

A proposed new licensing policy that meets the needs of residents and businesses

Hackney, 18 July 2018

Earlier this year Hackney's Licensing Committee agreed a revised draft licensing policy and recommended it for approval by Full Council.

The recommended policy was developed by the Licensing Committee following extensive evidence gathering and engagement with residents, businesses and visitors to the borough's night time economy.

Licensing Chair, Cllr Emma Plouviez, explains why she will be recommending the policy to Full Council this evening:

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Hackney has a fantastic nightlife. Our bars, clubs, restaurants and theatres are known across London and the world, and as a Council we are proud to champion the businesses that make such a contribution to our borough. However, as it has grown, it is becoming more and more difficult to

manage and to strike a balance between supporting our late night venues and the needs of residents who live amongst them.

As a Council we want to do both. It's important we manage our night life to ensure it continues to thrive, is safe and continues to build on its reputation as the best place in London for a night out. We're a small borough, with high density housing and very popular bars, restaurants and nightclubs, and that brings about tensions that are hard to manage without guidelines in place to help licensees and residents alike.

Councils are required by law to have a licensing policy in place – ours is out of date and needs renewing. We initially consulted on an updated policy a couple of years ago, but decided to go back to the

drawing board and, in preparing this policy, we did a huge amount of listening, research and evidence gathering. Our aim has always been to agree an approach that is shaped by the views of visitors, licensees and local residents.

The policy we have recommended to Full Council will not affect existing businesses and we will continue to consider each new application on its own merit. It is not a blanket policy. The core hours recommended in the policy set out the basic hours that a business can expect to get a licence for, however they may be able to open later. The onus will be on new applicants to demonstrate to us that they are responsible, understand the pressures on the area and that their business will not have a negative impact on the area if they want to open late. We will help and support them to do that. Without these steps to manage our nightlife, we face a potential situation where the licensing committee could be forced to approve late licences for venues that are completely unsuitable and will have a huge impact on residents' lives.

As the licensing committee, our job is to carefully balance the needs of local businesses and the people who live in our borough. We value the borough's nightlife – it's one of the things that makes Hackney unique – but we also value our residents' right to a good night's sleep. Many of them have watched Hackney's nightlife build up around them; they didn't choose to live in the middle of a busy area packed with late night venues. Through this process we've heard stories about lives being seriously affected by anti-social behaviour like people shouting in the early hours, litter and discarded take-aways strewn across the streets and people urinating on doorsteps. We need to find a way to support our nightlife to thrive, but we owe it our residents to make sure their concerns are represented too.

I believe this policy strikes that balance. It's about doing all we can to promote a wide, varied and manageable nightlife that doesn't come at the expense of the rights of people who live here.

Cllr Emma Plouviez, Licensing Chair, Hackney Council



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<http://mginternet.hackney.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=112&MIId=4348>