced but only if strongly enforced and the areas widened

Trafalgar Square area (2) and stakeholders who mentioned it:

- Several concerns over self-regulation and displacement – two feel that licensing should be used to limit overcrowding, excessive noise and ASB, and one for quality control
- Amplification on the North Terrace will prove to be a nuisance
- One stakeholder questions the management of activity clash between Christmas Markets and buskers and also notes that the King Charles Statue and Northumberland Avenue pitches can cause issues of motorist and pedestrian visibility and obstruct thoroughfares

Oxford Street/Bloomsbury area – 2 stakeholders:

- Concerns over lack of criteria for what constitutes a 'nuisance' and obstruction
- Two stakeholders feel that proposal isn't balanced outside of licensed areas given the lack of enforcement powers, the voluntary nature of the Code of Conduct and that self-regulation will be ineffective
- Concerns over displacement from Marble Arch and Old Quebec St to Baker St, Duke St or Marylebone High St – some support a borough wide licensing scheme
- Concerns over lack of quality control and one stakeholder wishes that BIDs are involved in the decision process
- Desire for BIDs to be more involved in discussions, and may need a contribution around resource implications
- Feel that performance times window is too long without enforcement

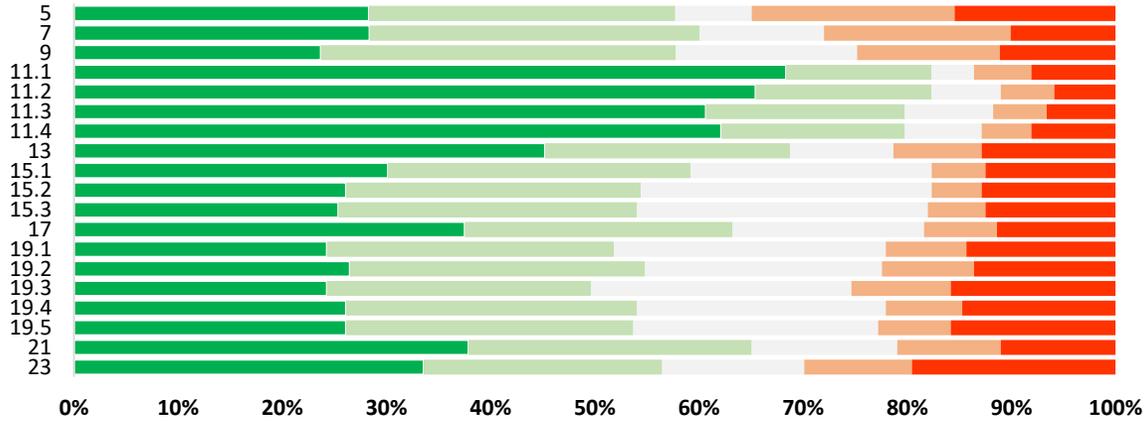
Pan-London (1) and street entertainment (1) stakeholders:

- One stakeholder defends that busking should be open to all and treated as a cultural asset, while supporting responsible street entertainment and stakeholder engagement
- One encourages Busk in London code to be used instead of the Code of Conduct
- The same stakeholder does not support blanket regulation nor fees but feels that street entertainers and the council must work together to nurture a successful culture
- A performer notes that amplification should not be banned as it effectively stops many from being able to perform and increases repetition due to limited possible acoustic repertoire – suggests using 'sound meter' app to understand what volume is reasonable and regulate it accordingly. They also say that 15min break for a 45min performance would be more appropriate

Executive summary cont.: charts showing the overall split between residents and workers on one side and street entertainers and visitors on the other

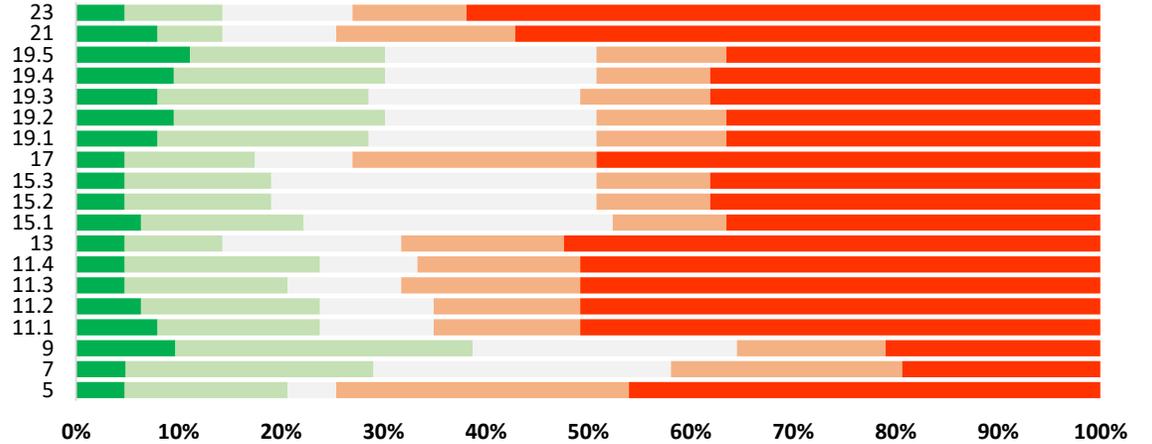
On average, the majority (62%) of residents agree/strongly agree with the overall proposals.

Residents



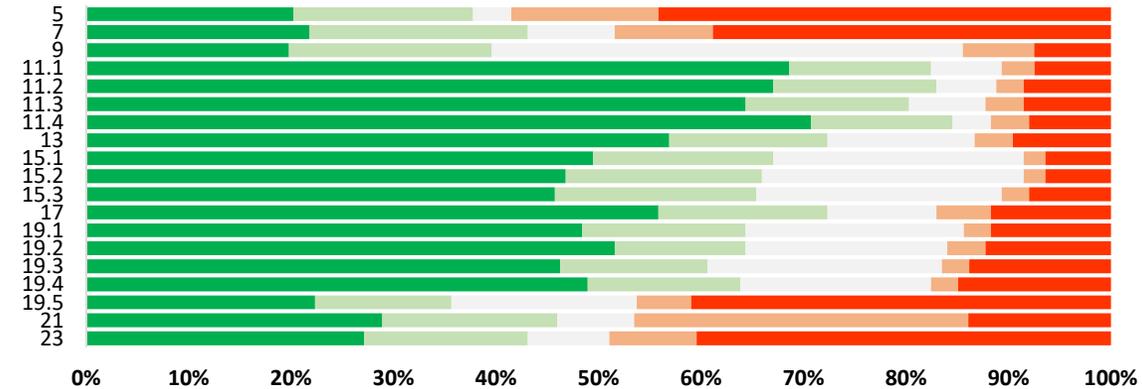
On average, the majority (58%) of entertainers disagree/strongly disagree with the proposals.

Entertainers



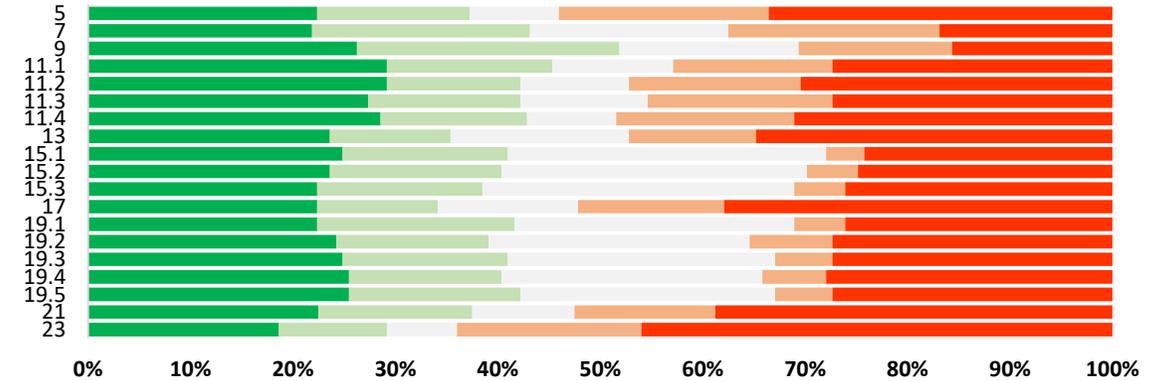
On average, the majority (62%) of workers agree/strongly agree with the proposals.

Workers



There is mixed agreement (40%) and disagreement (41%) amongst visitors.

