

London Borough of Islington

**Licensing Committee - 12 March 2024**

Minutes of the meeting of the Licensing Committee held at Committee Room 4, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD on 12 March 2024 at 6.30 pm.

**Present:**      **Councillors:**      Weekes (Chair), Bossman-Quarshie, Cinko-Oner, Ibrahim, Jeapes, Jegorovas-Armstrong, Mackmurdie, Nargund, Shaikh, Staff and Wayne

**Councillor Angelo Weekes in the Chair**

**22      APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Item 1)**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Matt Nathan and Marian Spall.

**23      DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Item 2)**

There were no declarations of interest.

**24      MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Item 3)**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2023 be confirmed as an accurate record of proceedings and the Chair be authorised to sign them.

**25      LICENSING UPDATE (Item 1)**

a) Late Night Levy Report

The Head of Regulatory Services introduced the Late-Night Levy Annual Report for 2022/2023. This levy was paid by any licence holder permitted to sell alcohol after midnight. In Islington this money was pooled to fund Operation Nightsafe. The aim of Operation Nightsafe was to support and promote the late-night economy in Islington and included in this was the provision of a high visibility street based patrol service operated by Parkguard for four nights a week, Thursday to Sunday. A fully equipped medic had been provided which helped provide an immediate response to incidents and who were the first line of response in non-emergency situations. A core function of the team was to safeguard people who had become vulnerable and to prevent them becoming victims of crime or injured.

The following was noted in discussion:-

- There was flexibility around the diversity of the team used by Parkguard. This included the alternating use of female or male medics and also looking at the employment of Islington residents.
- The amount paid for the late-night levy also depended on the rateable value of a premises.
- Primarily intelligence on crime data is shared with the safer neighbourhood team and the police licensing team. The licensing team can ask questions of Parkguard e.g.

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how many times premises had been visited and what had been found on these visits. The footage obtained from body worn cameras had been invaluable in obtaining information. Licensing applications had been refused due to information supplied by Parkguard.

- Hotspots tended to move from one place to another. Once one hotspot had been located and a team deployed to work in that location, the hotspot moved to a different area.
- A list of premises to be visited over the weekend may change depending on issues that may arise.
- Parkguard built relationships with licence holders and often they would call them first when incidents arose. Drink spiking was a crime and would need to be reported to the police and early interventions could result in the securing of CCTV footage. Parkguard could help with safeguarding the victim.
- There was a need to work with the police when putting in representations for premises. Representations were often withdrawn once conditions were agreed which would mitigate cumulative impact. It was noted that a police representation carried more weight in decision making. The Parkguard data might be available in such circumstances and would assist in decisions made by the Sub-Committee. The Executive member for Community Safety stated that he would look at the audit processes and how this information be used.
- Parkguard were looking at how to do better targeted work and this could also be spread across the Borough.
- The Chair thanked the work of the Operation Nightsafe team and advised members that they could attend visits if they wished to do so.

### b) Draft Culture Strategy

Members noted that the draft culture strategy would be deferred to a future meeting.

### c) Guidance Note - Licensing/Planning

The Head of Regulatory Services introduced the guidance note for members which was intended to help members facing alignment issues when making decisions about a licence application.

- Members thanked officer for producing the guidance note and stated that it had been particularly frustrating around the issue of planning at meetings.
- It was noted that planning issues had been used by residents.
- The guidance note had been shared with officers from Planning and the Chairs of the Planning/Sub-Committees.

### **RESOLVED**

- 1) That the reports be noted.
- 2) That the Executive member for Community Safety further consider ways in which data from Parkguard be used for licensing applications.

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### **VOTE OF THANKS**

The Chair of the Committee advised that the Chief Litigation Lawyer was retiring at the end of April and thanked her for the work she had been involved in over the past twenty years, in particular for the advice she had given to the Licensing Committee and its Sub-Committees.

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The meeting ended at 7.40 pm

**CHAIR**