

To: Gianluca Rizzo
Brixton BID
International House, Room 3C, Floor 3,
Canterbury Cres
London, SW9 7QD

Delivered via email

Dear Gianluca,

Thank you for meeting me today and for sharing the concerns of Brixton BID around the impact that the closure of the Brixton O2 Academy is having on the local night-time economy.

The events in December were a tragedy – two young women lost their lives and a third person remains in critical condition. The nature of a complex criminal investigation means that we will not know the full story of how and why this happened for some time, but clearly serious lessons will need to be learned. My thoughts are with the loved ones of all the victims and those affected by this tragic incident. There is a police investigation which has focused on bringing together evidence so far and has reported back informally to the community via the community reference group. It is right that this process takes the time necessary to do a complete and thorough job to ensure nothing like this ever happens again.

As Cabinet Member responsible for culture and a Brixton Councillor, I am aware of the strong local sentiment around not losing the Academy as a key cultural venue. The Academy is an iconic venue that is part of Brixton's rich cultural heritage, and it provides a key role in the cultural and economic life of our town centre. We understand that businesses are hurting whilst activities are suspended at the academy. We're keen to work with the Brixton BID and the community on how we can support local businesses while this matter remains unresolved.

Clearly the operator of the Academy and the police have conflicting views, and have submitted applications to Lambeth's Licensing Committee. The committee is completely independent and will follow due process fully – I obviously can't comment on that. Whatever the outcome, we will continue working to ensure Brixton remains a cultural hub in London visited by people from around the world.

I would welcome us keeping in touch over the course of this process and meeting with affected local businesses to understand the impact this closure has had on them.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Anyanwu', written in a cursive style.

Clr Donatus Anyanwu
Cabinet Member for Stronger Communities, Leisure and Sport