Visitors



Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree or Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Top cohesive responses within each of the demographic groups

Most cohesive answers among residents - denoted by majority of Strongly Agree and Agree:

- Introducing regulation in all the areas mentioned, Oxford St and Piccadilly Circus (82%), Chinatown and Leicester Square (80%)
- Then the prohibited areas within Oxford St (69%) and Piccadilly Circus, etc. (63%)
- Licensing Conditions (65%)
- The policy strikes the right balance and with the proposed joint working with the SPA in Trafalgar Square (58%)
- There is a majority of Strongly Agree and Agree for all questions, except for Pitch 9: Chinatown (Gerrard Street) (question 19.3) at 49%

Most cohesive answers among street entertainers - denoted by majority of Strongly Disagree or Disagree:

- Policy strikes the right balance and with the licensing conditions (75%), introducing regulation in all of the policy areas and the £20 license fee (73%)
- Prohibited areas in Oxford Street and introducing licensing in Chinatown (68%)
- Introducing licensing in Leicester Square (67%), Oxford Street and Piccadilly Circus (65)
- No single question achieved a majority of Strongly Agree or Agree
 - The highest agreed question was the proposal of joint working with the SPA in Trafalgar Square (39%), followed by agreeing with Pitch 8: Eros Statue, Pitch 10: Leicester Square North West Terrace and Pitch 11: Leicester Square North East Terrace (30%)

Most cohesive answers among people who work in Westminster - denoted by majority of Strongly Agree and Agree:

- Strong support for introducing licensing in Leicester Square (85%), Oxford Street and Piccadilly Circus (83%) and in Chinatown (80%)
- Prohibited locations in Oxford Street and in Piccadilly Circus, Chinatown and Leicester Square (72%)
- The only questions that do not achieve a majority of Strongly Agree and Agree are with the Pitch 11: Leicester Square North East Terrace (36%), whether the policy strikes the right balance (38%), the proposed joint working with the SPA (40%), the voluntary code of conduct and the £20 license fee (43%), and agreeing with the licensing conditions (46%)
- The discrepancy between workers overwhelmingly agreeing with regulation in Leicester Square (85%) and with prohibiting performances outside the pitches in the square (72%) while the North East pitch question gathers the lowest level of cohesive agreement within the group (36%) denotes the high levels of engagement with, and strong negative sentiments of, workers whose workplaces are located on the square itself, and who object to the location of the pitch and the fact that it is now the only amplified pitch

Most cohesive answers among visitors: denoted by majority of Strongly Disagree and Disagree:

- Visitors most disagree with the £20 license fee (64%), with the policy striking the right balance (54%) and with the prohibited busking areas in Piccadilly Circus, Chinatown and Leicester Square as well as with the licensing conditions (52%)
- Only the proposal of joint working with the SPA achieved a majority of agreement (52%), however only four questions achieved a majority of disagreement, demonstrating that this group is the most split but also has the highest proportion of Neither Agree or Disagree. As most qualitative answers demonstrate, this stems from the desire to voice that street entertainment is an integral part of London's culture that must be protected, but without having a specific opinion on other questions,

The consultation survey began on the 14th of January and ran for 6 weeks, ending on the 24th of February 2020. The council chose a consultation period of 6 weeks to enable a broad range of views to be gathered, and Westminster City Council handled the return of responses. Most were provided through the Smart Survey online questionnaire, but paper forms were also available and collected from selected libraries, and available at Q&A sessions. This led to 710 online surveys and 2 physical ones.

Some of the questions in the consultation questionnaire allowed the respondent to tick multiple answers. Therefore, in some of the analysis the sum of the response to a question may be higher than 100%. In other cases, the total response to a single answer question may add up to slightly over 100% due to rounding of decimal points. Questions are based on the total number of respondents per question, as not all respondents answered every question. Charts have been made for all questions, both compulsory and non-compulsory.

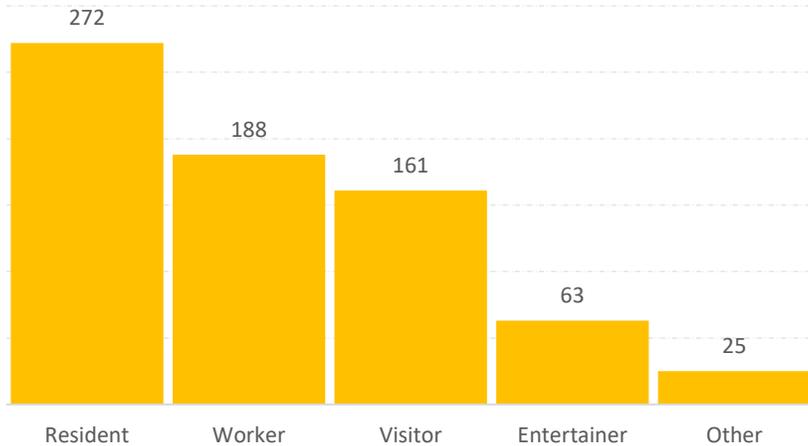
There were twelve open-ended questions, ranging from demographic information, to comments on close-ended questions and a call for any additional comments. A thematic analysis was done individually for each question, because of the different nature of the questions. The open-ended questions in the consultation were coded into themes and their frequency was quantitatively used for analysis; this encompassed reading every response to these questions and creation of a code frame. The selected quotes illustrate the most relevant themes.

It should be noted that there was a large number (11/26) of open-ended questions relating to aspects of the policy, so people often left unrelated comments on different questions, or expressed their opinion altogether in the initial or final questions, but skipped others.

Demographic information: who responded?

Number of people who responded within each demographic category:

- 38% are Residents
- 29% are Affiliated with a business or employed in Westminster
- 9% are Street Entertainer or part of a Street Entertainment Association
- 28% are Visitors



During the consultation, Westminster City Council received written responses from the following stakeholders:

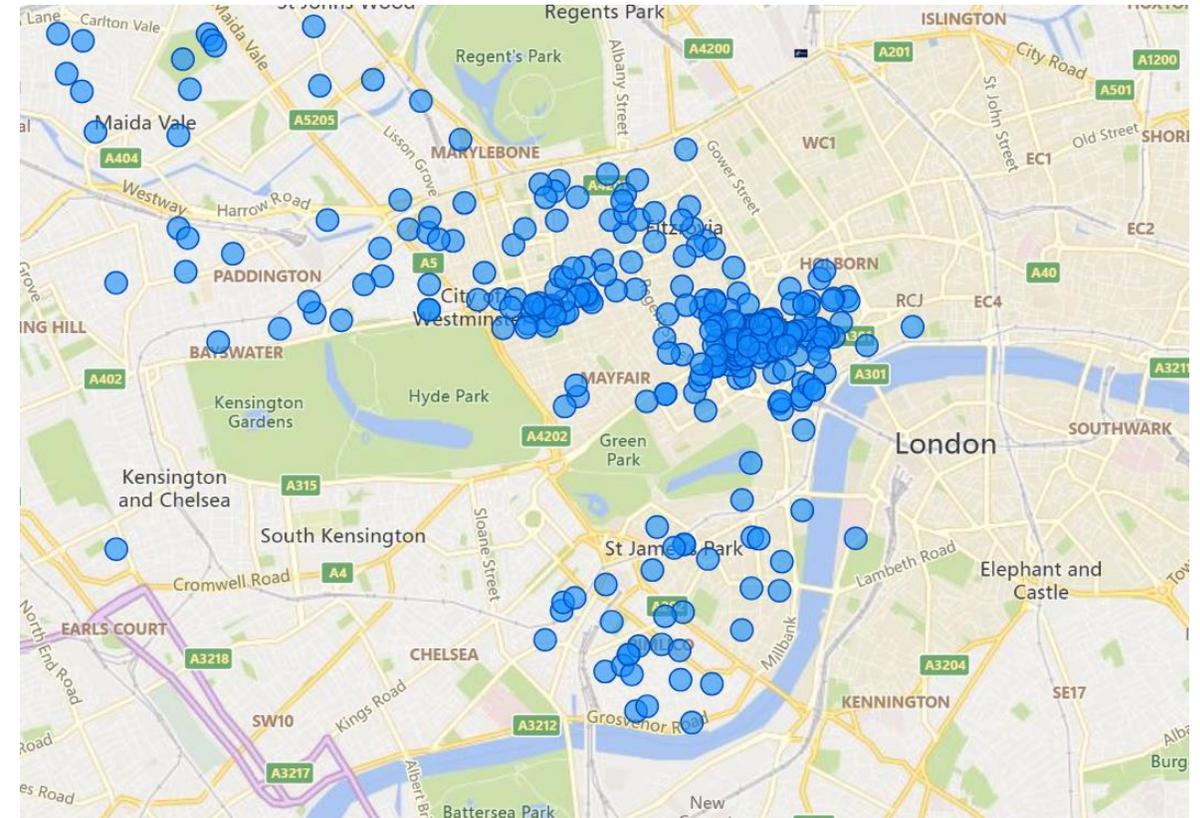
Covent Garden (CAPCO)
 Greater London Authority (GLA)
 Baker Street Quarter Partnership
 Bloomsbury Association
 New West End Company (NWECC)
 Covent Garden Community Association (CGCA)
 Jennifer Calvier (Busker)

The Long Acre Business Alliance
 Salvation Army
 West End Street Traders Branch (WESTA)
 Cllr Lewis Pancho
 St Martin in the Fields
 The National Gallery
 Shaftesbury

How long have you been living, working and or performing in the borough?

