

MINUTES OF LICENSING PANEL MEETING - TUESDAY, 27 MARCH 2018

Present:

Councillor Hutton (in the Chair)

Councillors

Cox Humphreys

In Attendance:

Mrs Sharon Davies, Head of Licensing Service

Mr Chris Williams, Democratic Services Adviser

Apologies:

Councillors

1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

The Licensing Panel considered the appointment of a Chairman for the meeting.

Resolved:

That Councillor Hutton be appointed Chairman for the meeting.

2 DECLARATION OF INTEREST - LICENSING

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

3 PROCEDURE FOR THE MEETING

The Chairman explained the procedure for the meeting including that an equal time limit of twenty minutes had been allocated for all parties.

4 APPLICATION FOR THE VARIATION OF A PREMISES LICENCE- HOME AND HQ, TALBOT SQUARE

The Licensing Panel considered an application for a variation of the Premises Licence in respect of Home and Headquarters, Talbot Road. The nature of the variation was to allow the venue to open until 6am. Objections had been received from the Local Authority Licensing Service and Lancashire Constabulary hence the application being referred to the Panel.

The applicants, Mr Michael Nordwind, Mr Mark Nordwind and Mr Jason Barr were in attendance and made representations. They explained that they had requested permission to extend the hours for recorded music, entertainment of a similar description and sale of alcohol to 06.00 on Friday and Saturday evenings and the addition of late night refreshment as a licensable activity on Friday and Saturday from 23.00 to 05.00 in the Headquarters section of the premises. The applicants claimed the application had not

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been entirely financially motivated and formed a legitimate response to a demand from many of the club's customers which would help to make the business more competitive both locally and nationally. It was suggested that more visitors were coming from around the UK to visit the club and in order to continue to serve these customers the club would need to open later to entice big name DJ's to perform and to deploy appropriate online marketing and ticketing to cover such events. It was also suggested that the extended opening hours would serve to create an obvious distinction between bar and club venues and therefore adjust people's expectations accordingly. The applicants advised that, should the extension be allowed, they did not intend to routinely open after 4am and would only do so during high season and for select high profile events/weekends.

Mr Michael Nordwind reported that the proposal had been built around the concept of staggered opening and closing time for each of the venue's three themed floors. This way, he claimed, dispersal of revellers would be much more organised and gradual so as to minimise the impact of intoxicated individuals leaving the premises. Michael Nordwind added that he would guarantee that no individuals from outside would be permitted entry to the venue after 4:15am, should the variation be granted and that all guests admitted into Headquarters would be those already in the building on its lower levels of Home and the Urban Lounge. The applicants claimed to have a good track record of working to a high standard with the Police, the Local Authority and others to reduce the impact of the club in the immediate vicinity. Use of extensive CCTV within the club and outside, along with appropriate numbers of trained door staff and refusal of entry to those deemed to be too intoxicated, were cited as examples of good practice already in place at the venue.

Referring to the number of visitors at the neighbouring Flamingo nightclub when operating at capacity, Mr Marshall, Head of Licensing Service, who was in attendance, suggested that the figures described by Mr Nordwind were not indicative of the numbers within that single venue between the hours of 4am and 6am and that the actual figure would be similar to the capacity figure of Headquarters, in the region of 450-600 guests.

Sgt Helen Parkinson, Lancashire Police, outlined the various Police objections to the application.

She suggested that primarily the Police's concerns were around the potential effect on the Cumulative Impact Zone within Blackpool town centre, which the premises was located within. Sgt Parkinson provided evidence of various forms of criminality over an extended period in and around the premises and further afield into the nearby Dickson Road area. Incidents ranged from aggravated assaults to begging, theft, drunk and disorderly behaviour and other forms of public nuisance. Many of these incidents, it was suggested, could be reduced by limiting the opening times of clubs, bars and takeaways in the immediate vicinity to reduce the reasons for people to remain in the area and encourage a more natural and manageable dispersal. The Police and Local Authority representatives both acknowledged that the venue was a very good operator and praised their working practices and desire to be compliant with the relevant legislation and licensing objectives. However, it was suggested that many of the problems alluded to within the cumulative impact zone were out of the control of the venue and once individuals had left the premises, there was little that could be done to minimise the effect on the locality and it would therefore be left for the Police to deal with any incidents that may arise thereafter. Sgt Parkinson provided statistics which suggested

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that some 147 incidents had been recorded in and around the vicinity of Home and HQ between 1 August 2017 and 31 January 2018. In response to a suggestion by the applicant that the situation nearer to the Flamingo venue may be as a result of the number of takeaways close to that premises, Sgt Parkinson advised that there were actually a significant number of fast food outlets close to Home and HQ, six in total, five of which operated until 5am.

In direct comparison, the Police suggested that the figures provided for the area around Talbot Road where Home and Headquarters and Urban Lounge were located currently showed a natural decrease in the number of incidents heading into the morning whereas the area around Dickson Road where Kaos and Flamingo were located had shown an increase with the highest percentage of incidents occurring between 5-7am. The Police therefore believed that were the variation to be granted for Headquarters, then the area would suffer the same fate. Despite having no issue with the management of the premises, Lancashire Constabulary had significant concerns that crime and disorder would increase if the premises was allowed to increase its licensable hours. The belief was that this would adversely affect the cumulative impact already being experienced within the Town Centre Saturation Area and would lead to further alcohol fuelled crime and disorder, contribute to further stress and create an additional burden on the emergency services.

Mr Marshall, Head of Licensing Service, echoed the comments of the Police and added that it was the Local Authority's position that the application as presented did not contain a detailed plan or suggest any significant mitigation measures that would serve to minimise the impact of granting the variation to the Premises Licence. When asked by the applicant about how many of the incidents cited around the venue could be directly attributed to them, Mr Marshall replied he did not know the precise figure but added that the point was more about the overall impact on the surrounding area. It was acknowledged by the Licensing Service that social habits were changing and that venues were trying to meet demand by opening later in the evening. However, one of the key points raised by Mr Marshall was that by allowing more venues to operate closer to normal daylight working hours, then the impact could be significant and there would be an unnatural crossover between traditional day and night time activities that could lead to further incidents requiring the emergency services. Mr Marshall acknowledged the assurance provided by the applicant regarding the non-admission of individuals from outside the premises after 4:15am, but suggested that this did not go far enough to address the concerns alluded to by the Licensing Service and the Police and more could have been done to ensure the application demonstrated exceptional mitigation of the risks associated with longer operating hours. The risk, according to Mr Marshall was that by allowing the venue to open for an additional two hours, the problems currently being experienced in the Dickson Road area would simply be shifted down towards the Talbot Road and Queen Street venues.

The Panel considered the application in detail and reasoned that the applicants had presented a reasonable case and had offered to accept a compromise or the imposition of additional conditions on the Premises Licence. The current venue was in many ways a model for other venues to emulate and strong management had been backed by robust measures to minimise the impact on the surrounding area. The applicant's good customer service record and desire to maintain a strong working relationship with the Authority and Police were commended. However, Members noted that the application

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had fallen short in terms of detailing any significant measures designed to minimise the impact of additional opening hours. Also, the Panel established that the measures proposed by the applicant during the meeting were insufficient to overcome the inherent risks identified by the Licensing Service and the Police. Ultimately, it was agreed that were the variation to the premises licence to be granted, then the cumulative impact on the area would be too great.

Resolved:

That the application for a Premises Licence variation in respect of Home and Headquarters, Talbot Road be refused.

Chairman

(The meeting ended 4.08 pm)

Any queries regarding these minutes, please contact:

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