

BELSIZE VILLAGE MATTERS

Working for you all year round

Contact us

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Top: Cllr Maria Higson
Bottom: Cllr Steve Adams (l), Cllr Oliver Cooper (r)

We are writing regarding Co-op's proposal to open a supermarket in Belsize Village in the space formerly occupied by XO. As local Conservative councillors, we've spoken to the Co-op to discuss the plan, and are concerned by their proposal to open and sell alcohol almost 24/7.

We welcome the opening of new stores in the empty spaces. Our well-balanced and well-loved village has few retail units, and two being left empty after XO closed has a real impact on how the village feels. We will work with the landlords to ensure both units are let to good tenants ASAP.

However, we are concerned by the **threat of congestion due to using large lorries** and by **Co-op's request for Camden to loosen its rules on alcohol sales**. Belsize Village is an overwhelmingly residential area, and we want to maintain the harmonious balance between shops and residents.

If the current application goes ahead, Belsize Lane will become blocked by large delivery lorries. However, there is an opportunity to fix that, and we're asking for your assistance.

The Co-op has applied for a licence to sell alcohol from 6am to 11pm every day: longer hours than all nearby shops. The Late Late Store, Budgens, Englands Lane Tesco, and the Adelaide Road Co-op all abide by the normal limits that Camden applies of 8am-11pm (and just 10am-10:30pm on Sundays). **Only a level playing field will minimise harm and maximise competition.**

Belsize's Conservative councillor Steve Adams sits on Camden's Licensing panels, so cannot prejudge the issue. As his colleagues serving the area north of Belsize Lane, we're eager to represent your views.

We urge you to object to this loosening of Camden's licensing guidelines in our residential area. Licensing is a complicated area of law, with objections only permitted on strict grounds, and we present overleaf a number of sample arguments and how you can submit them to Camden.

At a minimum, we believe that the Co-op should commit to **not selling alcohol outside the ordinary hours** and to **use small delivery vans** suitable for the narrow road, instead of large lorries. We also believe that the Co-op could **use its CCTV cameras to keep the village safe** by angling its cameras helpfully and sharing footage to deter a repeat of the break-ins of 2017.

We hope your representations will persuade Camden and the Co-op to re-think their proposals. The Co-op cannot expect special treatment. If it cannot play by the same rules as everybody else, and minimise the harm to its neighbours, it should not open in Belsize Village.

Cllr Oliver Cooper

Leader, Camden Conservatives

Cllr Maria Higson

Camden's Shadow Cabinet member for Health

HOW TO OBJECT OR COMMENT

The deadline to comment on the application is 13th September. You must object in writing, quoting 29 Belsize Lane, by either emailing david.curtis@camden.gov.uk or sending a written submission to:

Licensing Team
Camden Council
5 Pancras Square
WC1H 9JE

HOURS OF OPERATION

By requesting to sell alcohol from 6am to 11pm every day, the Co-op has asked for a licence well outside the 'framework hours' for which Camden ordinarily grants licences, which are 8am to 11pm Monday to Saturday and 10am to 10:30pm on Sundays. All other nearby shops — including the Late Late Store, Budgens, Tesco, Waitrose, and the Co-op on Adelaide Road — abide by these hours.

GROUNDINGS FOR OBJECTION

In law, just four narrow reasons are permitted to reject applications. Below are the four grounds with examples of how the Co-op application does not meet the licensing objectives:

- **Prevention of public nuisance:** Large delivery lorries would block the narrow road and deliveries would clog up the narrow pavement, as Tesco Express have on Englands Lane, Heath Street, West End Lane, and Swaine's Lane. Deliveries should thus only be done with smaller vans. Other than the few independent shops, it is generally a residential area, where even limited noise and disturbance would amount to public nuisance. Given the residential nature of the area, any early morning deliveries would be inappropriate. The store would also generate waste; the Village suffers from significant waste problems, which we have spurred the Council into reviewing.
- **Prevention of disorder:** The area is primarily occupied by small independent businesses, with few having CCTV, making it more vulnerable. If the Co-op were to install CCTV to cover a 180-degree arc, including the whole shopping area, and make the CCTV footage available to the police, this would help to reduce the harm, although not entirely mitigate it.
- **Public safety:** The application does not stipulate minimum staffing levels when alcohol is sold. Camden's licensing policy and government guidance both recommend that minimum staffing numbers be provided during licensed hours. This will be particularly appropriate at the end of the school day, when the number of customers is expected to increase and potential harm is as well. Tesco on Heath Street has mitigated its impact by having a security guard present each evening.
- **Protection of children:** The site is located near a large number of schools, making protection of children a paramount concern, as unaccompanied children will be a key part of its customer base. Para 143 of Camden's policy requires particular diligent monitoring where near schools. NW3 has over 50 schools teaching 11,000 students, including five schools located within 300 metres and South Hampstead High School not far away. Para 146 of Camden's licensing policy suggests requiring all staff to be trained in asking for ID, but the application does not do this.

LOCAL CONSERVATIVE COUNCILLORS' ASKS OF THE CO-OP

- 1 Commit at a maximum to the same permitted hours of alcohol sales as other shops**
- 2 Use small vans, not large lorries, to minimise traffic disruption and public nuisance**
- 3 Deploy CCTV with a 180° view of Belsize Village and share footage with the police**
- 4 Minimum staffing, including security, at peak hours, e.g. the end of the school day**