- 7% have lived in Westminster for less than 12 months
- 23% for 1-5 years
- 70% for more than 5 years

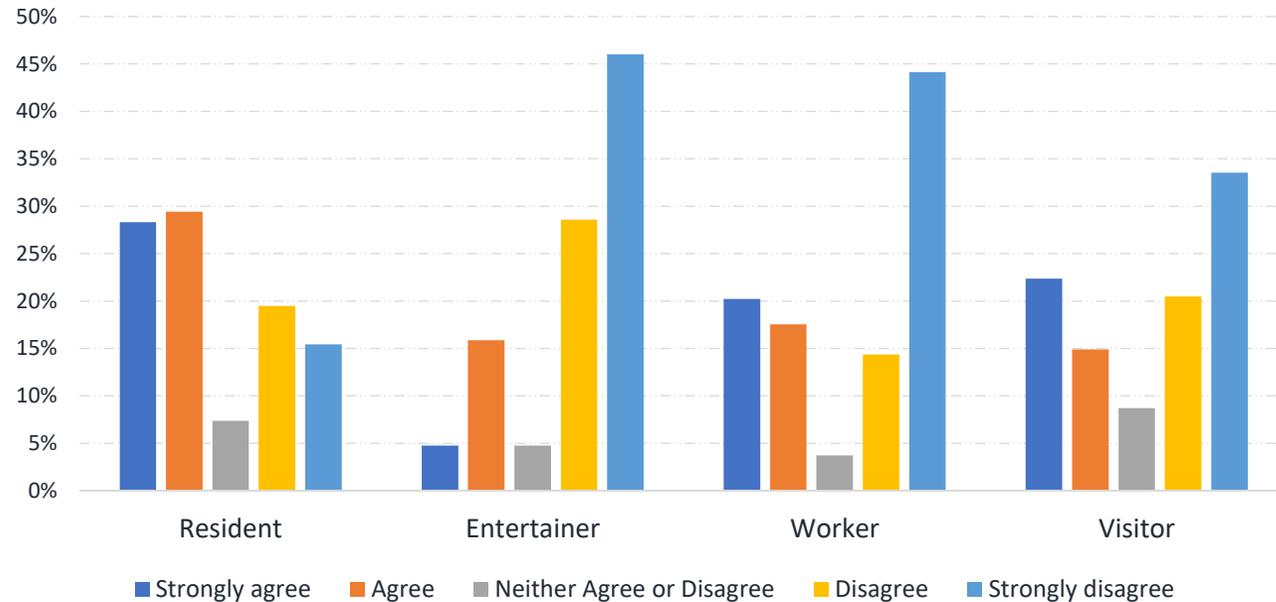
The map shows the postcode of respondents (optional question answered by 414 people)



Questions 5 and 6

To what extent do you agree or disagree that our policy approach strikes the right balance between supporting busking and street entertainment, whilst protecting those who are affected by it?

Overall, 50% of people Disagree or Strongly Disagree that the policy strikes the right balance. Residents are the only group who believe that it does, with 58% Agreeing or Strongly Agreeing – this is explained by the fact that a policy is seen to begin to address complaints. The reasons for disagreeing vary between the groups, illustrating the overall trend that residents, and especially workers, who left a comment believe that the policy could be stricter and/or worry about how it will be effectively enforced to combat current noise issues, therefore making current proposals unfair to them, while street entertainers and visitors tend to see it as unfair and “draconian”, effectively attempting to ban busking.



Breakdown of qualitative responses:

- 72% of the people who think that the policy doesn't do enough to protect them are residents and/or 17% are workers and/or visitors and people in general
- Of the 16% who mentioned the negative impact of street entertainment in their life and/or work, the volume levels of amplified sound, the same songs being played for hours, the crowds generating issues, and the quality of the singing/instrument being bad are the biggest issues
- 8% of respondents, mostly street entertainers and visitors saying that the ban on amplification in certain pitches prevents many artists from being heard, therefore preventing them from performing

This was the open-ended question that gathered the highest number of responses, and the qualitative analysis highlights some of the most mentioned themes throughout the survey, namely the division between those supporting and opposing amplification, the high number of workers who see the Leicester Square pitches as problematic, concerns about the livelihoods of street entertainers that arise from the reduced number of available pitches, and linked to that, the concern from residents that busking will be displaced onto their area and objections to the complaints themselves.

Theme	Frequency	%
Amplification is the issue	119	33%
Not fair to residents/workers	98	27%
Not fair to street entertainers	90	23%
Issues with Leicester Square policy	69	19%
Busking has had a negative impact in one's life/work	57	16%
Busking is a cultural part of London and this policy threatens it	51	14%
"It doesn't [sic] do enough to protect residents from noise."	48	13%
Licensing limits buskers' livelihood	33	9%
Concern for unregulated areas/displacement	31	9%
Policy is "draconian"	28	8%
Objection to the complaint itself	25	7%
Current powers are enough	25	7%
Busking is an unregulated activity and "should remain so"	21	6%
Defeats the point of busking - spontaneity, freedom of expression	20	6%
Association or self-regulation doesn't work	20	6%
Penalises the majority for a minority's fault	18	5%
Policy is not robust/clear enough for enforcement	17	5%
Quality of busking matters/"real" vs "fake" buskers	13	4%

Questions 7 and 8

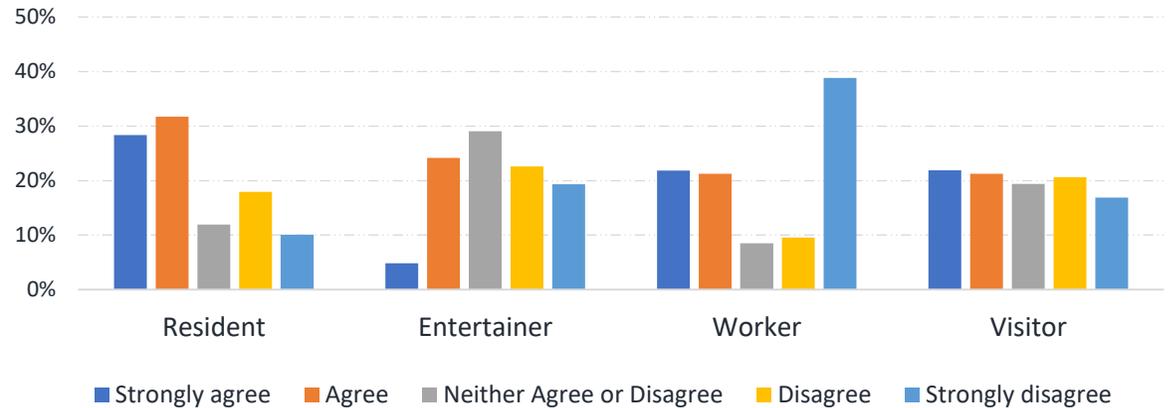
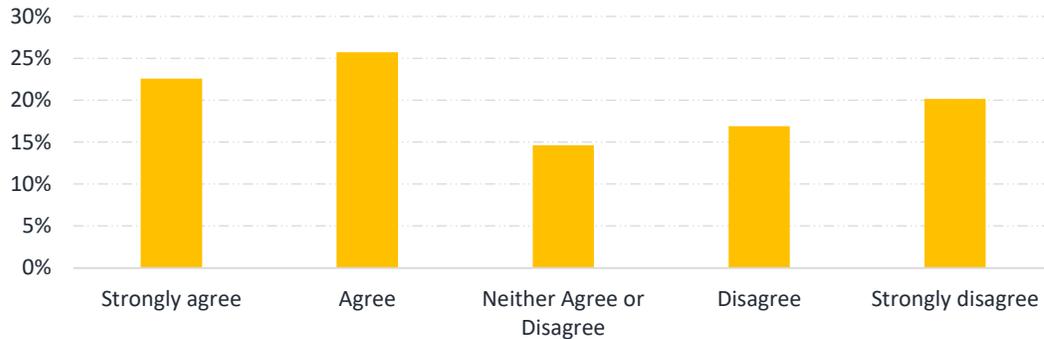
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the seven principles set out in our voluntary Code of Conduct.

Half of people Agree or Strongly Agree with the principles. Critical comments revolve around the perceived vagueness of certain aspects, particularly control of noise levels (22%) and obstruction of pavement (11%), and how these voluntary principles will be policed to ensure that the current sound levels are reduced in licensed and non-licensed areas, demonstrating the general trend that residents and workers want more enforcement and that licensing would enable to best identify the sources of nuisance. This is particularly notable in the open-ended answers, as 73% of those who believe that the voluntary nature of the code is problematic are residents.

The high numbers of workers strongly disagreeing might be explained by the overwhelming presence of comments regarding Principles 3 and 4 not being robust enough for enforcement, and because 97% of these respondents work in Leicester Square, there are visible concerns regarding this location which remain visible throughout the consultation.

There is widespread agreement across all groups, particularly among visitors (32%) then residents (18%), that performers should be allowed to sell CDs.

