

Better Bankside

**Making Bankside a thriving place
to live, work and visit**

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Cllr Barrie Hargrove
Cabinet Member for Transport, Environment and Recycling
Cabinet Suite
Southwark Council
PO Box 64529
London SE1P 5LX

10 April 2014

Dear Cllr Hargrove

Re: Public Access to Cathedral Square

Thank you for inviting our views in relation to the above matter.

Better Bankside has over 460 member businesses in the neighbourhood, and has been active in this area for nearly 15 years. We have been aware of the ongoing issues in relation to night-time antisocial behaviour being experienced by residents in Cathedral Square over the past number of years.

From what we have been told from residents the reported level of disturbance being experienced by them in Cathedral Square is unacceptable. As the incidents occur outside the normal business hours of most of our members in the vicinity, we have not received significant complaint or comment from them. However we are keen to help achieve a lasting improvement on the current situation that benefits everyone.

We suggest that further clarification would be useful on a couple of points raised by the letter from Rebecca Towers, namely what evaluation has been undertaken of measures to try and address the problems, and have revenue costs been estimated in terms managing a gate to the square.

Our position at this stage is as follows:

1. While the growing evening economy and the renewed vitality of the area around the market, station and Borough High Street are to be welcomed, the consequences must be managed in a way which all users and stakeholders can enjoy. Certainly no group should be overly disadvantaged by these developments
2. All measures should be considered to help address and proactively manage these on-going problems. We would be happy to assist in developing and piloting responses that would not necessitate gating the square. We are unclear at this stage what regimes have been tried to date, and what their impact, or lack of, has been
3. We would ask what guarantee is there that gating the square will deter people from congregating in adjacent spaces around Montague Close? We would like to see some form of human supervision being introduced. Given the nature of the problems any such solution would need to be carefully planned and adequately resourced. We would recommend exploring with all interested parties how this might work in practice –

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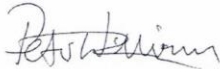
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residents, landlord, council, ourselves, and what prospects there are for financial contributions.

4. We would also propose that other resources be sought e.g. that revenue generated from any commercial use of the square be dedicated to its management and the eradication of these problems
5. The policy context is an important factor to consider. It is a strategic aim in London and local planning policy to increase access to the riverside. We would be concerned that gating the square will make it more difficult to ensure that future developments allow access to the river and to encourage existing developments to improve access to the river.
6. There is a paucity of open space in Bankside, and gating the square will further sever this open space from its surroundings.
7. We wonder if there is also an opportunity to look further at the planting in the Square – to look at planting that could be used to deter rough sleepers from using the space.

If you would like to discuss any of the points above, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Peter Williams
Chief Executive

cc.

Des Waters, Head of Public Realm
Rebecca Towers, Head of Parks