

Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk

Report to Licensing Sub-Committee under the Licensing Act 2003

Date of Hearing: 13th September 2018

Application for Review of a Premises Licence

- Kings Lynn Express, 103B High Street, King's Lynn, PE30 1BW
- Licence Holder: Mr Aram Mohammad HASSAN
- Premises Licence Number 18/00439/LA_PRE

Introduction

1. At any stage, following the grant of a premises licence, a 'responsible authority' or 'other person' may apply to the licensing authority to review the premises licence because of matters arising at the premises in connection with any of the four licensing objectives. These four licensing objectives are:

- the prevention of crime & disorder,
- public safety,
- the prevention of public nuisance, and
- the protection of children from harm

Current Premises Licence

2. The current premises licence for Kings Lynn Express was granted on the 15th May 2018. A copy of this licence is attached to this report at Appendix 1 and shows the times and activities authorised along with the licence conditions.

The Review Application

3. Miss Alice Barnes, Norfolk County Council Trading Standards has made an application to review the premises licence for Kings Lynn Express, 103b High Street, King's Lynn under 'the prevention of crime and disorder' licensing objective. A copy of the review application and supporting evidence is attached at Appendix 2.

Representation from Responsible Authorities

Section 13(4) of the Act defines the 'Responsible Authorities' as the statutory bodies that must be sent copies of an application.

4. Norfolk County Council Trading Standards, as a responsible authority has made the review application. Norfolk Constabulary supports the review application and a copy of their letter of the 3rd August 2018 is attached at Appendix 3. Comments from the remaining responsible authorities are:

<u>Responsible Authority</u>	<u>Comments Received</u>
CS&NN (BCKLWN)	None
Norfolk Fire Service	None
Norfolk Trading Standards	None
Norfolk Safeguarding Children's Board	None
Public Health	None
Planning (BCKLWN)	None
Health & Safety (BCKLWN)	None
Licensing Authority (BCKLWN)	None

Representations from ‘Other Persons’

As well as responsible authorities, any other person can play a role in a number of licensing processes under the 2003 Act. This includes any individual, body or business that are entitled to make representations to applications. Representations made must relate to the licensing objectives.

5. There are no representations from ‘other persons’ to consider.

Notices

6. The Borough Council is responsible for advertising a review application by way of a notice in a specified form at the premises and on the Borough Council’s website. This notice has to be displayed for 28 consecutive days and should have been displayed on the premises between the 3rd August 2018 and the 30th August 2018. A notice was displayed on the Borough Council’s website and at the Council offices for the same period. A copy of this notice is attached to this report at Appendix 4.

Plans

7. A location map is attached at Appendix 5 showing the general location of King’s Lynn Express, 103b High Street King’s Lynn.

Borough Council of King’s Lynn & West Norfolk’s Licensing Policy

8. The current Statement of Licensing Policy was approved by full Council on the 26th November 2015 and the following extracts may be relevant to this application:

3.0 Fundamental principles

3.1 The 2003 Act requires that the Council carries out its various licensing functions so as to promote the following four licensing objectives:

- (a) the prevention of crime and disorder,
- (b) public safety,
- (c) the prevention of public nuisance, and
- (d) the protection of children from harm.

3.2 Nothing in this ‘Statement of Policy’ will:

- (a) undermine the right of any individual to apply under the terms of the 2003 Act for a variety of permissions and to have any such application considered on its own merits;
- (b) override the right of any person to make representations or to seek a review of a licence.

7.0 Review Process

7.1 The review process represents a key protection for the community where problems associated with the licensing objectives are occurring after the grant or variation of a premises licence. At any stage, following the grant of a premises licence, a responsible authority, or an interested party, may ask the licensing authority to review the licence because of a matter arising at the premises in connection with any of the four licensing objectives.