Total answers



Breakdown of qualitative responses:

- 82% of people concerned about Principle 3 are workers and 97% of those work in Leicester Square
- 13% of people who think it's unfair to buskers are residents
- 94% of people who think that principle 4 is too vague/subjective are workers
- 32% of people who believe that merchandise selling should be allowed are visitors from elsewhere in London, 18% are residents, 14% are workers and 14% are street entertainers
- 73% of the people who believe that the voluntary nature of the code is problematic are residents
- 100% of those who believe in the need for policing and enforcement from outside of the street entertainers' community/beyond the voluntary code of conduct are residents, including two who are residents and workers

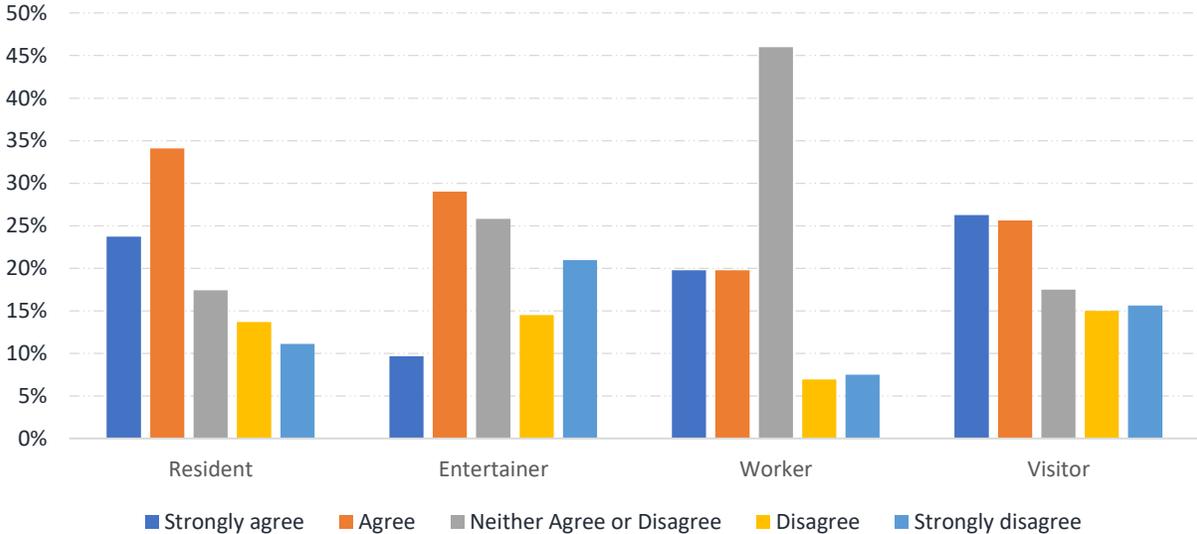
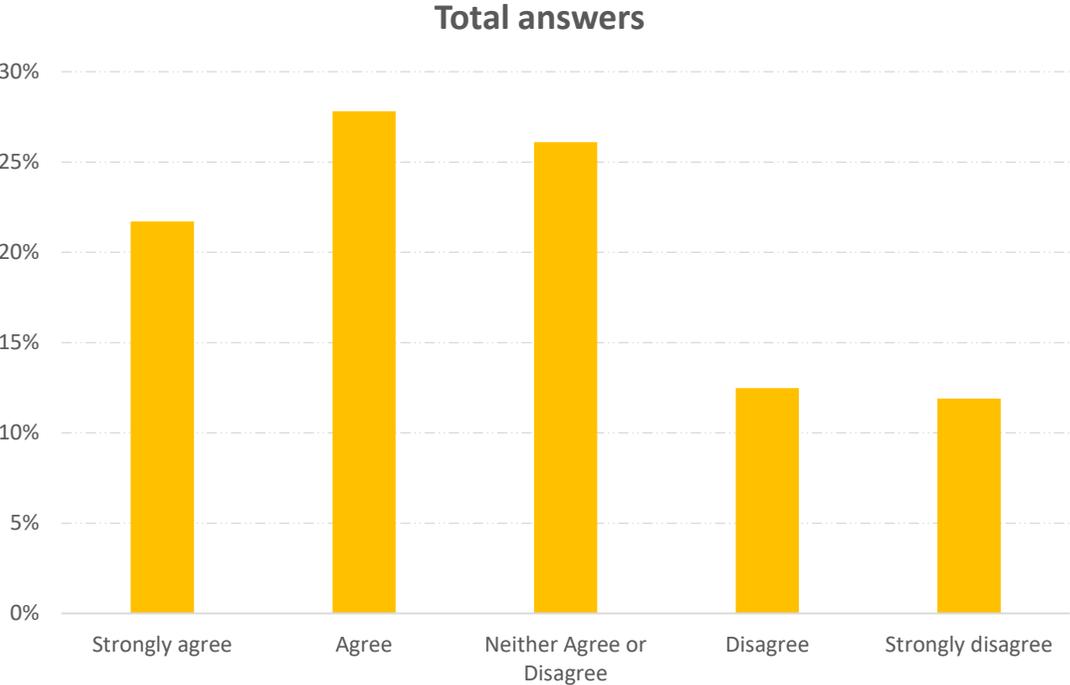
Theme

Theme	Frequency	%
Principle 3: noise level element is too vague/subjective for enforcement	66	22%
Code of conduct generally unfair to buskers	37	13%
Principle 4: Obstruction of pavement element too vague/subjective	32	11%
Principle 6: Performers should be allowed to sell CDs (and other merchandise)	22	7%
Voluntary nature of code of conduct is problematic	22	7%
Not fair to residents/workers or doesn't protect them enough	18	6%
"The policy will only work if it is constantly and rigorously enforced"	18	6%
Ban amplification	13	4%
Association/self-regulation doesn't work	8	3%
Proposed hours are too long/Stop after rush hour/9pm too late	7	2%
Issues with PLI: too excessive, not necessary for all acts, unfair or unrealistic	7	2%
Who will police a specific aspect? Mainly sound levels and duration of performances	6	2%
Principle 2: 40min slots are too limited/20min break too restrictive	6	2%

Questions 9 and 10: Supporting Busker and Street Entertainer Self-Regulation

Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the proposed joint working with the SPA in Trafalgar Square.

While most people (49.5%) Strongly Agree or Agree with the proposal, there are concerns about self-regulation not being enough to solve the current issues (10% of comments), particularly among residents, or it not working (6%), generally, and that having to audition to be part of the SPA might lead to elitism and create extra barriers that will exclude street performers from the trade (7%).



Breakdown of qualitative responses:

- Half of those who think that self-regulation does not go far enough are residents
- 43% of those concerned about the extra barriers and elitism within the SPA are street performers
- There is a concern that the discrepancy between the PSA rules and the Code of Conduct will lead to issues, for example by being able to start at 9am (SPA) instead of 10am (Code of Conduct)

Theme	Frequency	%
"Self-regulation doesn't go far enough"/need regulation	18	10%
SPA might prevent diversity/lead to elitism/creates extra barrier that excludes people	14	7%
Voluntary/SPA won't work	12	6%
Busking should remain unregulated	9	5%
Having to join SPA is unnecessary/unfair	6	3%
Extend SPA/self-reg to other policy-affected places	5	3%
Concern over areas not covered by SPA and over displacement	4	2%
Covent Garden is a particular (private) area, that's why self-reg works there	3	2%
Busk in London as example that this might not work	3	2%
"Performers are more than capable of regulating this themselves"/Agree with SPA	3	2%
Ban busking	3	2%
Marking pitches is good	3	2%
Need for regulation because of 'gangs'/crime/ASB	3	2%

Quotes that reflect the most recurrent themes from questions 5 - 10

Most mentioned themes across these questions reflect that most residents and businesses who feel that the current policy is too vague and self-regulation is not enough to solve noise issues and displacement. On the other hand, most street entertainers and visitors believe the policy to be unnecessary given existing powers, that complaints might not always be valid and that busking should not be restricted to those joining the SPA.

Music making and opportunity to perform **should be available to all**, not just to those that are part of a group. The idea of marking the **entertainment pitches is good** though. (Visitor)

As an example, the "seven principles" clearly state performances should only be between 10am and 9pm, yet the Westminster SPA are already stating their code is **9am while 9pm**. (Resident)

Principles 3 - 5 could worryingly [sic] shift the balance in favour of the one complaint made. Hundreds of people can be enjoying the music, the volume is reasonable and the busker a talented and experienced musician, however one complainer can be upheld, without filling in paperwork for a valid reason etc which seems unfair. (Street Entertainer)

The Council require all noisy works (e.g. from construction) to cease after normal working hours. Yet it's now proposing to allow even louder noises to be created on a continuous and regular basis **until 9pm**. This is a massive issue for residents that want to enjoy their home after work. My **household has been struggling for months** with buskers in the proposed pitch area of Debenhams, when loud (amplified) tunes are played repeatedly non stop for hours. Repetition is unnerving. (Resident)

Point 4 says 'An obstruction is likely to be caused if a wheelchair or double pushchair cannot comfortably move past'. In recent planning applications the test has been that two double pushchairs must be able to pass comfortably in opposite directions. Again, we need **clarity and consistency**, and the same standards must be applied going forward. Please confirm what the correct standard is and apply it to the busking and planning standards. (Affiliated with a business or working in Westminster)

