

Response of Councillors Daly, Hoda-benn and Aden to consultation regarding the application by Sudbury Primary School for an Alcohol and Music License

The concerns of a number of residents living close to Sudbury Primary School was drawn to the attention of elected members last year 2015. Residents reported that on a regular basis:

- there was illegal parking across their drives during evening and night time events at the school;
- loud music emanating from the school and disturbing their enjoyment of their homes;
- loud and disturbing noise such as revving of cars, banging of car doors and raucous guests of the school leaving late at night;
- unpleasant encounters with the school's guests when they were requested to behave in a less antisocial manner;
- a refusal by the school to listen to or address the residents' concerns;
- emergency vehicles had been obstructed;
- the school was actively marketing the school as a venue for large events both on the school's website and in hoardings attached to the school.

Members approached the council and established that the school did not have the requisite Licenses to offer the activities advertised. As a result of this the events stopped and residents reported the antisocial behaviour described above also stopped.

The school has now applied for a license and the community's concerns are justifiably very high. Members accept that the legislation governing the granting of licenses is permissive however the experience of residents indicates that careful consideration must be given to the circumstances in which this license is granted.

Sudbury Primary School is situated in a wholly residential area with homes bordering the school on all sides. The proposed hours requested for the operation of a Regulated Entertainment License and a License for the Supply of Alcohol and late night refreshment is incompatible with the residential nature of the school. Members believe such licenses should be granted only until 11pm.

Members do not accept the suggestion that the granting of a license for the hours sought by the school is not the same as the license being operated until those times on a frequent basis. The school's marketing operation clearly indicates they intend to seek as many bookings as possible.

The school is indifference to:

- low levels of crime and disorder, loud inebriated guests leaving events at the school, angry exchanges with residents;
- very high levels of public nuisance, illegal parking, car doors banging, shouting and littering;
- indifference to public safety: members have heard a number of instances where ambulances have not been able to reach very ill residents;
- a lack of clarity about how the night time events that the school wish to foster will not impact on its duty of protection of children aged three to eleven years in their care, during the day, from harm e.g. tobacco smoking during events and the resultant detritus, given the legislation surrounding tobacco use.

Members believe the following conditions should be attached to any license:

1. the holder of the License must be on the premises when events are taking place;
2. a senior school employee must be on the premises to supervise events. Individuals or organisations hiring the school for licensable events should not be left to their own devices;
3. all events must have professionally employed security staff and not just volunteers in high vis jackets;
4. the school must keep an incident book on the premises to be completed by the License Holder immediately after the incident occurred. The incident book must include: all complaints from residents of disturbance, illegal parking;
5. all incidents of evidence of the use of illegal substances to be included in the incident book;
6. the school must have a written protocol agreed with Licensing Department for handling residents' complaints;
7. the school to set up a resident liaison group to monitor the impact of events on the community;
8. the school to set up appropriate CCTV monitoring, not just the school entrance but the outer perimeter of the school and the immediate pavements;
9. the school agrees to inspect all areas of the school accessed by guests during events for any items discarded by guests likely to pose a risk to children and that such inspections are recorded in incident book and signed by the school employee conducting the inspection.
10. the school to agree to install acoustic glazing to limit noise from the school;
11. the License prohibits the selling of alcohol by the school and that Licensable events are not permitted during school hours or when children are in the school;
12. that alcohol, tobacco or other items of its night time economy activity is not stored in the school;
13. that all events must be contained within the acoustically protected elements of the building;
14. the school will identify designated smoking areas to comply with legislation and say how they intend to ensure that it is not an area ever used by children or their families.

Local communities see schools as safe places for their children. Schools are expected to offer moral guidance and a healthy environment for children, as well as an education this is the reason the proposal submitted by Sudbury Primary School has shocked the local community.

Members expect the school to show sensitivity to the rights of immediate residents as well as public expectations of the behaviour of the school and accept the conditions proposed above as well as any others suggested by the community.