Licensing Sub-Committee

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the Licensing Sub-Committee held on Thursday 1 October 2026 at 10.00 am at Online/Virtual

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PRESENT:	Councillor Margy Newens (Chair) Councillor Ruth Bannister Councillor Bill Williams
OTHER AUTHORITIES PRESENT:	P.C. David Watson, Metropolitan Police Service
OFFICER SUPPORT:	Debra Allday, legal officer Andrew Heron, licensing officer Ola Owojori, licensing responsible authority officer Charlie Jerrom, trading standards officer Andrew Weir, constitutional officer

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

The clerk opened the meeting.

Councillor Margy Newens was nominated by Councillor Ruth Bannister to chair the meeting. This was seconded by Councillor Bill Williams.

2. APOLOGIES

This was a virtual licensing sub-committee meeting.

The chair explained to the participants and observers how the virtual meeting would run. Everyone then introduced themselves.

There were no apologies for absence.

3. CONFIRMATION OF VOTING MEMBERS

The voting members were confirmed verbally, one at a time.

4. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT

The following item was accepted as a late and urgent item:

Quickstop (Also Known As S&R Supermarket), 285 Southwark Park Road, London SE16 3TP.

5. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

There were none.

6. LICENSING ACT 2003: QUICKSTOP (ALSO KNOWN AS S&R SUPERMARKET), 285 SOUTHWARK PARK ROAD, LONDON SE16 3TP - REVIEW

The licensing officer presented their report. Members had no questions for the licensing officer.

The trading standards officer addressed the sub-committee. Members had questions for he trading standards officer.

The officer from the Metropolitan Police Service addressed the sub-committee. Members had questions for the police officer.

The officer representing licensing as a responsible authority addressed the sub-committee. Members had questions for the officer.

The premises licence holder and their representative addressed the sub-committee. Members had questions for the premises licence holder and their representative.

All parties were given up to five minutes for summing up.

The meeting adjourned at 11.10am for the sub-committee to consider its decision.

The meeting reconvened at 11.31am and the chair advised everyone present of the sub-committee's decision.

RESOLVED:

That the council's licensing sub-committee, having considered an application made under Section 167 of the Licensing Act 2003 following receipt by the licensing authority of a closure order submitted by trading standards for the review of the premises licence has decided to revoke the premises licence Quickstop (Also Known As S&R Supermarket), 285 Southwark Park Road, London SE16 3TP.

Reasons

This was an application for the review of the premises licence in respect of Quickstop (Also Known As S&R Supermarket), 285 Southwark Park Road, London SE16 3TP.

The licensing sub-committee heard from the officer from trading standards who explained that the review application arose following the granting of a closure order on 4 June 2026 and its subsequent extension on 2 September 2026 under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. The closure order had been granted due to criminal activity connected with a sale and supply of illegal tobacco products from the premises and the trading standards representation supported the review application on the grounds of the prevention of crime and disorder licensing objective.

Trading standards identified a persistent pattern of criminal conduct to the premises between October 2025 and May 2026, including five successful test purchases of illicit tobacco products in 2025 on 28 October and 12 December and in 2026 on 2 February, 13 March and 23 April with a further illicit sale confirmed in May 2026. Multiple enforcement visits to the premises resulted in significant quantities of illegal products including 189 packets of illicit cigarettes, 42 packets of hand rolling tobacco, 79 illegal vaping devices and nicotine patches of non-compliant tobacco products being seized.

An individual was observed attempting to remove illicit tobacco from the premises during the Trading Standards inspection on 28 November 2025. Despite enforcement being undertaken, illegal tobacco sales continued, resulting in repeated enforcement action, product seizures and warnings. The supply of illicit tobacco was systemic and persistent; they were not isolated or accidental. Public complaints were also received alleging the sale of illicit tobacco.

There had been difficulties as to who was operating the business with conflicting information regarding tenants and operators, but Mr. Thanbir Ahmed Raju was the premises licence holder and the designated premises supervisor (DPS) throughout the period of offending. He had been notified of the illegal activity on 11 March 2026 and despite being placed on notice, illicit tobacco sales continued on 23 April and May 2026. These further incidents occurred after the premises licence holder/DPS had knowledge of criminal activity and had the opportunity to take immediate action. Multiple test purchases were conducted to show a persistent pattern of illicit tobacco being sold.

