

City of London Police Licensing Activity- Briefing to the Licensing Committee

Christmas Campaign 2015- Operation Tinsel

With the support of the Late Night Levy, City of London Police committed very significant additional resources to the policing of the Night Time Economy throughout the festive period.

From the last week in November up to 23rd December 2015, every Thursday, Friday and Saturday night were policed with additional teams of uniformed officers in support of the Licensing Team and other specialist uniformed units. These additional resources were made up of dog units, public order officers and other specialist officers countering the supply of illegal substances to city patrons. Specialist officers also completed a range of counter terrorism tactics in order to protect and reassure the community in the wake of tragic international events.

Police also deployed additional detective officers in order to provide investigative resilience during this period of greatly increased activity.

Officers were well matched to the level of activity on the street and within premises throughout the NTE. The police Licensing Team were able to investigate incidents within and connected with premises contemporaneous to events in order to accurately inform the management and behaviour of venues.

Superintendent Paul Clements, now responsible for City of London Police Communities, was appointed 'Silver Commander' for Op Tinsel. The vast majority of deployments commenced with a briefing delivered by Mr Clements before units were deployed to their areas of expertise.

The police Licensing Team commenced each shift, supported by a sergeant and 6 constables, carrying out licensed premises visits across the City. As incidents occurred and the shift developed into a more response led style the team attended live incidents in order to investigate, from a licensing perspective, what had gone wrong. This resulted in a significant number of premises staff and managers receiving direct feedback and guidance as to how to avoid repetition of incidents. In one instance this approach was so effective that evidence of seriously poor management practice was presented to a large operator who took immediate action and replaced a premises manager.

Operation Tinsel proved to be a very effective, structured deployment which was sufficiently flexible to deliver a variety of tactics, led by Support Group and other specialists, to deter criminal activity including terrorism as well as those units responding to often simultaneous calls to disturbances at premises, street violence and sexual offences.

This year, again, saw police units deployed to a large number of incidents where London Ambulance Service were not immediately available and the gap had to be filled by police either providing first aid and waiting with casualties or by conveying casualties to hospital.

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The additional staffing provided by OP Tinsel greatly assisted the Duty Inspector gain control of a chaotic scene on the tragic night of 6th December when a young man was murdered as a result of an incident in Leadenhall Street.

New Years Eve again saw the Licensing Team deployed from early evening throughout the night. Early intervention by the team at a large City premises prevented significant disorder from a promoted event getting out of control. With the assistance of 2 dog units, an entire Support Group Unit of an Inspector, 3 sergeants and 21 constables together with an Evidence Gathering Team, the venue was cleared without serious injury. These same resources had to be immediately redeployed to clear a very large disturbance outside a promoted event close to ST Pauls. Unfortunately a more significant injury was reported from this venue.

Police Licensing Team Activity- 2016 Going Forward

The police licensing team intends to maintain the level of activity demonstrated last year. Moving into 2016 police will continue with monthly deployments using a full range of resources and tactics drawn from across the force.

2015 demonstrated that with regular comprehensive deployments, thoroughly scrutinising licensed premises en masse, combined with other tactics the governance of the vast majority of premises improved considerably.

At the start of 2015 officers would deploy and carry out detailed premises visits throughout the NTE and regularly encounter premises operating in breach of their licences. By the end of 2015 transgressions became far less common as managers tightened their performance. This in turn had a positive effect on the safety of patrons. When CCTV systems, often a condition of licence, are maintained and operating correctly, crimes are successfully investigated leading to charge, conviction and hence a real deterrent.

In addition the team intend to deploy more regularly, resource permitting, in order to gather evidential footage of the impact that promoted events and other late night venues have within the vicinity of their businesses.

It is currently anticipated that the Christmas campaign 2016 should be comprised of a similarly extensively resourced deployment in order to meet the challenges of the season.

Inspector Simon Douglas, Police Licensing Team.

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