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Your ref: 104 to 106 Rushey Green
SE6

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Rubys 104 – 106 Rushey Green Catford SE6 4HW

Lewisham Police Licensing acknowledge receipt of an application for a new premises licence for a multi room events space at the above location with proposed capacity of approximately 2700. The proposed operating hours range from 8am through to 5am the following day 7 days a week. Alcohol will be on sale from 11am to 4.30am the following day and provision of live music 11am to 4.30 am 7 days a week. The capacity will be divided as follows: ground floor 800, restaurant and night club. First floor 1400,

Events such as weddings funerals and birthdays. Roof terrace 500, shisha lounge.

(I have included photographs of the venue in its current state).

Police would like to outright object to this application under the following Licensing objectives:

- Prevent crime and disorder
- Public safety
- Prevent public nuisance
- Protect children from harm

After considering the application, conditions offered by the applicant and taking into account the location of the proposed premises and its environs Police licensing feel that the proposed premises will undermine not only

the Licensing objectives but also greatly affect the local residences and the quality of their lives. The applicant has failed to take into account and address the negative impact that this venue will have. The extensive hours proposed will impact greatly on the lives of those in the surrounding areas, giving very little respite for residents. There are already several venues in the immediate surrounding area which is at saturation point with this kind of venue. Furthermore I have received an email from The London Fire Brigade Harry Glead (fire safety officer) stating the venue has a capacity of 484 only and does not conform to safety standards. (copy of email included). I have also have an impact assessment statement from PC Barney Jones from the Rushey Green Safer Neighbourhood Team which is also included.

Geographical Location

Rushey Green Catford is a densely populated urban area on the commuter belt, namely the south Circular. It is extremely busy 24/7, more so during rush hour as it is the direct route into London. The majority of the main roads, including Rushey Green itself are on a red route.

A large majority of the side roads are permit holder only parking. There are two train stations within walking distance, Catford Hill and Catford Bridge. No tube station. I believe there are two night buses N199 and N136.

Rushey Green has a high street and small run down precinct as well as a small retail park that has a late night refreshment venue and gaming venue. This area is known locally as Plassey Island.

At the back of 104 to 106 Rushey Green is Milford Towers a high rise estate consisting of social housing which has a large amount of ASB and drug taking/dealing. Next to Milford Towers at the back of the proposed venue are roads that consist of rows and rows of terraced houses in narrow streets with permit holder parking. I mention Milford Towers as the patrons of the proposed venue will be in extremely close proximity to this site and will likely find themselves walking or parking by it.

The main high street of Rushey Green is beset with problems. The doorways are littered with homeless individuals and street drinkers hang around in the alleys and green areas outside the shops. There are several hostels within walking distance and drug and alcohol recovery centre just along the road and another two along the road heading toward Downham.

There are other night time economy venues in Rushey Green that have contributed to the ASB mentioned in the above paragraph. Even though parts of the area have been rejuvenated they are now covered in graffiti and drug addicts openly sit in the street begging.

The application (public nuisance/public safety)

The applicant appears to have covered a lot when first reading the application form, however, having met the applicant at the venue it became evident they are not remotely familiar with the area and believe they are rejuvenating the area.

The venue is a very large empty building that is essentially a shell. It is going to take a vast sum of money to get this anywhere near what the applicant is proposing. The work alone will cause a lot of disruption to the local residents as there is nowhere for the workmen to park and there is nothing to stop the noise emanating from the building. It is unknown if planning has even been obtained to turn this into a night club. However, there is no way to monitor if the planning permission is to be applied for and carried out after the licence is granted or if the planning permission would even be granted. They would like a shisha lounge on the roof to accommodate 500 people plus furniture and the area covered. Would the roof even withstand this amount or weight or would it collapse causing a critical incident. The LFB have already informed police that the stair ways are not adequate to accommodate the 2700 the applicant would like the venue to hold.

The Lewisham Borough statement of Licensing Policy 2020 – 2025

2.26 states: The licensing Authority urges all applicants to ensure they have the correct planning use for the business type they are operating before they apply for their licence. Both planning and licensing consents must be in place for a business to operate legally.

Also in the statement policy under Licensing Objectives and operating schedules:

3.5 Applicants are expected to demonstrate sufficient local knowledge and steps to mitigate any negative impact on the licensing objectives.

Knowledge of local area and proximity to local residences and how their activities will impact on these.

An understanding of crime levels and types in the area and any problem hotspots where their activities may impact street congregating. .

Knowledge of any local youth establishments including schools and areas where children may congregate.

With Milford Towers directly at the back of this venue and rows and rows of terraced house this venue will have a huge impact with foot fall, noise from music and sheer volume of people. It will totally change the area. Not to mention 500 people smoking shisha on the roof.

