

MINUTES OF LICENSING PANEL MEETING - WEDNESDAY, 4 MARCH 2020

Present:

Councillor Hutton (in the Chair)

Councillors

Mrs Callow JP Critchley

In Attendance:

Mrs Sharon Davies, Senior Licensing Solicitor

Mr Chris Williams, Democratic Services Adviser

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 fifteen minutes had been allocated for all parties.

4 APPLICATION TO VARY A PREMISES LICENCE - SUGAR AND SPICE, 2-4 QUEEN STREET, FY1 1PD

The Panel considered the application to vary the Premises Licence issued in respect of Sugar and Spice, 2-4 Queen Street, Blackpool, FY1 1PD.

The Licence Holder, Mr Emad Abuaassi was in attendance and accompanied by Mr Mark Marshall and both provided representations to the Panel.

Mr Marshall outlined the rationale behind the application to vary the Premises Licence which primarily sought to extend the terminal hours of operation to 3am on weeknights and 4am over the weekend period. In order to mitigate any potentially undesirable effects of operating during those hours, Mr Marshall described measures designed to mitigate those instances, which included a reduced premises internal layout, enhanced CCTV coverage, employment of dedicated door staff during the early hours of the morning and the Licence Holder being on hand to facilitate the dispersal of patrons at 4am. In addition, the applicant suggested that ownership and rent of the premises was transparent and there were no unknown or silent partners involved in the day to day

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operation of thereof. It was claimed that the Licence Holder had operated with a strong track record and with good character noting that any Police incidents in the locality had not been directly attributable to the premises. Mr Abuaassi suggested that given the nature of other businesses in the vicinity and the demand from customers, he wished to open later in order to be more competitive and to avoid financial difficulties.

The Police and Local Authority case was concerned primarily with the number of similar premises located within the near vicinity of Sugar and Spice and the Council's own Saturation Zone and Policy which had been designed to reduce the cumulative impact of so many licensed premises and takeaways in terms of their contribution to crime and disorder in the town centre. It was reported that both historically and more recently, numerous violent incidents had occurred in or around those takeaways as such premises often gave intoxicated people a reason to loiter in the area later than they might otherwise following the closure of various bars and clubs nearby. Evidence of incidents from 2019 were presented and it was noted that there had been over 550 violent incidents in a 12 month period, many of which had occurred during the hours of 3-5am. The Police suggested the application as outlined by the Licence Holder and Mr Marshall was not exceptional in anyway and therefore they believed there were insufficient grounds to deviate from the current policy.

The Police questioned how the Licence Holder would manage a 4am close and ensure an orderly dispersal of patrons at the terminal hour as it was asserted that seeing other people sat in the takeaway, additional customers would attempt to enter the premises beyond the stated closing time. In response, Mr Abuaassi suggested that he would take no additional food orders after 4am and would warn customers ten minutes before the premises was due to close. He added that he wished to cooperate fully with the Licensing Service, Police and others and suggested an earlier closing time of 3:30am as a compromise.

The Panel considered that the premises appeared to be relatively small and therefore easier to manage than larger premises. They also noted the Licence Holder's previous good record and intention to employ measures designed to mitigate the potential for crime and disorder. However, the Panel agreed with the assessment of the Police and Local Authority that nothing about the application as presented could be regarded as exceptional and concerns remained about the potential for additional problems in the locale if another premises was allowed to extend its hours of operation and the potential additional strain that would likely impact on the emergency services and partners operating there.

Therefore, Panel Members agreed that to extend the licensable hours of Sugar and Spice would likely undermine the current Licensing Objectives.

Resolved:

To refuse the application to vary the Premises Licence for Sugar and Spice, 2-4 Queen Street, Blackpool, FY1 1PD.

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Chairman

(The meeting ended at 3.07 pm)

Any queries regarding these minutes, please contact:

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