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| Committee(s): | Date(s): | |
| Licensing Committee | 16 July 2012 | |
| Subject: Public Nuisance associated with Licensed Premises | Public | |
| Report of: Director of Markets and Consumer Protection | For Information | |
| <u>Summary</u> | | |
| <p>Members have complained that there is insufficient provision in the City at night to deal with anti-social behaviour (ASB) and public nuisance, primarily patron noise, from licensed premises, particularly in Carter Lane. This paper outlines actions to improve the service, using Carter Lane as a template for other areas and suggests the Licensing Steering Group set up by The Town Clerk as the appropriate body to oversee these improvements.</p> | | |

Main Report

Background

1. With the change in the Licensing legislation, the City has faced a series of challenges in its role as a licensing, local and police authority. Finding a balanced approach to the night-time economy is an example of the type of issue that the City has had to address and continues to work on.
2. Over this period, Members have raised concerns over a range of licensing issues affecting all Departments involved in delivering our Licensing Service, including the Police. The most recent of these concerns our out-of-hours Environmental Health Service. Following recent reviews heard by Licensing Sub Committees of two separate premises in Carter Lane in the City Members have complained that there is insufficient provision in the City at night to deal with anti-social behaviour (ASB) and public nuisance, primarily patron noise, from licensed premises, particularly in Carter Lane.
3. The aim of this report is to introduce the Licensing Steering Group set up by The Town Clerk to respond to the concerns of Members and outline the actions that the Group is proposing in relation to those concerns with particular respect to public nuisance, primarily from patron noise associated with licensed premises.

Current Position

4. So far these matters have been addressed as and when they emerge, but in response to this matter The Town Clerk has set up a Licensing Steering Group on a standing basis. The group will be led by the Comptroller & City Solicitor and supported by the Director of Markets and Consumer Protection, an Assistant Town Clerk, and a Police Superintendent and other relevant City Corporation Officers. It will look across the board and help to coordinate our work, including that in undertaken conjunction with the City Police. It is intended to demonstrate to Members that we are actively working to improve the position. The Comptroller & City Solicitor's contacts and experience in the field gained at

Hammersmith & Fulham and Kensington & Chelsea will be of great assistance in bringing a fresh perspective.

5. The group's terms of reference are as follows:
 - To keep under review and identify improvements in all areas of the City Corporation's licensing activities to ensure an efficient and effective service is delivered to the public, license applicants and holders, and elected Members;
 - To report on the work of the Group to the Town Clerk and Chief Executive on a quarterly basis.
6. City Police have confirmed that they will respond to any ASB complaints in Carter Lane and will be immediately focussing on Carter Lane to prevent public order /ASB problems including Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights. Environmental Health (EH) will arrange for EH Officers to deal with known problem areas, including Carter Lane, on Friday and Saturday nights by doing proactive inspections, taking action with premises managers and gathering evidence for further formal action.
7. Noise is included in the definition of ASB. For ASB, the City Police act as the first point of contact and will respond rapidly when contacted on 020 7601 2222. The EH response for noise related problems is provided via the Guildhall number 020 7606 3030 and consists of first response by a Department of Built Environment Street Enforcement Officer (SEO) who will take initial, informal, enforcement action and carry out surveillance where necessary or requested.
8. A series of further measures in the short, medium and longer term have been identified, some starting immediately but all being initiated by January 2013 and are outlined in Appendix 1.

Proposals

9. All of the steps agreed by the Licensing Steering Group will be undertaken and their effectiveness will be monitored by the same Group.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

10. This initiative fits within one of the three strategic aims for the City Corporation in the Corporate Plan 2012 -2016 'to provide modern, efficient and high quality local services and policing within the Square Mile for workers, residents and visitors with a view to delivering sustainable outcomes'. Similarly it meets the Markets and Consumer Protection Department Business Plan 2012 - 2015 strategic aim to 'to advise, educate, influence, regulate and protect all communities for which the Department has responsibility in the fields of Environmental Health, Port Health, Trading Standards, Licensing and Animal Health'. It also fits within one of the five themes of the City Together Strategy 2008-2014 which 'protects, promotes and enhances our environment'.

Implications

11. There may be the need for further consideration but at present all actions are expected to fall within the current local risk budgets of Departments. The

actions identified by the Licensing Steering Group have all been subject to the views of the Comptroller & City Solicitor.

Conclusion

12. The Licensing Steering Group should act as the overseeing body for the service improvements in providing a coherent, balanced approach to the City's night time economy starting with the actions noted in paragraphs 5 and 6 and outlined in Appendix 1 of this report.

Background Papers:

None

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Outline of Actions proposed by Licensing Steering Group

Contact:

steve.blake@cityoflondon.gov.uk | 1604: