



14th December 2015

Dear Member,

Housing and Planning Bill – Agent of Change principle

UK Music is the umbrella body representing the collective interests of the UK's commercial music industry, from songwriters and composers to artists and musicians, studio producers, music managers, music publishers, major and independent record labels, music licensing companies and the live music sector.

The Music Venue Trust is represented on UK Music's UK Live Music Group and is a charity created in January 2014 to protect, secure and develop the grassroots live music venues in the UK.

The Housing and Planning Bill proceeds to Report Stage in the House of Commons on Tuesday 5th January 2016. I am writing to ask you to support the introduction of an amendment that will ensure the "agent of change principle" is written into law.

At Public Bill Committee on the Bill, Roberta Blackman-Woods MP moved an amendment that would ensure a new development must shoulder responsibility for compliance when situated near an existing music venue. Similarly, if a music venue opens in a residential area, it too would be responsible for complying with residential requirements. The amendment was supported by the Opposition frontbench and has the endorsement of their DCMS team, led by Shadow Secretary of State Michael Dugher MP.

The amendments were resisted by the Government as unnecessary. The Minister for Housing and Planning considered that the national planning policy framework incorporates the "agent of change principle" already. This is not correct. Whilst some consideration for how to treat music venues in relation to planning decisions does exist, this is in guidance that can easily be ignored by local authorities, planning committees and developers.

An "agent of change principle" is necessary as it would protect struggling music venues from the financial and regulatory burdens that are often imposed by new developments

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in their vicinity. The Mayor of London's Music Venue Taskforce reported in October that grassroots venues in the capital have declined by 35% in the past 8 years. The "agent of change principle" is required to halt further threats to operating music venues.

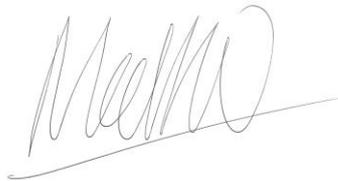
Venues act as important centres for cultural activity in our towns and communities. Grassroots music venues in particular act as important hubs for local music talent and offer a means by which musicians and performers can cultivate and nurture their creativity. The music industry contributes £4.1 billion to the economy and has grown 5% year on year. The sector needs thriving grassroots venues to ensure further growth.

We urge you to support the introduction of the "agent of change principle" as part of the Housing and Planning Bill currently before the House of Commons.

Yours sincerely



Jo Dipple,
CEO, UK Music



Mark Davyd,
CEO, Music Venue Trust

For further information, please see:-

- UK Music Press release on Public Bill Committee amendment - <http://www.ukmusic.org/news/agent-of-change>
- House of Commons Public Bill Committee debate – <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmpublic/housingplanning/151208/am/151208s01.htm> (col. 586 – 592)
- <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmpublic/housingplanning/151208/pm/151208s01.htm> (col. 595 – 600)
- Mayor of London Music Venues Taskforce report - https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/londons_grassroots_music_venues_-_rescue_plan_-_october_2015.pdf
- Parliamentary debate briefing - http://www.ukmusic.org/assets/general/HoL_VenuesDebate_Dec15.pdf

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