

Section 1: Background comments of the Borough Solicitor

- 1.1 The purpose of Camden's Statement of Licensing Policy is to make it clear to applicants that wider considerations will be taken into account when determining applications. It is intended to guide the Licensing Panel when considering licence applications. However, the Licensing Panel must always consider each application on its own merits and allow exceptions to the normal policy where the circumstances of the application justify allowing an exception. The burden is on the applicant to show that they comply with the policy.
- 1.2 Members should only address those matters that have formed the subject matter of relevant representations. Matters that arise that are not the subject of relevant representations fall outside the function that the Panel is exercising when it holds a hearing
- 1.3 Members must determine, having regard for the evidence, whether granting the application for a premises licence will impact adversely on the policy criteria listed in paragraph 3 of this report.
- 1.4 In accordance with the provisions of Part 1 of Schedule 5 of the Act, where a Licensing Authority rejects in whole or in part, an application for a new premises licence, the applicant may appeal against the decision, to a magistrate's court within 21 days of being notified of the decision.
- 1.5 Similarly, where a person who made relevant representations in relation to the application contends that the licence ought not to have been granted, or that different or additional conditions should have been imposed on the licence, he may appeal against the decision to a magistrate's court within 21 days of being notified of the decision.
- 1.6 **The Human Rights Act 1998** incorporates the key articles of the European Convention on Human Rights into domestic law. Decisions on licensing matters are actions of a public authority and must be compatible with Convention rights. Consequently, Members of the Panel must be aware of the rights contained in the Convention (particularly those set out below) when making licensing decisions.
 - (a) **Article 6: Right to a fair trial**
In the determination of his civil rights and obligations, everyone is entitled to a fair and public hearing within a reasonable time by an independent and impartial tribunal established by law.
 - (b) **Article 8: Right to respect for private and family life**
Everyone has a right to respect for his or her private life, his home and correspondence.

(c) Article 1 of the First Protocol: Protection of property

Every natural or legal person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions, including a licence. No one shall be deprived of his possession except in the public interest and subject to the conditions provided for by law and by the general principles of international law.

(d) Article 10: Freedom of Expression

Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers. This Article shall not prevent States from requiring the licensing of broadcasting, television or cinema enterprises.

The exercise of these freedoms since it carries with it duties and responsibilities may be subject to such formalities, conditions, restrictions or penalties as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society, in the interests of national security, territorial integrity or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health and morals, for the protection of the reputation or rights of others, for preventing the disclosure of information received in confidence, or for maintaining the authority and impartiality of the judiciary.

(e) Article 14: Prohibition of discrimination

The enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in this Convention shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth, or other status.

- 1.7 When formulating policy local authorities must have regard to the **Equality Act 2010**. The Act provides protection from discrimination in respect of certain protected characteristics, namely: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or beliefs and sex and sexual orientation. It places the Council under a legal duty to have due regard to the advancement of equality in the exercise of its powers including licensing powers. Members of the panel must be mindful of this duty when determining all licensing applications.

The section 149 Public Sector Equality Duty

(1) A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

(2) A person who is not a public authority but who exercises public functions must, in the exercise of those functions, have due regard to the matters mentioned in subsection (1).

(3) Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to—

- (a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- (b) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- (c) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

(4) The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.

(5) Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to—

- (a) tackle prejudice, and
- (b) promote understanding.

(6) Compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others; but that is not to be taken as permitting conduct that would otherwise be prohibited by or under this Act.

1.8 In determining any application, the Council must comply with the public sector equality duty in s.149 of the 2010 Act. This is a duty to have regard to the need to achieve the statutory goals of s.149, rather than to achieve a particular result. The s149 duty sits alongside and does not override statutory requirements in relation to determining licensing applications, including the duty to consider all evidence on its merits and the legislative criteria listed at paragraphs 3 & 4.

1.9 When members have before them representations or other material on issues relevant to s149, even outside the scope of "standard" licensing considerations such material must still be specifically assessed in the context of s149. However, because s149 creates a requirement to "have regard" the fact a matter raised is relevant to s149 will not automatically translate into a reason for refusing an application that would be sustainable in any subsequent appeal, given the legal requirement to determine applications in compliance with licensing legislation.

Section 2: Financial Comments

- 2.1 Following consideration there are no financial implications concerning this application. The Executive Director Corporate Services has been consulted in the preparation of this report and has no further comments to add.