

Neighbourhood Planning
Policy and Projects
Westminster City Hall
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10th July 2020

Dear Sir/Madam

THE SOHO NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN (FEBRUARY 2020)

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft Soho Neighbourhood Plan. I set out The Crown Estate's representations below, focussing solely on public realm matters.

Background

The Crown Estate has limited property holdings within the Plan area (only 61-75 Brewer Street & 12 Sherwood Street), but its Regent Street holdings immediately abut the west side of the plan boundary.

Summary of Policies

We support the general thrust of these policies as set out in this chapter and have highlighted any specific comments in our review of the detailed policies below.

Vision for Soho and Plan Objectives

We support this vision and the plan objectives as set out in these sections.

Policy 23: as the operators of a retail delivery consolidation scheme, started to cover our Central London holdings but in practice covering all central London retail, we strongly support this objective.

Policy 25: as one of the partners in Wild West End <http://www.wildwestend.london/> we strongly support this policy.

Policy 30: we recently sponsored the provision of 238 additional on street cycle parking spaces within the West End including within Soho. This is in addition to around 1,300 spaces provided within our buildings.

Policy 31: this is the approach adopted in our new developments and we are looking to adopt even wider collective waste disposal and recycling schemes (such as that adopted in Swallow Street). We therefore strongly support this approach.

Recommendations and Projects

21. Restricting deliveries until after 7 am is too late. Deliveries and waste collections need to have a “round” to reduce the number of vehicles coming into central London. 6.00 am would be more appropriate, otherwise vehicle reduction initiatives would be undermined and traffic volumes would increase.

26. We support the introduction of 20 mph speed restrictions.

28. We already operate delivery and waste consolidation schemes and support their extension.

34. We support measures to discourage vehicles “rat-running” through Soho, not just large goods vehicles. We are not sure that the 7.5 tonnes restriction is appropriate or would be effective. For the limited number of vehicles it may deter the traffic signs would harm the public realm – create unattractive street clutter at the boundaries (including on Regent Street) which is unwelcome. Restrictions on through traffic is better achieved by blocking the routes.

46. We support the ambition to improve 5. Beak Street and 6. Brewer Street although we have some reservations as to the detailed design shown in the Publica 2014 Study.

47-49. See our comments on Policy 30 above.

52. While we support the need to reduce or eliminate waste/recycling bags being left on footways, we do not believe waste/recycling storage equipment on the street is a solution to this, rather this should be incorporated within the buildings where it is generated. If this principal is followed it provides good impetus to reduce volume of waste generated.

53. We already support preferred supplier schemes for recycling collection to reduce the number of contractors.

58. Water bottle refill stations: we support this project and have already provided a station at one of our buildings.

59-62 Food Waste: last May we launched our Food Waste Pledge, which brought together 12 restaurants in Regent Street and St James’s, to pledge to take action to reduce food waste. Over the first 10 months they reduced food waste by 8%. In addition, they increased food recycling rates by 10% on average. This also reduced vehicle trips on the road.

I trust that the above comments are clear in expressing our views. As noted above, our comments are solely focused on public realm objectives, and we ask that silence on other areas is not automatically deemed as support by default.

I would be very grateful if you could provide confirmation of receipt, and please do not hesitate to get in touch should you wish to discuss.