- 7.3 In every case, the representation must relate to particular premises for which a premises licence is in existence and must be relevant to the promotion of the licensing objectives. After a licence or certificate has been granted or varied, a complaint relating to a general (crime and disorder) situation in a town centre should generally not be regarded as a relevant representation unless it can be positively tied or linked by a causal connection to particular premises, which would allow for a proper review of the licence or certificate. For instance, a geographic cluster of complaints, including along transport routes related to an individual public house and its closing time could give grounds for a review of an existing licence as well as direct incidents of crime and disorder around a particular public house.
- 7.4 The Borough Council recognises that the promotion of the licensing objectives relies heavily on a partnership between licence holders, authorised persons, interested parties and responsible authorities in pursuit of common aims. It is therefore equally important that reviews are not used to drive a wedge between these groups in a way that would undermine the benefits of co-operation. It is good practice for authorised persons and responsible authorities to give licence holder's early warning of their concerns about problems identified at the premises concerned and of the need for improvement. A failure to respond to such warnings is expected to lead to a decision to request a review.
- 7.5 Where the request originates from other persons – e.g. a local resident, residents' association, local business or trade association – the Borough Council will first consider whether the complaint made is relevant, vexatious, frivolous or repetitious.

Guidance Issued Under Section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003

Under Section 4 of the Act, Licensing Authorities must have regard to guidance issued under Section 182. The current Guidance was issued by the Home Office in March 2015 and offers advice to Licensing authorities on the discharge of their functions under the Act.

9. The following extracts may be relevant to this application and assist the Licensing Sub-Committee:

The review process

- 11.1 The proceedings set out in the 2003 Act for reviewing premises licences and club premises certificates represent a key protection for the community where problems associated with the licensing objectives occur after the grant or variation of a premises licence or club premises certificate.
- 11.2 At any stage, following the grant of a premises licence or club premises certificate, a responsible authority, or any other person, may ask the licensing authority to review the licence or certificate because of a matter arising at the premises in connection with any of the four licensing objectives.

- 11.4 In addition, the licensing authority must review a licence if the premises to which it relates was made the subject of a closure order by the police based on nuisance or disorder and the magistrates' court has sent the authority the relevant notice of its determination, or if the police have made an application for summary review on the basis that premises are associated with serious crime and/or disorder.
- 11.7 In every case, any application for a review must relate to particular premises in respect of which there is a premises licence or club premises certificate and must be relevant to the promotion of one or more of the licensing objectives. Following the grant or variation of a licence or certificate, a complaint regarding a general issue in the local area relating to the licensing objectives, such as a general (crime and disorder) situation in a town centre, should generally not be regarded as a relevant representation unless it can be positively tied or linked by a causal connection to particular premises, which would allow for a proper review of the licence or certificate. For instance, a geographic cluster of complaints, including along transport routes related to an individual public house and its closing time, could give grounds for a review of an existing licence as well as direct incidents of crime and disorder around a particular public house.
- 11.9 Representations must be made in writing and may be amplified at the subsequent hearing or may stand in their own right. Additional representations which do not amount to an amplification of the original representation may not be made at the hearing. Representations may be made electronically, provided the licensing authority agrees and the applicant submits a subsequent hard copy, unless the licensing authority waives this requirement.
- 11.11 If the application for a review has been made by a person other than a responsible authority (for example, a local resident, residents' association, local business or trade association), before taking action the licensing authority must first consider whether the complaint being made is relevant, frivolous, vexatious or repetitious. Further guidance on determining whether a representation is frivolous or vexatious can be found in Chapter 9 of this Guidance (paragraphs 9.4 to 9.10).

Powers of a licensing authority on the determination of a review

- 11.16 The 2003 Act provides a range of powers for the licensing authority which it may exercise on determining a review where it considers them appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives.
- 11.17 The licensing authority may decide that the review does not require it to take any further steps appropriate to promote the licensing objectives. In addition, there is nothing to prevent a licensing authority issuing an informal warning to the licence holder and/or to recommend improvement within a particular period of time. It is expected that licensing authorities will regard such informal warnings as an important mechanism for ensuring that the licensing objectives are effectively

promoted and that warnings should be issued in writing to the licence holder.

