HIGHGATE SOCIETY

10A South Grove N6 6BS

Tulip Siddiq MP (by e mail)

22 October 2026

Dear Tulip

Licensing

I am writing on behalf of the Highgate Society. With 1,400 members and around 175 active volunteers, we are one of the most active civic organisations in the area, and regularly engage on issues of importance for Highgate residents and businesses.

Earlier this year new legislation gave the Mayor of London the right to call in decisions made by London Borough Councils regarding the grant of licences under the Licensing Act 2003. This includes all sorts of liquor licences, including pubs and clubs. This right is restricted to applications that are "potentially strategic", with the definition of what is classed as potentially strategic to be defined later by the Government. The Government reassured Parliament that this was a *"carefully constrained strategic role"* for the Mayor.

The Statutory Instrument that defines what is potentially strategic has now been published (The Licensing Act 2003 (Applications of Potential Strategic Importance to Greater London etc and Consequential Amendment) Regulations 2026). Contrary to the intention of the primary legislation this definition covers **91%** of licensed premises in London.

Whilst the Mayor may not in practice call in many applications, the fact that he may do so is likely to encourage licensees to make later and less constrained applications and Council Licensing Committees to put less weight on the concerns raised in order to avoid the decision being called-in. This shifts the delicate balance between businesses and residents, especially in areas where there are existing concentrations of licensed premises.

Further, while the Mayor may not at first exercise the powers significantly, if such a high proportion of licences come within the Mayor's powers it would change the balance of Borough- and London-level decision making which would both be contrary to the intention of the legislation and importantly for local areas in London will reduce the effectiveness of

local decision making which is so valuable in reaching appropriate outcomes. Local residents and businesses are able to, and do, make representations.

We are aware that Rachel Blake, the MP for the Cities of London & Westminster, is securing Parliamentary time for a debate on this topic. We ask that you support her efforts to ensure that the Government reconsiders the definition and ensures that the balance between the desires of business and the needs of residents is maintained.

Yours sincerely

Francis

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Secretary, Highgate Society

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