

NEW LONDON PLAN RESPONSE

Online petition results at 02/03/2018

Petition details:

#SAVESPITALFIELDSBANGLATOWN

Petition link: <https://www.change.org/p/sadiq-khan-save-spitalfields-banglatown>

Date started: 15/12/2017

From: Bengali East End Heritage Society

Contact email: bengaliheritagesociety@gmail.com

Details of the petition:

We oppose Tower Hamlet Council's recent decision to replace the Bengali-themed street lighting along Brick Lane because it undermines our cultural identity. Brick Lane is a cultural centre for the Bangladeshi community and the removal of these architectural features does not signal well for London as a leading global city. We want to see the following issues acted upon by elected representatives, local authorities and the GLA's policy makers:

1) REINSTATE CULTURAL HERITAGE ASSETS: In 2016 the Kobi Nazrul Centre (located off Brick Lane) went through a re-launch but since then nothing much has happened. We do not want to see Bengali cultural centres like the Kobi Nazrul Centre sold off to the highest bidder!

2) RETAIN CULTURALLY DISTINCT AREAS IN LONDON: Just as Brixton caters for the Afro-Caribbean community, there's Southall for the Indians and China Town for the Chinese diaspora, Brick Lane's Banglatown is also a distinct area with strong Bangladeshi links that serves this community. We want to see this unique area of London actively safeguarded for the future British-Bengali diaspora and others to feel proud to be part of an international city.

Brick Lane is also an important draw because of its many restaurants and we feel that recent actions by Tower Hamlets has undermined this: by removing culturally distinct features, the Council are failing to celebrate diversity and now adversely impacting on the local restaurants - the lampposts along Brick Lane were part of the local character.

3) RECOGNISE 'BANGLATOWN': Provision should be put into place to recognise Banglatown as a cultural centre for Bangladeshis and the Bengali diaspora in the UK – the largest diaspora outside of Bangladesh. Bangladeshis continue to make a huge contribution to the UK's curry industry with 500k+ population paying taxes here into the UK economy.

English-themed areas exist in other major cities like Hong Kong and Kolkata, so then why not retain a Bengali area in London?

4) SAFEGUARD PROVISIONS INSIDE THE NEW LONDON PLAN: The current London Plan (March 2016) clearly states that London should be a “city of diverse, strong, secure and accessible neighbourhoods” (point 1.53, page 32) with which people are “proud to identify” (7.4, page 283) and where “...the outcome should be places where people want to live and feel they belong...” (7.8, page 286) where “...people feel comfortable with their surroundings” (Policy 7.4: Local Character, Page 288) The latest actions by Tower Hamlets Council fail to meet the London Plan and recent developments have returned very little to the local Bangladeshi community.

We want Sadiq Khan’s [new London Plan](#) to adequately safeguard ethnic majority areas of London from any further destruction of their local heritage.

Don’t forget: ethnic minority communities contribute significantly to London’s economy!

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED WANT TO SEE A POSITIVE, LONG-TERM AND INCLUSIVE LEGACY FOR SPITALFIELDS BANGLATOWN.