Trafalgar Square is a beautiful and historic landmark, and the **National Gallery** is a peaceful place. The presence of multiple mascots, vendors, musicians, individuals drawing on the pavement, etc, all take away from this. Tourists are unable to take photos without obstruction, and are hassled at length for money for photographs. **Residents and workers are disturbed** and prevented from sitting to enjoy a coffee or their lunch. It seems a shame. (Resident)

This code of conduct is basically a list of common sense rules. If buskers weren't considerate enough to use common sense before, why would they now? In effect, **Westminster has already tried self-regulation, but loud and prolonged busking persists** today. (Resident)

Banning amp usage [...] literally **means no busking at all**. Furthermore, 90% of the amps currently used in the street need an external battery to power them and the guitar pedals some musicians use need batteries too. Closing so many spots will cause an unworkable situation in Trafalgar Square and the **only pitch left** in Leicester. (Street Entertainer)

Use **current legislation** already in place to deal with the minority of buskers causing problems - rather than using **draconian** new powers that will punish the majority of buskers in Westminster who cause no problem at all. (Visitor from elsewhere in London)

It does not offer sufficient protection for those affected by noise and nuisance. **No amplification should be permitted anywhere**. (Resident and worker)

I agree with the principles, but the issue is how these are policed. If there is not **enough resource** to enforce this behaviour we will remain in the same situation as we are now. (Affiliated with a business or working in Westminster)

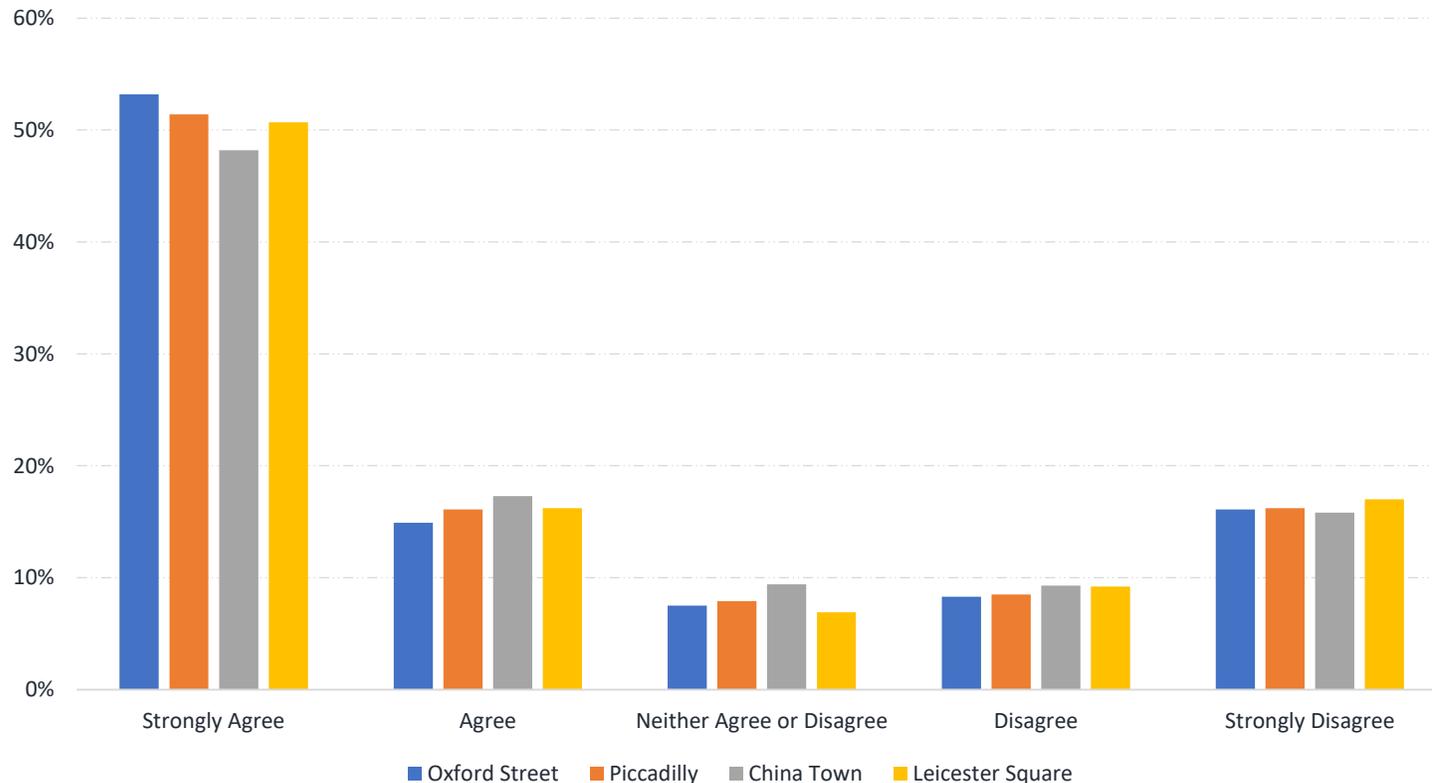
Question 11 and 12: Introducing Licensing: Oxford Street, Piccadilly Circus, Chinatown and Leicester Square

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the council should introduce regulation in these areas?

Overall, there is very strong support for introducing licensing in all areas: 68% Strongly Agree or Agree for Oxford Circus, 67% for Piccadilly Circus, 65% for Chinatown and 67% for Leicester Square. This support is particularly strong among workers and residents, whose proportions of Strongly Agree are always above 60%, in line with the demonstrable desire to regulate street entertainment in key areas of the borough, while residents and visitors overwhelmingly disagree.

The comments demonstrate that most people who disagree do so because they believe that this will stifle diversity and unfairly prevent some street entertainers from playing (16%), because there is no need for regulation (15%), the requirements for buskers seem too restrictive and current powers are enough to deal with the issues (9%) while some mention that this will have a negative impact on tourism and London's cultural life (7%). This more general question about several locations gathers some of the most frequent comments throughout the survey.

Total answers



Differences between demographic groups:

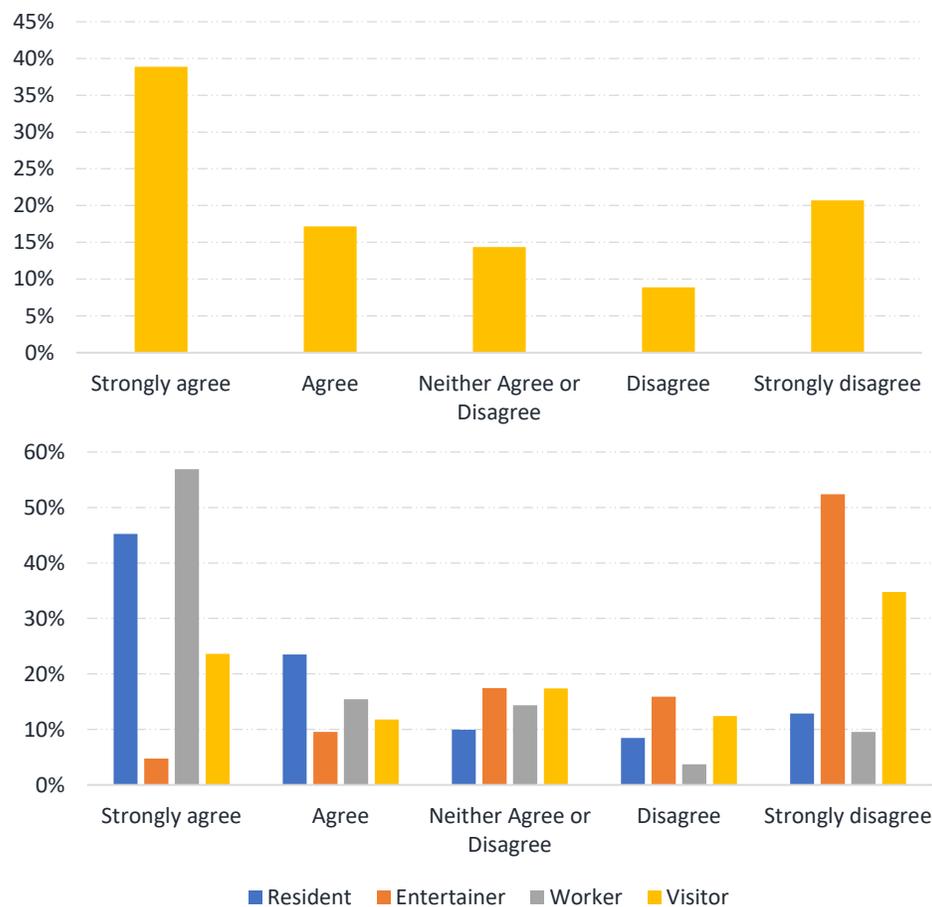
- Oxford St: between 68% and 69% of residents and workers Strongly Agree while only 8% of street entertainers do
- Piccadilly Circus: 67% of workers and 65% of residents Strongly Agree, but only 6% of street entertainers
- Chinatown: 64% of workers and 61% of resident Strongly Agree while only 5% of street entertainers do
- Leicester Square: 71% of workers and 62% of residents Strongly Agree, as opposed to only 10% of street entertainers
- Visitors remain fairly even across all proposed pitches, with between 27% and 29% always Strongly Agreeing.

Question 13, 14, 15 and 16: Introducing Licensing: Oxford Street

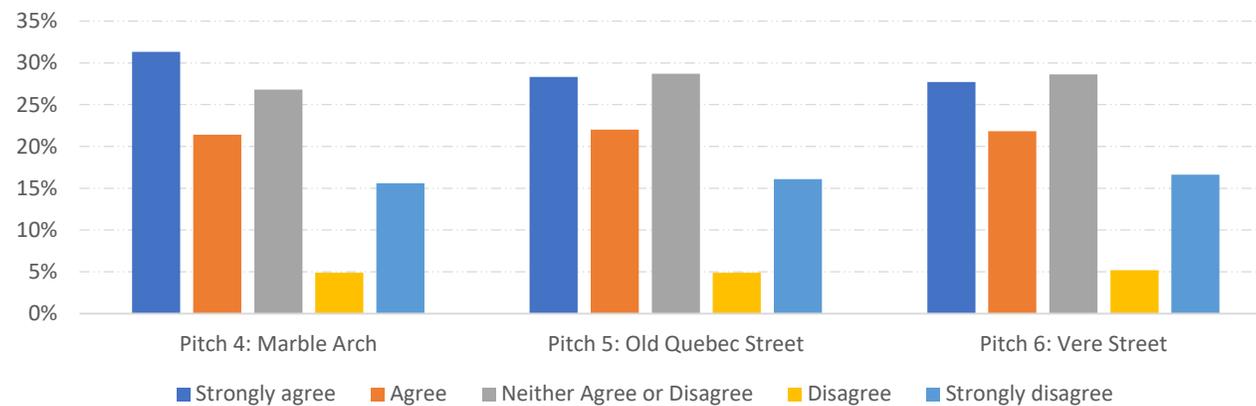
Of all respondents, 56% support the prohibited areas, despite clear differences between workers (73%), residents (69%) and street entertainers (15%) (of whom 68% Strongly Disagree or Disagree). All pitches receive a similar degree of support, except from street entertainers. The strong backing reflects that Oxford St is the area where most complaints originate, while entertainers feel that it is an adequate location for busking.

The substantial number of Neither Agree or Disagree and lower-than-average proportion of open-ended answers (31%) shows that only those with strong opinions decided to comment, helping to explain the prevalence of critical themes in the comments, despite the high levels of agreement in the quantitative question. Comments show the split between the desire to not license or add more pitches, and criticism that the area (or specific pitches) is not suitable for street entertainment.

Total answers about prohibited areas



Total answers about introducing licensing in different pitches

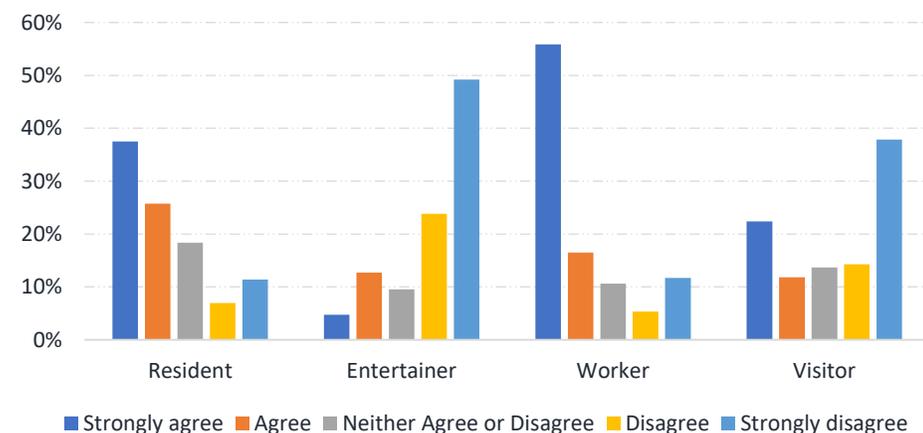
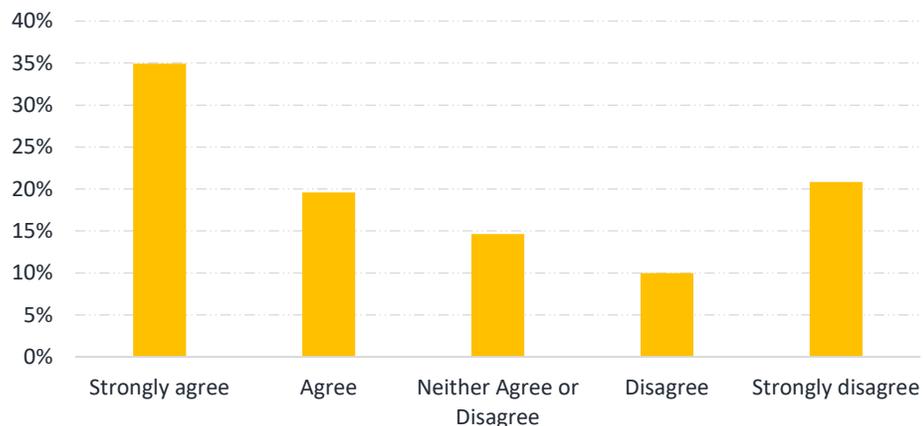


Theme	Frequency	%
Disagree with regulation/limiting pitches beyond current powers	51	12%
Too few pitches for all street entertainers	29	7%
More pitches should be added	24	6%
Oxford St pitches (non-specified) unsuitable: too close to residences, crowds, encourage busking	30	5%
Extend restrictions to other areas around/WCC	17	4%
Pitch 6 (Vere St) unsuitable: too close to residences/hotel, too often congested	16	4%
Amplification is the problem	15	4%
Pitch 6 unsuitable: too close to residences, might become "sound trap", blocks tube entry	13	3%
Include Tottenham Court Road: add/move pitches towards this way	13	3%
Busking should be regulated/prohibited everywhere	13	3%
Pitch 4 unsuitable: too noisy already, asking for no more busking there	12	3%

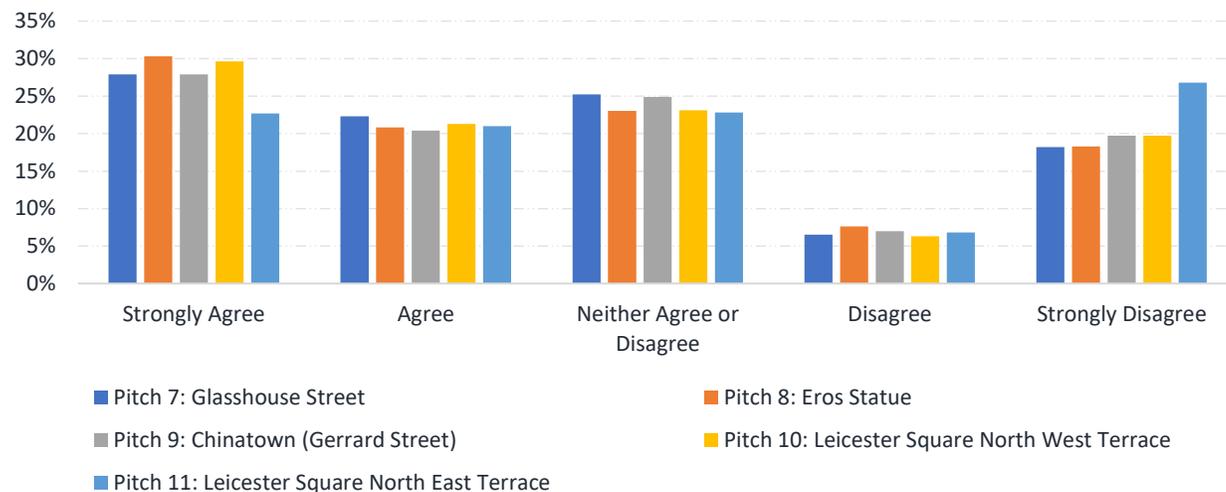
Question 17, 18, 19 and 20: Introducing Licensing: Piccadilly Circus, Chinatown and Leicester Square

Overall, 55% Strongly Agree or Agree with the prohibited areas, despite clear differences between workers (72%), residents (64%) and street entertainers (18%) (of whom 73% Strongly Disagree/Disagree). Pitch 11, Leicester Square North East is the only one to display more Strongly Disagree answers, due to the high volume of workers from the area that voiced their concerns about it being the only amplified pitch in the square. Amplification concerns, particularly in Leicester Square, and crowds are crucial to the current issues that residents and workers have with street entertainment in the area, while other residents fear displacement to their area from those unable to perform in the square. While open-ended answers are dominated by critiques of the pitches, performers and visitors argue, conversely, that it should have more pitches as it has traditionally been a busking hotspot that gathers tourists and is well-managed by entertainers.

