



**METROPOLITAN
POLICE**

The Licensing Authority

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Police Licensing comments regarding Brent Council Review of: The VIP Lounge, 546 High Road, Wembley, London, HA0 2AA

I acknowledge receipt of an application for the review of under section 51 of the Licensing Act 2003, for The VIP Lounge, 546 High Road, Wembley, London, HA0 2AA.

On behalf of the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis, I wish to make a representation, as police believe the following objectives have been undermined, namely the Prevention of Crime and Disorder and the Prevention of Public Nuisance.

Background on venue

The venue is situated within a cluster of 7 business units, normal entry is made via the entrance along the terraced business properties at 546 High Road Wembley. The interior of unit 7 is on multiple levels, the two lower levels had been utilised for unlicensed activities (regulated entertainment, sale/supply of alcohol) in 2018. 11th January 2018, bailiffs attended the mall and seized possession of all 7 units. Found within the units were 75 shisha pipes over the two lower floors of the venue. Since this time, new tenants took over and a premises licence applied for and granted on 17/08/2019 with certain licensing conditions, these included the following times of operation:

Regulated Entertainment

Monday to Sunday – 12.00hrs – 01.30hrs

Performance of Dance

Monday to Sunday – 12.00hrs – 01.30hrs

Late Night Refreshments

Monday to Sunday – 23.00hrs – 01.30hrs

Supply of Alcohol

Monday to Sunday – 12.00hrs – 01.30hrs

Hours Premises is Open to the Public

Monday to Sunday - 12.00hrs – 02.00hrs

The basement rear area of the premises leads out into a service alley, which is where a lot of complaints arise from residential neighbours who attest to the issues of ASB noise nuisance at very late times in the night (0300-0430hrs+).

The alley area is close to residential premises that face towards it. New residential premises are also being built close by which are likely to suffer similar complaints when they become occupied.

There have been regular complaints from local residents, as well as Brent Council licensing who carried out a late night visit to the premises, confirming the venue is providing licensable activity outside of its permissible hours. There were no TEN's or late TEN's granted for these events.

Details of issues

Resident complaints revolve around the regular late night revelry, noise, laughter and shouting emanating from the rear service alley exit, where patrons congregate to smoke, socialise, enter or exit. Many leave from this area, waking up the neighbours. 19th June 2021, 20th June 2021, 25th June 2021 & 26th June 2021 were all reported late night finishes of beyond 0300hrs, one had people leaving at 0520hrs.

Some of these residents have sick and needy children as the result of their specific medical conditions. Regardless of any unique medical concerns, every local resident has a right to a work/life balance and a peaceful night's sleep. There is very little scope for peace and quiet at weekends during night-time, or other days that the venue might operate late. The venue has had a spate of late clubbing events that took place without authority to conduct licensable activities, resulting in complaints. Since the Council put in the review of the premises licence, there was an uplift in TEN applications requesting much later times for licensable activity. These were rejected due to the complaints regarding late night noise and disturbance. To grant these very early morning extensions would mean legitimising the continued annoyance of residents.

On 25th July 2021, there was a report of a GBH violent crime, where the victim was spotted exiting the venue on Brent Council CCTV. He was found to have been stabbed in the leg. The Sergeant in charge of the case made a request for the CCTV from the venue within the 31 day time period, as stipulated on the license. She has assured they would provide the requested footage, but as yet (6th September 2021), none has been forthcoming.

The venue essentially operates as a nightclub, promoting events via flyers on social media and selling tickets via sites such as Shoobs.com. There had been a recently opposed TEN granted by the Council and the applicant stated it was for a birthday party. Yet it isn't a birthday party in the traditional sense, such as close friends and family etc., it is a ticketed and marketed event open to any who buy a ticket, a common theme in more candid nightclub style advertising.

The issue here isn't the nature of the music or D.J.s themselves, it's the simple fact the venue is breaching its existing licence, opting for late night licensable activity when they feel they can "get away with it", or hopefully have it granted officially for

them outside of their agreed hours. The venue is clearly using the rear service alley exit, which is a major concern for the public nuisance it causes to residents. The expectation of patrons to such events is a "late one", many such events can run until 0400hrs or even "sun up" at 0600hrs. Unfortunately, the venue is not only nestled amongst business venues, but is in close proximity to many densely packed residential properties and given the continued use of the rear, it's a site not best suited for late night regulated entertainment. The use of the rear service alley is most likely to hide the fact its open much later, allowing entry and exit via the rear away from CCTV. You also have to factor in the additional noise brought on by boisterous inebriated customers at these times.

Police licensing support the review of the premises licence due to repeated breaches of licensable hours; failure to adhere to licence conditions regarding CCTV (1-6), as well as breaches of conditions 11, 12, 13 & 15.

Licence Conditions are put in place for the responsible parties to ensure adherence to the licensing objectives and help prevent issues arising. However, when those same parties deliberately ignore or try to circumvent the conditions, despite recommendations and previous warnings, it is clear that the revocation of the premises licence is necessary.

Yours Sincerely,

Gary Norton 2965NW
Licensing Constable – Brent Police