The applicant has therefore not demonstrated how he will prevent the local residents being disturbed by constant noise/loud music from the venue or what impact this will have on their quality of life. The hours they plan to operate are excessive and will have a detrimental effect on the surrounding area. The applicant has not demonstrated how he will deal with people queuing to get into the venue or the dispersal policy and the noise generated by several hundred (possibly thousands) of people leaving the venue. The fire exit for this premise is at the back of the building down a flight of metal stairs taking the patrons of this venue directly into the residential area. The stairs are metal. In my 29 years of experience in the emergency services I have learned that metal stairs are a hazard and are very slippery when wet. A crowd using metal stairs to escape from a building in a panic is a hazard this is without adding alcohol and stilettos to the mix.

The front of the premise opens up onto the very busy road. Where will people go to smoke, queue to get in and the dispersal be controlled at closing time. The requested closing time is 0500. This is the same time as another big venue in the area that causes issues at closing time.

The applicant states everyone will be getting Ubers. If the venue is at the full capacity they are proposing and if they are 4 up in an Uber that is still 675 Ubers. These will have to go to the back of the premise because the front of the premise is on a red route. Again into the residential area around Milford Towers and surrounding roads.

Children

The applicant does not mention having children at this venue but does state they plan to hold events such as weddings, funerals and birthday parties. Will children be banned from these events? There is no explanation how this can be managed or how children can be kept separate from adult entertainment areas as children would be expected to be present at a wedding or birthday party. . How will they protect children from harm if they are using the same toilets as the rest of the patrons? Will the venue be open during the day to patrons with children and how will this be managed. This also has not been demonstrated by the applicant.

The area is densely populated and school children reside in the locality, they will regularly be in the presence of the patrons coming and going to the premises and also subjected to the noise from the premises, this may have a negative impact on their sleep and subsequently their schooling as well as having to share the public transport with people who may well be intoxicated

Crime

The area is within the Rushey Green Ward. Research on the crime database shows this to be a high crime area. Although this is not directly linked to this venue the patrons of the venue may find themselves victims of crime. The applicant has applied for a licence to run from 11am finishing at 5am 7 days a week, Police would suggest that in a period of several hours to consume alcohol the chances of crime and damage to health from the consumption of alcohol would be greatly increased. The ability to monitor inebriation of alcohol and any other substances is made increasingly difficult by the large capacity that the venue is able to hold.

It is the Police belief that the large capacity and the hours requested would lead to an increase of crime and anti-social behaviour which would become an extra burden on emergency services.

The patrons are more likely to be the victims of crime if they are under the influence of alcohol and less aware of their surroundings.

It is also a fact that drug use occurs in late night economy venues and while we accept drugs can be hidden, random searches of entrants would make it easier to hide drugs. A search of every applicant as a requirement of entry would discourage hiding drugs or weapons.

Further to this Police are aware of a friendship groups in and around Rushey Green and the violence this generates. Indeed police also have another venue on Lewisham who also hosts weddings and funerals and our experience of this is that due diligence has not been in place when booking those events and has contributed to ASB. Police already have an issue with weapons being hidden in Plassey island retails area and in the walk way under Octavia house. Machetes and large knives have been found and seized. The violence Police see and that spreads onto the south circular in front of traffic has been extreme.

Relevant Local strategies - Statement of licensing policy 2020 – 2025

2.21 – The council has developed a wide range of initiatives to tackle alcohol related harm through its alcohol delivery plan, the delivery of which is overseen by the Lewisham health and wellbeing board. Additionally, reducing alcohol harm is one of the key priorities in the ten year Lewisham health and wellbeing strategy (2013 – 2023).

2.24 Key aims of policies within this statement are to discourage drunkenness and excessive drinking and encourage licensees to promote licence objectives by including more availability of food and seating within their operating schedules. This is to encourage the enjoyment of alcohol alongside other entertainment, not as the main offer.

7.13 The times within which live music and /or amplified sound may be played in any external area or marquees or relayed by external speakers (where permitted under the terms of the licence). The licensing authority deems this should not continue beyond 10pm.

24.1 It is known that there is a strong link between vertical drinking and violent and disorderly behaviour. Increased levels of drinking amongst patrons are also associated with vertical drinking. Given the clear public health (2.20) and crime and disorder considerations around this, the licensing authority expect any application that proposes vertical drinking to make this clear in their operating schedules and outline effective measures for managing associated risks.

Police have read the Local authority's objection and the conditions they have suggested but they do not address the fundamental issues of this application. The venue is not fit for the proposed capacity or change of use, The licensing objectives have not been met and the Lewisham statement of policy has not been adhered to.

Police Licencing acknowledge that all options are open to committee but with the application in its current form cannot be supported by Police whilst the licensing objectives and the Lewisham Council Statement of Licensing Policy have been ignored. Police licensing would strongly recommend that this application be denied to open a venue of this capacity in Rushey Green. Police also suggest that when Lewisham's statement of licensing policy comes up for renewal in 2025 Rushey Green is made a communitive impact zone.

Yours sincerely,

PC Gillian Pearce
Police Licensing Officer
Lewisham