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The Health Safety & Licensing Unit
Southwark Community Safety Enforcement Business Unit
The Chaplin Centre
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27th May 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

Re: Proposed saturation area in Borough and Bankside

As an official Business Improvement District (BID), Waterloo Quarter works with and for businesses, securing funding to deliver a range of projects in the local area to improve economic performance and the physical environment in order to make Waterloo cleaner, safer and more attractive; as well as acting as a voice for businesses to speak directly to organisations such as the Council, Transport for London and the Police. Waterloo Quarter BID operates across the borough boundaries of Lambeth and Southwark, including part of Cathedrals ward, and therefore has a strong and locally representative interest in the proposed saturation policy. In this response it has been assumed that the area under assessment includes The Cut, as stated in point 5 of the overview, however this is not shown within the zone boundary on the map provided in the consultation pack.

Waterloo Quarter BID does not consider that it is appropriate or necessary to introduce a saturation policy in the area, as it will not address the current issues of alcohol related violence and ambulance pick ups, which have been detailed in the overview provided. There is an assumption that the data given relates specifically to local licensed premises and the overview does not demonstrate how a saturation policy would reduce these figures. Before a new policy is introduced, which aims to try and prevent future problems, the current problems need to be addressed directly.

We would also suggest that the proposed boundaries, which incorporate Blackfriars Road and part of The Cut, are not appropriate, nor are the proposed classes of premises. Well managed restaurants, pubs, bars and grocers shops can have a positive impact on the economic development of the area and add to its vibrancy, and there is a risk that with a saturation policy, new applications will be viewed negatively. In the case of The Cut, the recent redevelopment of the street specifically looked to encourage outdoor dining at the many bars and restaurants through marking out licensable areas in front of the premises. A saturation zone would seem in direct contravention to one of the aspirations of this award-winning regeneration scheme.

In the BID's experience, there is an issue with off licenses selling alcohol to people who are already drunk, in particular the local homeless population. This then has a knock-on effect on alcohol-related problems in the area. In our view, the approach to this problem should be to ensure that current licensees are adhering to the terms of their license and enforce or review where this is not happening, offering support to existing licensed premises to help manage the situation, before looking to introduce new policies such as the proposed saturation zone.

Licensees in Bishops Ward have recently come together to form a Licensing Forum, attended by representatives from Lambeth Council's licensing team, along with the Police. This forum gives an opportunity for licensees to discuss and resolve issues affecting them in partnership with key statutory agencies. Given that many of the problems identified stretch across the borough boundary, we would suggest that it would be beneficial for licensees in Southwark to attend, along with representatives from the Council and the Police Safer Neighbourhoods Team to work to address some of these issues on a cross-borough basis.

In summary, Waterloo Quarter does not feel that introducing a saturation area will solve the problems of alcohol related violence or ambulance pick ups and the current issues need to be dealt with directly. We would also have concerns that such a policy would impact negatively on new license applications.

Many thanks for your consideration,

Helen Santer
Director of Operations
Waterloo Quarter Business Alliance