

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Sola Odusina](#)
Subject: 02.07.26 Culture & Environment Scrutiny Committee - Deputation Request - Camden Better Music
Date: 22 June 2026 09:01:45

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21st June, 2026.

Dear Sola,

I am writing to you as the Principal Democratic Services Officer in my capacity as the Contact Person for a Camden council gym membership group called Camden Better Gyms Music Group. The group would kindly request that Committee Chair, Councillor Rebecca Filer, grant me permission to make a short deputation speech and for us to submit our hand-signed petition to the next Culture and Environment Scrutiny Committee.

We are very concerned that without conducting any prior consultation with members, nor potentially affected fitness professionals, the music across Camden leisure centres was changed from use of self-chosen licensed popular music to use of the American PowerMusicNow app. Reasons for the change given by Greenwich Leisure Limited on the surface sound reasonable, but on further investigation the decision-making process appears worryingly flawed.

Quite reasonably, GLL wish to be legally compliant regarding the sounds being played in the 254 gyms across the UK that they now control on behalf of local Councils, making them the largest UK charitable, co-operative social enterprise in the country. Quite reasonably GLL wish to provide services as cheaply as possible to as many people as possible. However GLL has a robust financial situation and to make arrangements to legally use original licensed music is something that GLL, as the largest charitable social enterprise in the UK could potentially successfully negotiate with relevant UK organisations. This could set an example and marker point for other gyms, since research is now indicating the importance of ongoing participation in culturally relevant experiences as well as exercise in well-being and health, including the prevention of cognitive decline in an ageing population.

Scientific evidence is already available and new studies are emerging (such as the recently published UCL study by Professor Daisy Fancourt et al.) to indicate the health-promoting impact of participation in arts and cultural experience as well as exercise. Other researchers have found that for human beings, the kinds of sound that are people listen to when trying to exercise importantly need to be self-chosen and enjoyed, if they are trying to improve their tolerance and fitness through exercise. The type of music that shows most benefit on exercise physiology and psychology vary in relation to a person's gender, ethnic and cultural background, lived experience, acute and ongoing mental and physical health conditions, as well as processes associated with ageing, such as age-related cognitive decline. Looking at current research, original specially chosen music performs significantly better than more generic types of music specifically manufactured to be royalty free or to be unrecognisable 'fitness cover versions' that don't resonate pleasurably

with the ears and brain as familiar or interesting to the people listening

Better Gym class members started a petition in Camden because they had enjoyed attending particular classes because of the popular music tracks self-selected by their teachers. They did not enjoy the new American 'elevator-style' fitness music. Better members in other areas across the UK have also raised concerns and started petitions, as have fitness instructors. GLL do not have a members' organisation, so it is not currently possible for concerned memberships in other council areas to get in touch with each other and work collectively to address systemic concerns. Also, some fitness instructors who voiced their concerns were told that speaking out publicly would result in disciplinary meetings for 'reputational damage' to GLL brand Better Gyms. Some instructors decided to leave, whereas others were understandably reluctant to lose their jobs and have tried to comply.

A few people started a membership group in Camden in order to make a petition "Reinstate Licensed Music in GLL Better Leisure Centres in Camden." We have collected over 900 signatures that kindly request that the Committee scrutinise this particular decision-making process in relation to the contract between Camden Council and GLL regarding running of leisure and wellbeing facilities, particularly with respect to compliance with Camden's rich and diverse music and cultural history and its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion goals.

Main Reasons for Petition Request:

- 1. Detriment to Community Health & Wellbeing**
- 2. Lack of Cultural Representation & Inclusion**
- 3. Professional Standards and Safety**
- 4. Breach of Expectations for a 'Charitable Social Enterprise'**

We respectfully ask that this committee look at and consider this petition and scrutinise the Camden Better Gyms contract on behalf of Camden citizens.

We ask that:

- 1. GLL halts the mandatory rollout of the restrictive "Power Music" app/platform.**
- 2. GLL renews the necessary PPL/PRS UK Music Licence, enabling the reinstatement of a wide variety of commercial, popular music.**
- 3. GLL engages in meaningful consultation with members and instructors before making further changes to class delivery.**

During this pause, we ask to see an evidence-based review of EDI, mental, physical and social health impacts of mandatory use of non-self-chosen royalty free music (such as PowerMusicNow) in comparison with teacher selected licensed popular music. We are particularly concerned that a percentage of Better Gym attendees have been referred by general medical, mental health and social services professionals because of specific health and wellbeing needs. We also ask to see a proper economic assessment of all available music options and for there to be a genuine collaborative consultation with a diverse cross-

section of affected local members and fitness instructors.

Yours sincerely,

Susanne Griffin

(Contact person for Camden Better Music Group petition)

