

**Briefing note: Ocean Diva licensing application and City implications.
November 2022.**

The Ocean Diva is a leisure vessel which is proposed for operation on the River Thames as an entertainment space and conference venue. The capacity for the venue is 550 seated and 1500 for standing events. The proposed navigation routes are yet to be published but it is likely that the vessel due to its size will only travel up river as far as London Bridge. Proposed pier locations include Tower Millennium, Canary Wharf, West India, North Greenwich, Butlers Wharf, Royal Docks, and Excel.

Leisure vessels operating on the Thames do attract a large number (450+) noise complaints from across London to the London Port Health Authority (LPHA) each year and there is a resource implication for the investigation and prevention of complaints for LPHA and City based teams.

Licensing:

A licensing application (and amendment on 8th September) has been made by Ocean Diva Shipping Limited to the London Borough of Newham for the Ocean Diva which will be where the more permanent mooring for the vessel is proposed.

The application seeks the provision of alcohol, live music, recorded music, performance of dance, plays, films, sporting events, late night refreshment 1100 to 0200, 7 days per week and on 6 calendar days each year from 1100 until 0300 the following morning.

The consultation period ended on the 7th of October and a detailed objection to the application has been submitted on behalf of the City of London (attached) based on the objective of prevention of public nuisance, to protect City residents and workers from disturbance. City of London Police have submitted a separate representation on crime and disorder matters. City officers have requested to speak at the hearing to re-enforce the objection and to deal with any new information that arises and will be supported by the City Solicitor.

There has been very little quality detailed information in support of the application, what has been submitted (Pier Management Plan and Event Management Plan) is inadequate to date. We do know that they propose to embark and disembark from Tower Millennium Pier so there is potentially a significant and specific City impact in relation to noise, disturbance and crime and disorder from embarkation and disembarkation, unless significant mitigation is put in place.

The consultation methodology for the licensing application has been insufficient as there were no navigation plans submitted, so it wasn't initially possible to determine who would be affected by the application, the City has made that point in the objection letter.

Planning:

A planning application was refused permission in November 2020 for the provision of a new pier at Swan Lane together with associated riverside works and it was the intention that the Ocean Diva would moor at the proposed pier to allow passengers to embark and disembark. Planning permission was refused for two reasons, firstly because the pier was not designed to be multi-use to allow for freight delivery and secondly the noise and disturbance and congestion arising from the intended number of passengers embarking and disembarking the vessel.

Here is a link to the application and the associated documents:

[19/00116/FULL | Erection of a new pier within the River Thames at Swan Lane, to comprise a refurbished landside access platform; new canting brow and pontoon; dredging and filling of river bed; repair and reinstatement of camshed and riverbank; replacement of mooring pile and installation of additional mooring pile. | Swan Lane Pier 1 Swan Lane London EC4R 3TN \(cityoflondon.gov.uk\)](#)

There has been no subsequent planning application submitted for the development of a new pier at Swan Lane and as such there is no current Planning remit in the City in respect of the operation of the Ocean Diva.

Future dates:

In December 2022 it is proposed that the vessel will be in London, the Police and other regulators have been invited to attend to aid their understanding of the proposed operations.

The hearing dates are currently set at 22nd and 23rd February 2023.

Useful links:

<https://www.newham.gov.uk/business-licensing-regulation/premises-alcohol-entertainment-license>

Attachment

City of London objection letter and suggested conditions.

For further detail or any queries please contact rachel.pye@cityoflondon.gov.uk