

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE LICENSING COMMITTEE

HELD AT 5.30 P.M. ON THURSDAY, 17 DECEMBER 2020

ONLINE 'VIRTUAL' MEETING - [HTTPS://TOWERHAMLETS.PUBLIC-I.TV/CORE/PORTAL/HOME](https://towerhamlets.public-i.tv/core/portal/home)

Members Present:

Councillor Kahar Chowdhury (Chair)
Councillor Shad Chowdhury (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Rajib Ahmed
Councillor Sufia Alam
Councillor Amina Ali
Councillor Shah Ameen
Councillor Peter Golds
Councillor Mohammed Ahbab Hossain
Councillor Eve McQuillan
Councillor Ayas Miah
Councillor Mohammed Pappu
Councillor Kyrsten Perry
Councillor Zenith Rahman

Apologies

Councillor David Edgar
Councillor Victoria Obaze

Officers Present:

Ladi Lapite	– (Principal Enforcement Lawyer)
Tom Lewis	– (Team Leader - Licensing Services)
David Tolley	– (Head of Environmental Health and Trading Standards)
Simmi Yesmin	– (Democratic Services Officer, Committees, Governance)

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest made.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING(S)

The minutes of the Licensing Committee held on 8th September and 2nd November 2020 were agreed as a correct record of proceedings.

3. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

3.1 Night-Time Economy Enforcement Update

Mr David Tolley, Head of Environmental Health and Trading Standards introduced the report and explained that the review undertaken by the Environmental Health and Trading Standards Services detailed the late night time economy in relation to licensed premises.

It was noted the operation was run biweekly on Friday and Saturday evenings between the hours of 22:00 and 03:00 hours, these late night visits investigated a variety of alleged breaches such as:- premises undertaking licensable activities without a licence, premises alleged to be breaching with conditions and restrictions detailed in their licence and where licenced premises that have failed to pay the annual licence fee and/or late night levy charge and have had their license suspended yet have been identified as continuing to carry out licensable activities or premises alleged to be undermining one or more of the licensable activities.

Mr Tolley said that there were approximately 1200 licensed premises in the borough, and where non-compliance is witnessed and a breach of the Licensing Act 2003 is established, appropriate and proportionate action is taken in line with the Council's Enforcement Policy. Such as warning letters, application to review the licence or an investigation for prosecution – such formal action is made through a graduated approach.

It was noted that a total of 425 inspections were undertaken in 2019/20 with 35 premises receiving warning letters for non-compliance and 3 receiving a verbal warning and therefore 8.9% of the premises visited were non-compliant. There were 8 prosecutions and 1 prosecution was lost.

It was further noted that for 2020/21, so far there has been 53 inspections with 8 warnings and 6 prosecutions due to breaches of Covid regulations. It was highlighted that in 2020/21 there were less visits, however a higher rate of warnings were issued.

In response to questions the following was noted;

- Details of the prosecutions that were made against premises.
- That costs to carry out enforcement work were taken from a central fund and the annual licence fees.
- Covid enforcement had started since September allowing officers to issue fixed penalty notices.
- Only police have powers to take enforcement actions over people congregating outside premises.
- The increase in touting in the Brick Lane area would be brought to the attention of the Town Centre Team.
- The night time economy hotspot areas were Brick Lane and Commercial Street.

The Committee welcomed the report.

The Chair moved and it was **RESOLVED**;

1. The report be noted.

3.2 Update on the Community & Alcohol Partnership and Best Bar None Scheme

Mr Tom Lewis, Team Leader, Licensing, introduced the report and updated the Committee on the progress of the Community Alcohol Partnership (CAP) initiative in the North East Quarter of the Borough and Best Bar None (BBN) scheme within the borough for 2019-2020 (October 2020). It was noted that both initiatives seek to reduce alcohol related harm across the borough and as a result lower alcohol related crime and anti-social behaviour. Mr Lewis explained that the work for this is funded by the Drug and Alcohol Team (DAAT) within the Council, who fund a post to manage and run these initiatives.

Mr Lewis referred to the report and highlighted examples of partnership working, the work undertaken during COVID-19 and what went well and the learning points from these partnership working arrangements.

It was noted that a total of 53 venues applied to the Best Bar None Scheme for 2019/2020 this was approximately a 20% rise in applications to the scheme and 41 venues were awarded the National Standard in Tower Hamlets. This was an increase of 13 % from the previous year of venues awarded Best Bar None status.

Members welcomed the report and the noted the good work done by officers. Concern was raised about delivery drivers congregating outside premises late at night. Mr Lewis said that these issues fall within the police enforcement powers, however he would also raise it with the Health and Safety Team.

The Chair moved and it was **RESOLVED**;

1. The report be noted.

3.3 Update in relation to Prosecutions and Appeals – Quarters 3-4 2019/2020; Quarters 1-2 2020-2021

Mr Ladi Lapita, Principal Enforcement Lawyer, briefly introduced the regular noting report which detailed licensing related prosecutions and appeals for Quarters 3 & 4 for 2019-2020 and Quarters 1 & 2 for 2020/2021.

The number of prosecutions over the quarters was noted and it was also noted that during Quarters 1 & 2 for 2020/21 no proceedings were concluded due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Members welcomed the report.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

The meeting ended at 6.40 p.m.

Chair, Councillor Kahar Chowdhury
Licensing Committee