

Amended representation

Licensing sub-committee

16 February 2012

Item 3 – Application to vary a premises licence – Carnival, 1 Queen Street, Norwich, NR2 4SG



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RE: Carnival (Application to extend licensable hours)

The Norfolk Constabulary choose to make representation against the current licensing application relating to the premises known as 'Carnival' located at 1 Queen Street, Norwich.

This application is to extend the licensable activities until 0400 hrs and opening hours until 0430 hrs Monday-Saturday with an additional allowance of licensable activities on Bank Holidays until 0600 hrs.

The Norfolk Constabulary Licensing Team have sought to engage with the premises management in order to agree a suitable variation to the license. Unfortunately, a satisfactory agreement has not been reached.

We originally proposed that the following conditions were added to the licence in order to ensure that this application reduces any impact on crime and disorder and associated harm caused by the licensable activity.

- Whilst the premises is open to the public and available, a radio communication system will be in use to communicate to other venues and the Police
- On Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights before Bank Holidays, there will be a minimum of 1 SIA door supervisor employed from 2200 hrs, another 1 SIA Door supervisor employed from 2300 hrs and 1 additional Door supervisor at Midnight. (A total of 3 SIA door supervisors on the ground floor from midnight until close)
- When the upstairs floor is open for licensable activities, 1 additional SIA door supervisor will be employed to specifically patrol this area until finish.
- Door Supervisors will use a signing in book to log names, SIA badge number and tour of duty. This book will be available on request.
- Last entry to the premises is at 0315 hours

The applicant, Sarah Roberts agreed to the conditions requested with the exception of the specific conditions regarding levels of door supervision.

However, the Police now wish to withdraw this offer of agreed conditions following recent incidents highlighted since the end of the consultation period.

On Door Supervision and Security at the Venue

The premises licence has no current condition in relation to the number of door supervisors required. However, we are aware that under previous management, the security was managed by 4 Door Supervisors on a Friday (increasing to 5 at peak weekends of trading throughout the year) and 5 on a Saturday (increasing to 6 at peak weekends of trading throughout the year).

The Norfolk Constabulary believe that it is necessary to specify the number of door supervisors required to provide effective management and security of a licensed premises. We recognise that each venue is unique. However, in this case, Carnival is located in an old building not designed to be nightclub. The venue is spread over 3 floors with a dedicated smoking area at the front of the premises making it unrealistic to expect 2 doormen to manage all floors, the front door and smoking area. It's sight lines are poor and the lighting is low meaning that security already face a difficult challenge in pro-actively monitoring incidents and patrons inside the venue reducing the opportunity to make early interventions and identify those people who have consumed too much alcohol; This is a theme that has been picked up on recent police visits and has been acknowledged by duty management and the security team.

Observations on Saturday 27th January and Saturday 11th February at around 2am identified a high number of people outside and in the vicinity of the venue smoking, drinking alcohol and being generally disorderly. Many were not utilising the designated smoking area and the security team were insufficiently numbered to restore any sense of normality to the street. One 19 year old male was stopped walking away from the premises by police in a clearly drunk state. He stated that he'd been drinking in Carnival all night. There is a need for at least 2 SIA door supervisors during peak times (after midnight) to solely supervise the front of the premises, search patrons on entry, check for ID, monitor the smoking area and to prevent access at all times. This is effective due diligence by any license premises operating in the City Centre. Further security is required on each floor of the premises which is open to the public at all times.

The applicant, Miss Roberts has previously suggested the use of managers applying for SIA door licences to be incorporated into the levels of security at the venue. This is not appropriate and should not be included within the security plan as this is not their primary role. They cannot be expected to perform both roles except in the case of a spontaneous incident.

On extending licensable hours

Given that the venue now wish to extend the licensable hours it is absolutely imperative that proper control measures are put into place. The Constabulary would state that our peak hours of alcohol related crime and disorder falls between midnight and 3am with an increasing level of harm between 3am and 6am demonstrated over the last 12 months.

This venue is now a busy student music venue located outside the City Council designated Late Night Economy zone.

Any extension of hours puts the venue at an increased risk due to patrons drinking alcohol for longer. The venue are yet to demonstrate that they can effectively manage a 3am license with high levels of intoxication and lack of control witnessed on recent inspections (27/1/2012 and 11/2/2012)

On general management and incidents of crime and disorder

The premises was only transferred to the current management team in December 2011 and whilst the Constabulary would acknowledge that we have seen a reduction in crime and disorder associated with the venue some of this could be attributable to the business struggling to initially establish itself and build a popular reputation with students which it now seemingly has. To date,

there have only been 2 reported crimes of theft and one call from the premises in relation to a drug seizure following a search. Despite this low number of incidents reported the Constabulary do have significant concerns regarding the potential for crime and disorder. .

It was apparent during an earlier visit to the premises on the 11th February 2012 by different officers that the management were overwhelmed by the numbers of patrons who visited the venue. Despite the premises having 3 members of SIA door supervisors on duty, the premises appeared to be unable to manage the premises sufficiently and Officers had to assist with an ejection whilst there. Duty Manager James Watkins advised at the time that they had experienced higher numbers than expected. Mr Watkins also admitted that there had been intoxicated patrons allowed entry into the premises against the initial advice of his security team. He acknowledged that his risk assessment of the situation (basically that they were quite probably drunk but might be okay if they were kept a close eye on) was incorrect. Whilst this group were subsequently ejected it was concerning to note that they were admitted entry in the first place.

Both Watkins and the security team advised that they felt the number of doorstaff on duty was inadequate but when the outstanding application to vary the license was discussed with Duty Manager, Watkins, he then back tracked saying he felt it was sufficient. It was clear that he felt under more pressure to develop the business than the necessity to uphold the licensing objectives in particular the prevention of crime and disorder and public safety.

Summary

Police believe that the current management control of the premises is inadequate.

The premises is yet to convince the Constabulary that it is responsibly operated and able to effectively manage a later license.

The levels of door supervision must reflect the level of risk associated with this venue. Specified minimum numbers of door supervisors in line with recommendations (at least 3 for ground floor operation only plus additional door supervisors for upper floor usage and Saturdays / Bank Holidays)

The license should remain at 0300

If a later license is granted it is suggested that a last entry time of 0200 is added as a condition of the license. (The venue has been unable to demonstrate that it can satisfactorily manage responsible alcohol consumption at the current levels so at least this measure would ensure they are not taking on the increased risk of patrons arriving later into the night / morning)

Two door supervisors should be deployed outside the premises at the end of licensable activities for a period of at least 30 minutes to ensure the safe dispersal of patrons.

Whilst the premises is open to the public and available, a radio communication system will be in use to communicate to other venues and the Police. As this venue is situated outside of the City Council Late Night Entertainment Zone it is important that it has an effective communication system to link with the police and other venues to prevent crime and disorder.

We ask the committee to carefully consider the points raised.