The premises licence holder/DPS, had the responsibility to ensure the premises were being operated lawfully, and it was trading standards position that he failed to exercise adequate control, supervision and oversight of premises as demonstrated by the continued of criminal activity.

The trading standards officer stated that they had lost confidence in Mr Raju's ability and willingness to uphold the licence objectives to desist in the sale of illicit tobacco.

The licensing sub-committee heard from the officer from the Metropolitan Police Service, who fully supported review application. Mr. Raju was the premises licence holder and DPS and the sale of illicit tobacco undermined the licencing objectives with regard to the prevention of crime and disorder. The frequency of recorded incidents demonstrated a criminal course of conduct and because of this, the police had no confidence in his ability to promote the licencing objectives. The police recommended a revocation of the premises licence.

The licencing sub-committee heard from the officer representing licensing as a responsible authority, who also supported the review application. The circumstances that led to the closure order demonstrated significant failings in the management and operation of the premises and a failure to promote the licencing objectives.

The licence holder had failed in his responsibility to exercise any control of the criminal activities taking place at the premises and failed to follow the advice given by responsible authorities, especially trading standards and the police.

A closure order was one of the most severe enforcement tools available and a strong indicator that the premises has been associated with serious crime and criminal activities. To prevent the further occurrence of serious criminal activities at the premises, the Magistrates' Court awarded the closure order which questioned the licence holder's ability to promote the licencing objectives.

The officer also advised that he had no confidence in the management and the operation of the premises and asked the sub-committee to revoke the premises licence.

The licensing sub-committee heard from the premises licence holder's representative, who stated that Mr Raju did not minimise the seriousness of the illegal tobacco and vaping activity that took place at the premises or its impact on the community, but a revocation or suspension of the premises licence was opposed.

For the avoidance of doubt, he had never personally supplied or authorised the sale of any illicit products. He recognised the review application was not about Mr Raju's personal guilt, and as the premises licence holder/DPS, he accepted he was responsible to ensure the proper management and oversight of the premises.

Prior to test purchases, he carried out quarterly inspections at the premises. However, due to family circumstances, he was away between December 2025 and February 2026, so the quarterly inspection that would have ordinarily taken place during that period did not occur. He accepted this oversight and should have made alternative arrangements. He was however adamant, he had no knowledge at the time that illicit tobacco was being sold from the premises.

Mr. Raju became of the issues in March 2026 and had cooperated with Trading Standards, by answering their questions and providing all relevant information and documentation requested of him, including the floor plans and lease documentation. He also took steps to bring the occupational arrangement to an end, resulting in a formal surrender of the lease on 28 May 2026.

Once Mr Raju became aware of the problem, he did not ignore it. He cooperated with the authorities bur the tenant had a legal right of occupation, and he could not simply enter the premises and seize suspected goods, or physically remove the occupier.

It was also acknowledged that simply removing the operator did not address the underlying management issue and it was accepted that there was a weakness in the tenant selection process and the continual oversight of the premises, for which he took responsibility. Mr Raju said he would look into whether there were effective measures that could promote the licencing objectives and prevent reoccurrence.

He intended writing a compliance and management system for future operators, partners or members of staff and would ensure that appropriate checks would be carried out in advance of operation, with formal written agreements between any party containing clear compliance obligations. There would be unannounced inspection visits, and appropriate visits to take action where those obligations are breached. Enhanced controls concerning legitimate suppliers and the retention of invoices would also be carried out.

The premises licence holder/DPS was asked what action he took following his notification from trading standards in March 2026 that they were investigating the premises.

The premises licence holder/DPS stated that he had to allow the investigation to conclude. The licence holder had planned to surrender the lease and was also seeking advice on how to prevent a reoccurrence, but essentially, there was not anything legally he could do.

This suggested that the licence holder/DPS expected someone else to sort out the issues meaning, he did not understand his responsibility as DPS. The licence holder/DPS stated that he had visited the premises at the end of March 2026 but it was unclear whether a quarterly inspection was carried out or how the visit different from any other visit. To this, it was confirmed that he just spoke with the occupiers about the serious illegal irregularities at the premises and that they needed to obtain a tobacco licence.

The premises licence holder/DPS then alleged that the occupants did not have the authority to sell alcohol under his premises licence. It was made clear that if Mr Raju did not authorise the sale of alcohol under his premises licence, he should have surrendered the premises licence or agreed with the occupier to transfer the licence.

