

London Borough of Islington

Licensing Committee - 5 December 2023

Minutes of the meeting of the Licensing Committee held at Committee Room 4, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD on 5 December 2023 at 6.30 pm.

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

Councillor Angelo Weekes in the Chair

15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Item 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Marian Spall, Asima Shaikh and Ben Mackmurdie.

16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Item 2)

Councillor Ibrahim stated that he had a personal interest in Item B1 as he worked as an advisor to the Mayor of London.

17 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Item 3)

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on the 16 May 2023 be confirmed as an accurate record of proceedings and the Chair be authorised to sign them.

18 ROLE AND MISSION OF THE MAYOR OF LONDON'S NIGHT CZAR (Item 1)

The Chair welcomed Amy Lame, who was appointed as London's first Night Czar in 2016.

Amy Lame gave a presentation at the meeting and the following points were highlighted:-

- There were enormous challenges for night-time businesses since Covid and the economy had not yet recovered.
- London had a cross cutting approach/ holistic approach to their night-time economy which included planning transport and economic development.
- Boroughs were asked to consider 24 hour licences and include consideration in their licensing policy.
- There had been an in-depth data study using ONS, NHS and TFL data and it had been found that only 4.3% crimes at night were alcohol related offences. Previous policies had lacked data.
- The Night Czar spent time at night surgeries in Boroughs gaining first-hand knowledge and collaborating with Boroughs. Lighting at night was a popular discussion point.
- Bars, pubs and takeaways were just one part of the night-time economy and working people were at the heart of the cities at night whilst there were licensing inequalities at night. A 24-hour economy was more encompassing.
- Workers were expecting more flexible working patterns after Covid.
- There was a need to make better use of under used space. Shops may shut early but could sign up to late shopping evenings.

Licensing Committee - 5 December 2023

- Transport provision at night and safety at night needed to be taken into consideration. There was a Women's Night Safety Charter to help women feel confident and welcome at night.
- Night-time strategies were developed to help London authorities to plan for the night to help identify the strengths in each local area.
- Helping boroughs to boost the high street after 6pm at night with night-time enterprise zones.
- Business friendly licensing was used for different projects in different Boroughs.

The following points were highlighted in discussion:-

- Concern was raised regarding the protection of space for businesses, particularly the change of use from commercial properties into residential properties. This concern would be fed back to the Mayor of London.
- Concerns were raised regarding low paid staff working at night. It was noted that unfair employment practices occurred during the day as well as night and there was a need to make work better for all people.
- The late-night levy was used in Islington to fund Women's Night Safety Charter. The Night Czar considered that this was an extra tax for opening up after midnight.
- It would be helpful for schemes to work across the boundaries of Boroughs e.g Islington/Haringey/Hackney and could help smaller businesses. The task would be to find collaborative boroughs.
- The lack of live music venues in the Borough was a concern. The Night Czar suggested that council unused assets could be considered as a space for music. Councils could partner with the Music Venues Trust who were dedicated to helping preserve live music. Councils could become more pro-active, so the live music came to those venues and the Borough.
- The Night Czar reported that even where crime is committed during the day it did not mean that premises were restricted or shut down. The Committee expressed concern regarding how the crime statistics measured at night. In Islington, crime peaked between midnight and 3am and it was necessary to make spaces as safe as possible.
- It was noted that money was spent in tackling violence against women and girls. The Council was investing in prevention; multi-agency risk assessment meetings were held on a monthly basis and work was carried out in schools.
- There was a balance that needed to be struck between protections for residents and businesses. It was also noted that residents had protections through planning, environmental health and licensing enforcement when issues did arise.

RESOLVED

That the presentation be noted.

19

DISCUSSION WITH LICENSING POLICE TEAM - KEY HEADLINES OF THE AUTUMN (Item 2)

Neil Fraser from the licensing police team advised the Committee about the work that was carried out in the team.

The following points were raised during the discussion:-

- Phone snatches were investigated; they were deemed as serious crime and would be pursued. There had been convictions.
- The police team needed to have a safe night-time economy. The police would ask for conditions to be added to the licence to mitigate risk.

Licensing Committee - 5 December 2023

- Over 690 applications for licences had been received this year. Over 1000 applications for temporary event notices had been received but only 9 objected to. The team would only object where there was a need.
- Licensing panels were arranged at an early intervention stage. Licensees would be invited for an informal discussion when the team had any issues with premises. This intervention was extremely successful and most of the time negated the need for further enforcement. Sixteen of these panels had been held this year. Where there were instances of serious crime a premises application would be made for a summary review, but this happened only rarely.
- The police and licensing teams worked on Friday and Saturday evenings visiting licensed premises. They would do spot checks regarding conditions, Ask Angela, drink spiking at venues and this also built a positive relationship with the venues and helped to solve potential problem areas.
- The later hours that premises were open, the higher the risk and licensed premises could also be targeted by criminals.
- The late-night levy allowed for a task force to target crime hotspots and also helped potential crime victims with crime prevention messaging eg drink spiking. This had been very successful.
- 76 venues had signed up to the Women's Night Safety Charter.
- The police and licensing team were considered to be proactive and worked well with venues to ensure they were safe.
- It was helpful that the police approach was proportionate and made on evidence which allowed the right balance to be struck between businesses and concerns.
- The late-night levy was essential for Operation Nightsafe who dealt with low level anti-social behaviour and giving practical advice. They were a visible presence around venues and helped people get home safely.
- Further details around how the levy was used could be given at the next Licensing Committee.
- There was a need to communicate to residents the positive stories about Islington's nightlife and this was currently work in progress. The Night Czar stated that she could help with supporting positive news stories.
- The Met police had rolled out Operation Rana which encouraged victims to watch out for signs of drink spiking and to look after friends and personal belongings. Detection rates were low.
- The number of patrols at licensed premises were doubled for key nights which was particularly important in the run up to Christmas.
- It was agreed that the winter night strategy be shared with Councillor Ibrahim.

RESOLVED

- a) That the late-night levy and how it is used be an agenda item for the next Licensing Committee.
- b) That the winter night strategy be shared to Councillor Ibrahim.

20 OTHER LICENSING RELATED ISSUES (Item 3)

None.

21 CHANGE TO LICENSING SUB COMMITTEE A MEMBERSHIP (Item 4)

It was noted that Councillor Valerie Bossman-Quarshie had stood down from Licensing Sub Committee A which would take effect from the end of December 2023.

RESOLVED

Licensing Committee - 5 December 2023

Councillor Ben Mackmurdie be appointed to Licensing Sub Committee A with effect from 1 January 2024 until the end of the municipal year 2024 or until a successor is appointed.

The meeting ended at 8.20 pm

CHAIR