

LICENSING APPLICATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 10 FEBRUARY 2023

Present: Councillors Woodward (Chair); Cresswell and Kitchingham

14. APPLICATION FOR THE REVIEW OF A PREMISES LICENCE IN RESPECT OF TODAY'S EXPRESS, 17 DUKE STREET, READING

Further to Minute 11 of the meeting held on 2 February 2023, the Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services submitted a report on an application by Reading Borough Council, Licensing who were a named responsible authority under the Licensing Act 2003 in respect of Today's Express, 17 Duke Street, Reading RG1 4SA. The application for review had been submitted in order to address the failure of the premises licence holder to promote the four licensing objectives (Prevention of Crime and Disorder, Prevention of Public Nuisance, Public Safety and Protection of Children from Harm) due to insufficient measures to ensure due diligence or compliance with their licence conditions. The following documents were appended to the report:

Appendix MG1	Review Application Form;
Appendix MG2	Representations from Thames Valley Police
Appendix RS1	A copy of the current premises licence.

The existing Premises Licence permitted the following:

Hours for the Sale by Retail of Alcohol

Monday to Thursday	0800 hours until 2300 hours
Sunday	1000 hours until 2230 hours
Good Friday	0800 hours until 2230 hours
Christmas Day	1200 hours until 1500 hours and 1900 hours to 2230 hours

The report explained that these concerns were based on the breaches of the conditions attached to the licence that had been observed on several visits by RBC Licensing officers and Thames Valley Police to the premises. These included the regular supply of alcohol to individuals engaged in street drinking and its related anti-social behaviour in and around the vicinity of the premises, the sale of alcohol beyond the licensed hours, concerns that the premises were involved in the alleged offences of handling of stolen goods and incidents of violence. The report also raised concerns that CCTV footage was not available when requested by Licensing Officers or Thames Valley Police officers. The report added the Premises Licence Holder had failed to engage with Licensing and Thames Valley Police officers on multiple occasions, when they had attempted to work with him to ensure that he complied with the conditions attached to the Premises Licence.

The Premises Licence Holder, Quais Aziz, and his representative, Bill Donne, Silver Fox Consultants, were present, addressed the Sub-Committee. Mr Donne answered questions on behalf of Mr Aziz. An interpreter, Mohammed Afiq Rafiq, attended the meeting to assist Mr Aziz.

Robert Smalley, Licensing Enforcement Officer, Reading Borough Council and Ed Barham, Counsel for Thames Valley Police, Vince Moore, Declan Smyth and Simon Wheeler, Thames Valley Police, were present and addressed the Sub-Committee.

During the 28-day consultation period representations had been received from Thames Valley Police and their submissions were attached to the report.

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Resolved That, having regard to the four licensing objectives and the oral and written representations made, the Secretary of State's guidance issued under section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003 (April 2018) and the Council's Statement of Licensing Policy, the Sub-Committee concluded that it was appropriate and proportionate to revoke the Premises Licence in respect of Today's Express, 17 Duke Street, Reading, RG1 4SA. After hearing all of representations the Sub-Committee had no confidence that the licence holder understood his responsibilities to promote the four licensing objectives. The Sub-Committee had considered the evidence of numerous breaches of the conditions of the licence, the licence holder's lack of engagement with Thames Valley Police, and were particularly concerned about the absence of CCTV footage when requested by the police, and examples of out of hours sales of alcohol in November and December 2022.

The Premises Licence Holder was informed of his right to appeal the decision.

The meeting started at 9.30am and closed at 12.47pm.