

Summary Report: Ambient Noise

This report contains summary findings from the public consultation on the draft London Environment Strategy, with a focus on ambient noise. It draws together data from both quantitative and qualitative research. Detailed reports supporting this summary are available from the Greater London Authority Opinion Research and Statistics team.

1. Methodology

Ambient noise public consultation methodology

Qualitative Research: A programme of qualitative research was designed to explore views on noise in London. All qualitative research was conducted with Talk London members. This resulted in a more engaged sample than would be the case in the general population.

Online qualitative research (discussion threads)

- 2 discussion threads on energy ran from 11th August to 17th November on the Talk London community:
 - Noise from the night time economy (15 comments)
 - Peace and quiet in London (26 comments)
- Analysis of the discussion threads, supported by key quotes, has been included in this report

Correspondence

- The GLA received a total of 1,345 emails from members of the public either writing in as individuals or as part of a campaign
- Emails from individuals have been included in the analysis for this report
- A separate report has been produced to cover responses that were submitted as part of a campaign

2. Peace and quiet in London

Summary of views based on qualitative research:

- Participants felt it was difficult to find peace and quiet in London:
 - The most commonly mentioned sources of noise included traffic, sirens, aircraft, construction, and music (from events or individuals).
- Green spaces and cultural venues (museums or galleries) were seen to offer the most peace and quiet:
 - However even these can be impacted by noise from traffic or aircraft.
- Noise at night is a key concern for some, as this impacts on quality of sleep:
 - Sirens were identified as a major source of noise at night.
 - There was concern that becoming a 24hour city will worsen noise at night.
- Participants had the following suggestions for noise reduction in London:
 - Restrict the volume or use of sirens for emergency vehicles when not needed (e.g. if there is no traffic or if there are multiple emergency vehicles).
 - Improve housing insulation.
 - Restrict airplanes.
 - Oppose government's plans for Heathrow expansion.

- One participant signposted to a site that aims to map out tranquil places in London:
<https://tranquilitycity.co.uk/>.

“Generally, the only place to find peace and quiet outside of the home is in another building e.g. museum, art gallery etc. There is no peace and quiet in any built-up area of London due to traffic noise, construction noise, aircraft noise, helicopter noise and worse of all, sirens used by emergency vehicles”

Talk London Member, 67 years old, male, Sutton

3. Noise from night-time economy

Summary of views based on qualitative research:

- Participants felt that it was important that considerations over noise did not unduly restrict the night-time economy:
 - Some participants felt that if you choose to live in and around Central London or near high streets, then you should expect loud noise.
 - Some felt that current licensing hours are too restrictive.
- Participants said other sources of noise disturbed them more than those of the night-time economy:
 - These included sirens, helicopters and motorcycles, all of which were felt to have a detrimental impact on ability to sleep and sense of well-being.

“Night life is essential to making London a vibrant place to live and should not be restricted.”

Talk London Member, 34 years old, male, Wandsworth