Total answers about prohibited areas



Total answers about different pitches



Theme

Theme	Frequency	%
Amplification is the main concern when it comes to the location of the pitch	73	15%
LS should have no amplification at all (remove amplified pitch 11)	63	13%
Disagree with regulation/limiting pitches beyond current powers	46	9%
Non-specific pitches unsuitable: too close to residences, crowds, legitimises busking	22	4%
Pitch 7 (glasshouse) unsuitable: obstructs pedestrians	15	3%
Pitch 8 (Eros statue) unsuitable because: bank, echo	14	3%
Too few pitches	14	3%
Busking should be regulated/prohibited everywhere	14	3%
Chinatown unsuitable for busking: crowds, residents	13	3%

Respondents' quotes and recommendations on the locations of the pitches (that reflect the majority of comments)

The Embankment Area (essentially Villiers Street) was the area with the **third most complaints** (596) and essentially consists of one small street. Piccadilly Circus, Chinatown & Leicester Square covers an area several times larger but only had 33% more complaints. Regulating busking in Leicester Square will **displace** non-compliant buskers (those who cause the greatest nuisance) to nearby areas, including Villiers Street. Leicester Square should only be regulated if and when the **non-busking zone of Trafalgar Square is extended to include the Embankment area with no busking pitches except on Trafalgar Square and outside Waterstones.** (Resident)

There should be **more pitches** built and maintained throughout **Soho and Tottenham Ct Rd**, towards **Seven Dials** and the opposite way down to **Green Park.** (Visitor from London)

More need to be allocated. The corner of **Charring Cross road and Oxford Street** and **behind Oxford Street station** has always been very good pitches in the past for street entertainment. They cause very little disruption and are good area for visitors to watch. (Visitor from the UK)

I definitely feel if you are going to add restrictions there could be at least 7 or 8 spots. Especially some **between Oxford Circus and Tottenham court road** and some between bond street and marble arch. Outside Selfridges for example, there seems no reason not to have a spot.

The proposal for **Leicester Square** doesn't ban amplified and percussion performances in areas where they will **cause nuisance and harm to neighbouring businesses**, as it does in every other area. The proposal goes further and recommends an amplified pitch in the NE corner despite it being nearer than many other pitches to businesses including hotels, a charity community centre and al fresco dining. (Worker)

We would prefer it not to be directly outside Debenhams as we work above the O2 store opposite. The buskers don't play at Vere street. They are under the awning outside Debenhams. Further down **opposite [sic] Bond Street station** main entrance outside the new station (the other side of Disney) would make more sense in terms of space (Worker)

The pitch in front of **John Lewis, Selfridges and Band Street** are the ones that usually work best for the performers. (Street entertainer)

Pitch 9 in Chinatown is still a **problem** for residents of that area, **there are a lot of people who live in Chinatown** (myself), the Newport Pl square on the east side is the most densely populated, but there are flats at the west end too. It'd be better to move pitch 9 more south, closer to Leicester Sq. / Coventry St. (Resident)

The Leicester Sq pitches should be **South East and South West to reduce impact on residents.** We live on Gerrard Street, facing Leicester Square, and we can hear every word of every horribly repeated song from every busker on the north side of the square. Alternately, prohibit ***all* amplifiers** on the pitches. (Res)

Again this is pretty much a **blanket ban** on busking in the entire area. Busking is all about creating your opportunities, so if you can find a pitch which doesn't get complaints then why not? For instance there is a nice pitch near the **TGI Fridays** in Leicester Square which is suitable for street entertainment. (Street entertainer)

Other streets that more than one respondent felt should be included in the licensed regulation: Brown Hart Gardens, Weighhouse Street, St Anselm's Street, Duke's Yard, and George Yard, Providence Court, Green Street, North Row, Old Quebec St and Grosvenor Square, Agatha Christie statue.

Whilst I realise that a large proportion of noise complaints in Westminster occur on Oxford Street, the majority of these can be resolved by sensible application of the **law as is.** At some point in the future Oxford Street will likely be pedestrianised and these rules would stifle the possibility of performers to use that space. (Visitor from elsewhere in London)

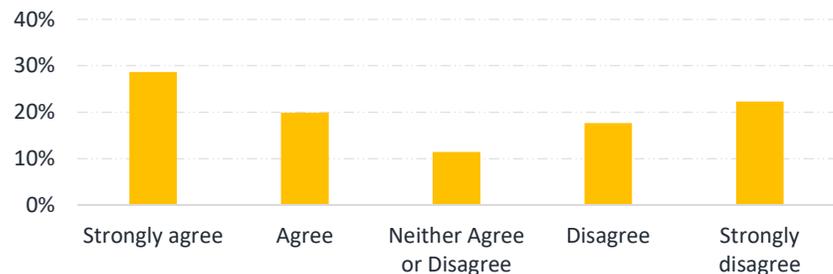
We would welcome focussed patrolling and enforcement within the Chinatown area, which is not part of the neighbouring BID and does not benefit from additional eyes and ears. This is to avoid the likely intensity of **displacement into Chinatown from Leicester Square.** There will be a need also for more intensive enforcement of illegal street trading and begging which occurs in Chinatown as a result of walking characters, balloon and flower sellers which are not covered by your prohibition. (Business)

Questions 21, 22, 23 and 24: The Licence Conditions and Fees

License conditions: of all the respondents, 49% Agree or Strongly Agree, while 40% Disagree or Strongly Disagree.

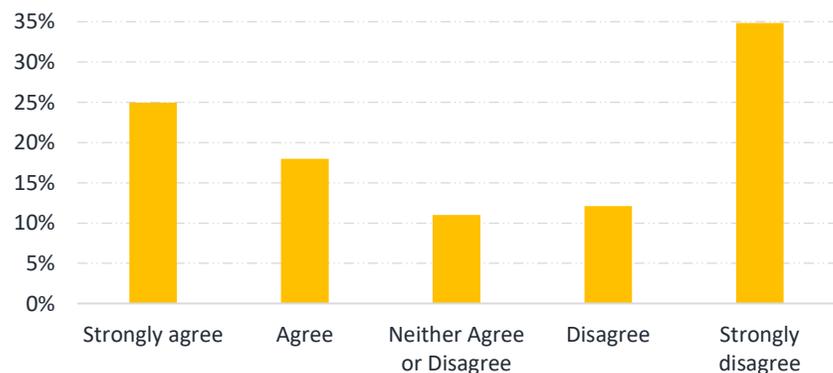
License fees: overall, 47% of respondents Disagree or Strongly Disagree, while 43% Agree or Strongly Agree.

Licensing conditions total answers



- 74% of street entertainers Disagree or Strongly Disagree
- 65% of residents Agree or Strongly Disagree

License fees total answers



- 74% of street entertainers Disagree or Strongly Disagree
- 57% of residents Agree or Strongly Agree

Breakdown of qualitative responses: the main divides remain, particularly between residents and street entertainers regarding whether the fee is too low to cover enforcement costs, to deter problematic or bad buskers or whether it is necessary at all. There was a trend towards believing that the fee should be waived or only payable upon being granted a license, rather than pushing for a lower price.

- 57% of people who commented that they believe the fee is too low are workers, 39% are residents, while no street entertainer commented to say that.
- 26% of those who commented that the fee is too high are residents, 21% are buskers and 16% are workers

Theme	Frequency	%
Fee is too low (needs to cover the cost of enforcement, business rates are higher, SEs don't pay taxes...)	123	19%
Fee is too high/unjustified (will drive performers away, limits cultural value/livelihoods, too big a barrier for particular groups...)	96	15%
Fee decision "needs to be [more] objective"	44	7%
Disagree with regulation/licensing beyond current powers	41	6%
License should be free	40	6%
Too restrictive/draconian	28	4%
Amplification is a crucial problem	25	4%
Fee should be higher/is too low to act as a deterrent for the bad performers	20	3%
"Code of conduct is more than enough" therefore licensing not needed	18	3%
Quality matters/licensing should be tied to quality of performance	13	2%
Management and enforcement will be the key to this working	12	2%
Ban busking	11	2%
Need to crack down on the [minority of] problematic performers	11	2%
Didn't see the policy document before commenting/confusion	10	2%
Complaints/issues aren't going to be solved/will be worsen through licensing	10	2%

Response rates

Question 1 and 2: 100% of people responded and 93 people commented from around 70 organisations

Question 3 and 4: 73% of people responded, and of those 519 people, 414 left a postcode

Questions 5 and 6: 100% of people responded to the question and 52% left a comment

Questions 7 and 8: 99% of people responded to the question and 42% left a comment

Questions 9 and 10: 99% of people answered the question and 27% left a comment

Questions 11 and 12: 100% of people responded, while 33% left a comment

Questions 13, 14: 100% of people responded, while 31% left a comment

Questions 15 and 16: 100% of people responded, and 26% left a comment

Questions 17 and 18: 100% of people responded, while 27% left a comment

Questions 19 and 20: 100% of people responded, while 27% and 41% left a comment

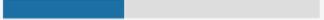
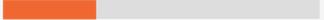
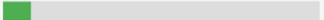
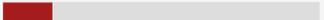
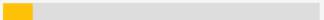
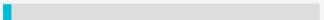
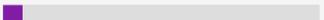
Questions 21 and 22: 99.7% of people responded, while 41% left a comment

Questions 23 and 24: 99.7% of people responded, while 48% left a comment

Q1. Are you a...(please tick all that apply):

+ Create Chart

Answered: 710 Skipped: 0

Answer Choices	Responses		
Resident of Westminster		38.31%	272
Affiliated with a business or employed in Westminster		29.44%	209
Street Entertainer or part of a Street Entertainment Association		8.73%	62
Visitor to Westminster, from elsewhere in London		15.63%	111
Visitor to Westminster, from elsewhere in the UK		9.44%	67
Visitor to Westminster, from outside the UK		2.54%	18
Other (please specify): Show		6.06%	43
Response Total:			710

Q2. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation please state its name:

Answered: 113 Skipped: 597

Responses: [Show +](#)

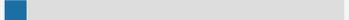
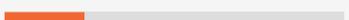
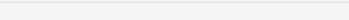
[Text Analysis](#)

Response Total: 113

Q3. Please indicate how long you have been living, working and or performing in the borough? (If multiple apply to you, please respond with the longest standing relationship in mind).