- 11.18 However, where responsible authorities such as the police or environmental health officers have already issued warnings requiring improvement – either orally or in writing – that have failed as part of their own stepped approach to address concerns, licensing authorities should not merely repeat that approach and should take this into account when considering what further action is appropriate.
- 11.19 Where the licensing authority considers that action under its statutory powers is appropriate, it may take any of the following steps:
- modify the conditions of the premises licence (which includes adding new conditions or any alteration or omission of an existing condition), for example, by reducing the hours of opening or by requiring door supervisors at particular times;
 - exclude a licensable activity from the scope of the licence, for example, to exclude the performance of live music or playing of recorded music (where it is not within the incidental live and recorded music exemption);
 - remove the designated premises supervisor, for example, because they consider that the problems are the result of poor management;
 - suspend the licence for a period not exceeding three months;
 - revoke the licence.
- 11.20 In deciding which of these powers to invoke, it is expected that licensing authorities should so far as possible seek to establish the cause or causes of the concerns that the representations identify. The remedial action taken should generally be directed at these causes and should always be no more than an appropriate and proportionate response to address the causes of concern that instigated the review.
- 11.21 For example, licensing authorities should be alive to the possibility that the removal and replacement of the designated premises supervisor may be sufficient to remedy a problem where the cause of the identified problem directly relates to poor management decisions made by that individual.
- 11.22 Equally, it may emerge that poor management is a direct reflection of poor company practice or policy and the mere removal of the designated premises supervisor may be an inadequate response to the problems presented. Indeed, where subsequent review hearings are generated by representations, it should be rare merely to remove a succession of designated premises supervisors as this would be a clear indication of deeper problems that impact upon the licensing objectives.
- 11.23 Licensing authorities should also note that modifications of conditions and exclusions of licensable activities may be imposed either permanently or for a temporary period of up to three months. Temporary changes or suspension of the licence for up to three months could impact on the business holding the licence financially and would

only be expected to be pursued as an appropriate means of promoting the licensing objectives. So, for instance, a licence could be suspended for a weekend as a means of deterring the holder from allowing the problems that gave rise to the review to happen again. However, it will always be important that any detrimental financial impact that may result from a licensing authority's decision is appropriate and proportionate to the promotion of the licensing objectives. But where premises are found to be trading irresponsibly, the licensing authority should not hesitate, where appropriate to do so, to take tough action to tackle the problems at the premises and, where other measures are deemed insufficient, to revoke the licence.

Reviews arising in connection with crime

- 11.24 A number of reviews may arise in connection with crime that is not directly connected with licensable activities. For example, reviews may arise because of drugs problems at the premises; money laundering by criminal gangs, the sale of contraband or stolen goods, the sale of firearms, or the sexual exploitation of children. Licensing authorities do not have the power to judge the criminality or otherwise of any issue. This is a matter for the courts. The licensing authority's role when determining such a review is not therefore to establish the guilt or innocence of any individual but to ensure the promotion of the crime prevention objective.
- 11.25 Reviews are part of the regulatory process introduced by the 2003 Act and they are not part of criminal law and procedure. There is, therefore, no reason why representations giving rise to a review of a premises licence need be delayed pending the outcome of any criminal proceedings. Some reviews will arise after the conviction in the criminal courts of certain individuals, but not all. In any case, it is for the licensing authority to determine whether the problems associated with the alleged crimes are taking place on the premises and affecting the promotion of the licensing objectives. Where a review follows a conviction, it would also not be for the licensing authority to attempt to go beyond any finding by the courts, which should be treated as a matter of undisputed evidence before them.
- 11.26 Where the licensing authority is conducting a review on the grounds that the premises have been used for criminal purposes, its role is solely to determine what steps should be taken in connection with the premises licence, for the promotion of the crime prevention objective. It is important to recognise that certain criminal activity or associated problems may be taking place or have taken place despite the best efforts of the licence holder and the staff working at the premises and despite full compliance with the conditions attached to the licence. In such circumstances, the licensing authority is still empowered to take any appropriate steps to remedy the problems. The licensing authority's duty is to take steps with a view to the promotion of the licensing objectives in the interests of the wider community and not those of the individual licence holder.

