

Licensing Sub Committee Hearing Panel

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 14 June 2023

Present: Councillor Andrews - in the Chair

Councillors: Grimshaw and Connolly

LACHP/23/42. Summary Review Interim Steps - Vision, 58 Whitworth Street West, Manchester, M1 5WW

The Hearing Panel considered a report from the Director of Planning, Building Control and Licensing concerning the above application. The written papers and oral representations of the parties who attended were also considered, as well as the relevant legislation.

GMP addressed the Hearing Panel and stated that their application was submitted under Section 51 of the Licensing Act regarding concerns over serious violent crime and serious disorder. The licence at Vision Club is in the name of the company YDS UK. Regarding the incident, GMP read their report verbatim from the agenda issued whilst raising that this recent incident came after a previous violent incident only 10 weeks prior. The Hearing Panel had added a condition at this previous Summary Review hearing for the club to operate with knife/metal detector wands. This was extremely concerning as now this latest incident had seen a brawl escalate within the club and then continue in the street where two individuals were stabbed, one victim having been reported as being in and out of consciousness due to the injuries sustained. GMP had concerns around further violence at Vision and the safety of staff and customers.

In responding to questions from the Premises representative, GMP stated that it could not be confirmed at the time whether the offenders had taken weaponry into the club, that they were able to obtain the weapons quickly and that this information was pending further investigation. GMP stated that they had not seen the CCTV footage mentioned by Premises's representative regarding an individual putting gloves on in the street prior to the stabbings.

In responding to questions from the Hearing Panel, GMP stated that the phone call alerting the police to the incident was made on a mobile telephone number and that GMP were not aware of any extra CCTV footage.

The Premises representative addressed the Hearing panel and stated that it was regrettable to see another incident of violent crime break out at the venue so soon after the previous incident. The representative, DPS and General Manager all agreed that they were not resisting any potential suspension but felt that concerns about whether the offenders were inside the club with knives was debatable. They would work with GMP and check over all the evidence as the premises may not be at fault. The evening in question was a busy and popular night in the city centre as the Champion's League final had seen Manchester City win the treble and the Parklife festival was also running. As soon as the fight started, the club made the decision to close and customers were moved out onto the street. Trouble continued and the

CCTV had shown people leaving and returning and one assailant putting on gloves. It was possible that the offenders had left to get the knife from elsewhere and the representative stated that since the condition was added for the club to operate with wands, this had been followed stringently. All information regarding the assaults was fully agreed by the premises team at Vision, they had many years experience of trading and would investigate fully what occurred during the incident. A suspension of the licence was sensible for public safety but needs to be based on evidence going forward, via CCTV and witness statements. The whole team at Vision take the incident very seriously.

The representative then confirmed matters with the DPS who was at the premises on the night. The DPS stated that he made the call to the police and stayed on the phone for around 10 minutes. CCTV had been given to GMP. This showed an offender returning and putting on a pair of gloves. The incident began when two groups started fighting inside the club and door staff intervened to separate them. The DPS had called the police and remained on the call while customers were sent outside and the music was ceased. One group returned and started up another fight with the same group and then the police arrived. No weapons had been seen inside the club and no first aid was given inside the club either. Lots of people were out wearing blue tops and it was raised that the incident may have been football related.

In responding to questions from the Hearing Panel, the DPS and General Manager stated that they had called the police from the club to alert them to the incident, that booths at the club are generally booked in advance, that no customers were on the premises wearing branded sports wear but could be associated as one group were all wearing light blue tops, that the night was quiet so door staff let groups in as they felt confident there was enough security on the premises and that the incident occurred at around 02:30 on a Sunday morning/late Saturday night which their licence allows (alcohol sales cease at 03:30 and the premises close at 04:00).

The Hearing Panel responded to say that the likelihood of football related violence was debatable but may come to light with further investigations.

In summing up the case for the Premises, the representative stated that public safety was paramount, any suspension would not be resisted by the premises but they do not accept liability at this time, before the full investigation is complete.

In summing up their case, GMP stated that they appreciated the co-operation shown by the premises.

In their deliberations, the Hearing Panel noted the gravity of the incident, especially coming so soon after a previous similar incident only two months prior. They accepted GMP's request for a suspension and noted that the premises were also compliant in this regard.

Decision

To suspend the licence with immediate effect on the grounds of public safety pending a further full Summary Review decision to be made on Friday 7 July 2023.