+ Create Chart

Answered: 519 Skipped: 191

Answer Choices	Responses		
Less than 12 months		6.55%	34
1 - 5 Years		23.51%	122
More than 5 Years		69.94%	363
Response Total:			519

Q4. If you live or work in Westminster, please give us your home or business postcode in the borough (6 characters, no spaces):

Answered: 414 Skipped: 296

Responses: [Show +](#)

[Text Analysis](#)

Response Total: 414

4. Our Policy Approach

5. To what extent do you agree or disagree that our policy approach strikes the right balance between supporting busking and street entertainment, whilst protecting those who are affected by it?

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	1) Strongly Agree		21.97%	156
2	2) Agree		21.69%	154
3	3) Neither Agree or Disagree		6.34%	45
4	4) Disagree		19.30%	137
5	5) Strongly Disagree		30.70%	218
			answered	710
			skipped	0

5. Our Policy Approach Continued

6. "Our policy approach strikes the right balance between supporting busking and street entertainment whilst protecting those who are affected by it." If you disagree with the above statement, please let us know why.

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question		100.00%	372
			answered	372
			skipped	338

6. Our Code of Conduct

7. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the seven principles set out in our voluntary Code of Conduct. (Policy Document: Page 8-9)

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	1) Strongly Agree		22.59%	159
2	2) Agree		25.71%	181
3	3) Neither Agree or Disagree		14.63%	103
4	4) Disagree		16.90%	119
5	5) Strongly Disagree		20.17%	142
			answered	704
			skipped	6

8. If you disagree with the seven principles set out in our voluntary Code of Conduct (Policy Document: Page 8-9), please let us know why.

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question		100.00%	296
			answered	296
			skipped	414

Questionnaire 9-12

7. Supporting Busker and Street Entertainer Self Regulation

9. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the proposed joint working with the SPA in Trafalgar Square.

		Response Percent	Response Total	
1	1) Strongly Agree	 21.70%	153	
2	2) Agree	 27.80%	196	
3	3) Neither Agree or Disagree	 26.10%	184	
4	4) Disagree	 12.48%	88	
5	5) Strongly Disagree	 11.91%	84	
			answered	705
			skipped	5

10. If you disagree with the proposed joint working with the SPA in Trafalgar Square, please let us know why.

		Response Percent	Response Total	
1	Open-Ended Question	100.00%	188	
			answered	188
			skipped	522

8. Introducing Licensing: Oxford Street, Piccadilly Circus, Chinatown and Leicester Square

11. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the council should introduce regulation in these areas?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Response Total	
Oxford Street	53.2% (378)	14.9% (106)	7.5% (53)	8.3% (59)	16.1% (114)	710	
Piccadilly	51.4% (365)	16.1% (114)	7.9% (56)	8.5% (60)	16.2% (115)	710	
China Town	48.2% (342)	17.3% (123)	9.4% (67)	9.3% (66)	15.8% (112)	710	
Leicester Square	50.7% (360)	16.2% (115)	6.9% (49)	9.2% (65)	17.0% (121)	710	
						answered	710
						skipped	0

12. If you disagree with any of the proposed regulation areas, please let us know why.

		Response Percent	Response Total	
1	Open-Ended Question	100.00%	238	
			answered	238
			skipped	472

9. Introducing Licensing: Oxford Street

13. The map above shows the specific streets we propose to prohibit busking (areas marked in red). To what extent do you agree or disagree with these? You also can see a detailed list of streets here (Policy Document : Appendix A : Page 26-28).

		Response Percent	Response Total
1	1) Strongly Agree		38.87% 276
2	2) Agree		17.18% 122
3	3) Neither Agree or Disagree		14.37% 102
4	4) Disagree		8.87% 63
5	5) Strongly Disagree		20.70% 147
			answered 710
			skipped 0

14. If you have any further comments on the streets where we propose to prohibit busking and street entertainment in Oxford Street, please provide them here.

		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question		100.00% 219
			answered 219
			skipped 491

15. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the location of busking and street entertainment pitches on Oxford Street? See detailed map above (pitches marked in yellow). If you wish to see more detailed maps of the pitch locations, please see Policy Document: Appendix A: Page 29-30

	1) Strongly Agree	2) Agree	3) Neither Agree or Disagree	4) Disagree	5) Strongly Disagree	Response Total
Pitch 4: Marble Arch	31.3% (222)	21.4% (152)	26.8% (190)	4.9% (35)	15.6% (111)	710
Pitch 5: Old Quebec Street	28.3% (201)	22.0% (156)	28.7% (204)	4.9% (35)	16.1% (114)	710
Pitch 6: Vere Street	27.7% (197)	21.8% (155)	28.6% (203)	5.2% (37)	16.6% (118)	710
					answered	710
					skipped	0

16. If you disagree with any of the proposed pitches on Oxford Street, please let us know why.

		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question		100.00% 187
			answered 187
			skipped 523

10. Introducing Licensing: Piccadilly Circus, Chinatown and Leicester Square

17. The map above shows the specific streets we propose to prohibit busking (areas marked in red). To what extent do you agree or disagree with these? You also can see a detailed list of streets here (Policy Document : Appendix A : Page 28).

		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly Agree		34.93% 248
2	Agree		19.58% 139
3	Neither Agree or Disagree		14.65% 104
4	Disagree		10.00% 71
5	Strongly Disagree		20.85% 148
		answered	710
		skipped	0

18. If you have any further comments on the streets where we propose to prohibit busking and street entertainment in Piccadilly Circus, China Town and Leicester Square, please provide them here.

		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question		100.00% 194
		answered	194
		skipped	516

19. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the location of busking and street entertainment pitches on Piccadilly Circus, China Town, Leicester Square? See detailed map above (pitches marked in yellow). If you wish to see more detailed maps of the pitch locations, please see Policy Document: Appendix A: Page 30-32

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Response Total
Pitch 7: Glasshouse Street	27.9% (198)	22.3% (158)	25.2% (179)	6.5% (46)	18.2% (129)	710
Pitch 8: Eros Statue	30.3% (215)	20.8% (148)	23.0% (163)	7.6% (54)	18.3% (130)	710
Pitch 9: Chinatown (Gerrard Street)	27.9% (198)	20.4% (145)	24.9% (177)	7.0% (50)	19.7% (140)	710
Pitch 10: Leicester Square North West Terrace	29.6% (210)	21.3% (151)	23.1% (164)	6.3% (45)	19.7% (140)	710
Pitch 11: Leicester Square North East Terrace	22.7% (161)	21.0% (149)	22.8% (162)	6.8% (48)	26.8% (190)	710
					answered	710
					skipped	0

20. If you disagree with any of the proposed pitches on Piccadilly Circus, China Town, Leicester Square, please let us know why.

		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question		100.00% 295
		answered	295
		skipped	415

11. The Licence Conditions

21. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed licensing conditions? Please find proposed standard licence conditions on page 20 of the policy document.

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly Agree		28.67%	203
2	Agree		19.92%	141
3	Neither Agree or Disagree		11.44%	81
4	Disagree		17.66%	125
5	Strongly Disagree		22.32%	158
			answered	708
			skipped	2

22. If you disagree or have any further comments on our proposed Busking and Street Entertainment Licensing Conditions, please provide them here

		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question	100.00%	300
		answered	300
		skipped	410

12. Licence Fees

23. To what extent do you agree or disagree with a £20 fee being charged to apply for a busking and street entertainment licence?

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly Agree		24.96%	177
2	Agree		17.07%	121
3	Neither Agree or Disagree		11.00%	78
4	Disagree		12.13%	86
5	Strongly Disagree		34.84%	247
			answered	709
			skipped	1

24. If you disagree with a £20 fee being charged to apply for a busking and street entertainment licence, please let us know why.

		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question	100.00%	338
		answered	338
		skipped	372

13. Additional Information

25. If you have any further comments or suggestions on any part of our draft policy, please provide them here:			
		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question	100.00%	333
		answered	333
		skipped	377

14. Contact Information

26. Email address:			
		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question	100.00%	421
		answered	421
		skipped	289