The premises licence holder/DPS was also advised that it was an offence under Section 144 Licensing Act 2003 for keeping smuggled goods at the premises, so the continued unlawful sale of illicit tobacco was an offence and put his premises licence at risk. To this, the licence holder explained that he had done as much as he could by working Trading Standards and surrendering of the lease, but his hands were essentially tied as Trading Standards had control of the premises. It was confirmed with Trading Standards that this was not the case.

In determining the application for the review of the premises licence in respect of Quickstop (Also Known As S&R Supermarket) both the written representations and verbal presentations were considered. What was apparent was that the premises licence holder/DPS, did not have sufficient management oversight concerning the premises whether on day-to-day basis, or at all.

Despite being a party to the closure order proceedings at the Magistrates' Court, it was clear that the premises licence holder/DPS did not understand the reason why he was party to them or the role that trading standards had in them. For example, despite the Court granting the closure order and closure order extension, Mr Raju believed that trading standards "had control of premises".

As the premises licence holder/DPS, Mr Raju believed this was the case because trading standards had requested a copy of the lease. However, the letter of 11 March 2026 from trading standards (agenda, page 298), simply informed him of the suspected offences and enquired who the tenant was.

Further, Mr Raju's representative informed the sub-committee that it would have been helpful to seek further advice from trading standards at the time to see what additional controls could be required and a clear system for reoccurrence. By way of mitigation, it was asserted that the retail environment had changed since the transfer to Mr Raju in 2022. However, the sub-committee were of the view that the retail environment had not changed substantially in that time.

It was claimed that the premises licence holder/DPS visited the premises towards the end of March 2026. It was not explained how the visit was in line with the usual quarterly inspection but stated that he informed his tenant to obtain a tobacco licence. The sub-committee was troubled with this because the Tobacco and Vapes Act 2026 became law in April 2026, the mandatory retail licensing framework are scheduled to take place between 2027 and 2029. Regardless, the persistent sale of illicit tobacco and vapes put the premises licence at serious risk by virtue of s.144 Licensing Act 2003.

The options available to the sub-committee were:

i. **Do nothing**. The sub-committee were satisfied that a Closure Order had been made by Croydon Magistrates' Court on 4 June 2026, which was extended on 2 September 2026. This was demonstrated by the multiple test purchases carried out at the premises when illicit tobacco was sold. Taking no action was not an option.

ii. **Exclude a licensable activity from the scope of the licence**. The only licensable activity on the premises licence was for the sale by retail of alcohol to be consumed off premises. An exclusion was tantamount to the revocation of the licence. It was concluded this was not a reasonable option.

iii. **Remove the designated premises supervisor**. The premises licence holder was also the DPS and also a sole trader. It was considered inappropriate to remove the DPS no knowing whether there was a viable alternative DPS.

iv. **Modify the conditions of the licence**. Although it was possible to modify the premises licence there were significant breaches of s.144 Licensing Act 2003. The sub-committee were therefore not confident that the premises licence holder could comply with a comprehensive list of conditions imposed by way of a modification.

v. **Suspend the licence for a period not exceeding three months**. Any suspension would be in respect of the sale of alcohol only. Since the premises was already the subject to a three-month extension to the Closure Order, the sub-committee concluded a suspension of the premises licence would essentially duplicate what was already in place. In view of this, suspension of the licence was not deemed appropriate.

vi. **Revoke the licence**. Having considered the various options available to the sub-committee, the only appropriate course of action was

In reaching its decision, the licensing sub-committee had regard to all the relevant considerations, its equality duties and four licensing objectives and the National Licensing Policy Framework for the Hospitality and Leisure Sectors England and Wales (November 2025) and considered that this decision was appropriate and proportionate.

Appeal rights

This decision is open to appeal by either:

a) The applicant for the review
b) The premises licence holder
c) Any other person who made relevant representations in relation to the application.

Such appeal must be commenced by notice of appeal given by the appellant to the justices' clerk for the Magistrates' Court for the area within the period of 21 days

beginning with the day on which the appellant was notified by this licensing authority of the decision.

This decision does not have effect until either:

a) The end of the period for appealing against this decision; or
b) In the event of any notice of appeal being given, until the appeal is disposed of.

The meeting ended at 11.34am.

CHAIR:

DATED: