

Dear Michelle,

I am representing the Soho Society and Jane Doyle at the hearing of this application on Thursday.

Having had chance to consider the content of the LSC Report, I thought it might be helpful to summarise the position ahead of the hearing.

The application

1. Although a new premises licence application, the applicant effectively seeks to extend the hours of operation of the current licence from 'core hours' to 3am for licensable activities, 3.30am for customers to be on the premises. These are very significant extensions, for which the applicant must demonstrate a 'genuine exception' to Policy CIP(i) in order for the application to be granted under that Policy.
2. The Soho Society agrees with the applicant's statement at page 16 of the Report that the premises '*has a long and proud history as an institution in the heart of Soho. It has operated as a pub for nearly 200 years, and is a prominent premises in the LGBT+ community*'. However, having considered the application and supporting documents, the Soho Society's position when submitting its representation was that the applicant has not demonstrated an exception to Policy. That remains their position.
3. The applicant has proposed a number of conditions. The key conditions seem to be 14, 15 and 16 on p37 of the Report. These conditions appear to aim to further the stated purpose of the application (see p16), which is '*to allow the premises to use the additional hours to provide entertainment for its existing and loyal customer base.*'
4. The application has attracted relevant representations objecting to the application from the statutory authorities, the Soho Society, Jane Doyle, the Soho Safer Neighbourhoods Ward Panel, and 3 local residents.

Reasons for Soho Society representation

5. The applicant has submitted what it describes as a 'bespoke operating schedule' in what appears to effectively be a *quid pro quo* for the longer hours sought. The Soho Society accepts that a number of the current licence conditions are outdated, but do not consider these new conditions to be sufficient to demonstrate an exception to Policy, because the underlying reasons for having the policy are simply not mitigated. Nor do the proposals mitigate what they see as the likely deleterious effect on the promotion of the licensing objectives which would result from grant the application beyond 'core hours'.
6. The Soho Society's representation draws the Sub-Committee's attention to the saturated nature of the late-night entertainment offering in this part of Soho, and the problems this can cause due to the global and cumulative effect of a large number of late night premises.
7. They also emphasise that Old Compton Street does have residents living on it. Two of these residents (p6 and 7 of the Report) provide evidence of their experiences of noise levels from

the premises, including for the same activities which it is proposed would take place at the premises as an integral part of the extension of hours. It is difficult to see how activities which cause some nuisance to local residents to the current hours can properly be said to constitute 'exceptional' reasons for extending the hours.

8. Representatives of the Soho Society have met with manager of the premises and the area manager of Stonegate Pub Company Limited and talked through the proposed extension of hours. I understand that it was a friendly meeting, but the Soho Society remain of the view expressed in their representation.

Statement of Licensing Policy

9. The application is contrary the CIP1, PB2 and HRS1 of the Policy. Policy HRS1 states that:

(i) Applications for hours within the core hours set out below in this policy will generally be granted, subject to not being contrary to other policies in the Statement of Licensing Policy.

(ii) Applications for hours outside the core hours set out below in this policy will be considered on their merits, subject to other relevant policies and with particular regard to the following:[].

10. One of these 'other policies' is CIP1(i), which states that:

It is the Licensing Authority's policy to refuse applications in the Cumulative Impact Areas for: pubs and bars, fast food premises, and premises offering facilities for music and dancing; other than applications to vary hours within the Core Hours under Policy HRS1.

11. Policy PB2 is couched in similar terms to CIP(i).

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above, the Soho Society must object to this application. I will amplify these reasons as necessary at the hearing.

David Gleeson and Jane Doyle will be attending the hearing on behalf of the Soho Society. Jane will also be present in her role as Chair of the Soho Safer Neighbourhood Ward Panel.

I should be extremely grateful if you would distribute this to Members and the parties in advance of the hearing.

Kind regards,

Richard