

Dear Stuart

I am writing to you regarding the proposed temporary pedestrianisation of areas of Soho.

This is to propose the temporary pedestrianisation of Greek Street, Frith Street, Dean Street, Soho Square and Old Compton Street, in order to allow the businesses in this area to start trading again. The extra space that pedestrianisation creates, would allow businesses to add tables and chairs outside of their premises, and patrons would have the ability to enjoy the area, whilst remaining safe. All staff working in these businesses would wear PPE whilst they are interacting with customers, in order to protect themselves and others.

We suggest this would commence on a date deemed appropriate, based on the easing of the current lockdown restrictions, and would conclude at the end of September 2020. Proposed trading hours are 8am to 11pm, in order to allow deliveries and other essential transport into the area, as well as respecting the noise levels for residents on these streets.

As we are all only too aware, the impact of Covid-19 on businesses nationwide has been disastrous, and with Soho being a place of activity, entertainment, eating and drinking, we have been amongst the worst hit. With so many independent businesses in Soho, we are at risk of losing the culture that makes the area so special.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer has predicted that we are facing a 'severe recession, the likes of which we haven't seen', and therefore the need to act in any way we can to save businesses is urgent. With the business rates from Westminster alone contributing 5% towards the UK economy, as well as the area providing employment for thousands of people, the survival of this area is vital to the economy.

The West End is world famous for being the cultural and vibrant heart of London, and we are immensely proud of the community that we have cultivated here. We need to be given the strongest chance of survival, so that when we are through this atrocious time, we can still attract people from all over the world to come and enjoy the area.

An added bonus to this proposal would, of course, be the continued enhancement of the Council's green agenda, by reducing the number of vehicles in what, in truth, is a very densely occupied area.

This proposal would also show that Soho is once again open for business and would create a much needed injection of joy for the public, business owners and residents alike.

I leave this for your consideration and look forward to hearing from you on this proposal.

Yours sincerely

John James