- 11.27 There is certain criminal activity that may arise in connection with licensed premises which should be treated particularly seriously. These are the use of the licensed premises:
- for the sale and distribution of drugs controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 and the laundering of the proceeds of drugs crime;
 - for the sale and distribution of illegal firearms;
 - for the evasion of copyright in respect of pirated or unlicensed films and music, which does considerable damage to the industries affected;
 - for prostitution or the sale of unlawful pornography;
 - by organised groups of paedophiles to groom children;
 - as the base for the organisation of criminal activity, particularly by gangs;
 - for the organisation of racist activity or the promotion of racist attacks;
 - for knowingly employing a person who is unlawfully in the UK or who cannot lawfully be employed as a result of a condition on that person's leave to enter;
 - for unlawful gambling; and
 - for the sale or storage of smuggled tobacco and alcohol.
- 11.28 It is envisaged that licensing authorities, the police and other law enforcement agencies, which are responsible authorities, will use the review procedures effectively to deter such activities and crime. Where reviews arise and the licensing authority determines that the crime prevention objective is being undermined through the premises being used to further crimes, it is expected that revocation of the licence – even in the first instance – should be seriously considered.

Hearings

- 9.37 As a matter of practice, licensing authorities should seek to focus the hearing on the steps considered appropriate to promote the particular licensing objective or objectives that have given rise to the specific representation and avoid straying into undisputed areas. A responsible authority or other person may choose to rely on their written representation. They may not add further representations to those disclosed to the applicant prior to the hearing, but they may expand on their existing representation.
- 9.39 The licensing authority should give its decision within five working days of the conclusion of the hearing (or immediately in certain specified cases) and provide reasons to support it. This will be important if there is an appeal by any of the parties. Notification of a decision must be accompanied by information on the right of the party to appeal. After considering all the relevant issues, the licensing authority may grant the application subject to such conditions that are consistent with the operating schedule. Any conditions imposed must be appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives; there is no power for the licensing authority to attach a condition that is merely aspirational. For example, conditions may not be attached which relate solely to the health of customers rather than their direct physical safety.

History

10. Members of the Licensing Sub-Committee may wish to be aware that a previous application to licence King's Lynn Express, 103b High Street, King's Lynn was refused after consideration by Members of the Sub-Committee on 21st November 2017. A copy of the determination notice is attached to this report at Appendix 6.

Determination

11. Having regard to the review application, the Licensing Sub-Committee are requested to consider this report and any submissions submitted by the licence holder and those making representations and take such steps as it considers appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives. These steps are:

- (a) To do nothing;
- (b) To modify the conditions of the premises licence (which includes adding new conditions or any alteration or omission of an existing condition);
- (c) To exclude a licensable activity from the scope of the licence, for example, to exclude the sale of alcohol;
- (d) To remove the designated premises supervisor, for example, because they consider that the problems are the result of poor management;
- (e) To suspend the licence for a period not exceeding three months;
- (f) To revoke the licence.

12. The Sub-Committee are reminded that full reasons for its decision must be given as all parties have a right of appeal against that decision to the Magistrates' Court. Such an appeal must be made within 21-days beginning with the day on which the parties are notified by the Borough Council of the decision which is being appealed.

Marie Malt

Marie Malt

Senior Licensing Officer
Environmental Health - Licensing
31st August 2018

Appendixes:

1. Copy of Current Premises Licence.
2. Copy of Review Application received 2nd August 2018.
3. Police Letter dated 3rd August 2018.
4. Copy of Review Notice.
5. Location Plan.
6. Determination Notice dated 21st November 2017.

Background Papers:

1. The Licensing Act 2003
2. Borough Council's Statement of Licensing Policy (26 November 2016)
3. Guidance issued under Section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003 (April 2018)