

**Alexandra Palace Statutory Advisory Committee**  
**16<sup>th</sup> June 2009**

**Report Title: Variation to increase licenced capacity of the Great Hall for live music/concerts.**

**Report of: Mark De'Ath, Acting Head of Operations & Events**

**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 This report is for information only and details Alexandra Palace Trading Limited's proposal to request from the London Borough of Haringey a variation in the Premises Licence enabling the capacity for live music/concert events to be extended from 7,250 to 10,400 inclusive of all staff.
- 1.2 An independent specialist consultant, Capita Symonds, from the events/live music industry has been engaged to undertake the technical work and calculation to investigate the possibility of increasing the capacity. Their findings and report are attached in Appendix I.
- 1.3 The current Licence already permits up to 10,000 persons in the building at any one time.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 That the committee discuss the report and raise any concerns or observations they feel may be appropriate. APTL would be pleased to consider any advice/comment that the Committee feels would enhance this application before submission to LB Haringey.
- 2.2 That the Committee advise their representative groups of this planned action and the option should they so wish, to respond within the consultative period as specified by the London Borough of Haringey following formal submission.

Report Authorised by: Rebecca Kane, Managing Director APTL

  
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### **3. Executive Summary**

3.1 N/A

### **4. Reasons for any change in policy or for new policy development (if applicable)**

4.1 N/A

### **5. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

5.1 No specific background papers other than those attached to the report were used in compiling this report.

## **6.0 Background**

- 6.1 The original calculation of capacity for the Great Hall and remainder of Alexandra Palace was determined by the number of available doors and an agreed number of persons that could escape through those doors in a given time. A figure of 250 per set of doors was determined.
- 6.2 The Great Hall at Alexandra Palace has 34 available doors of exit. Removing the largest exit route out of the building in the event of a fire or the need to evacuate, 29 doors would be available giving the current license capacity of 7250.
- 6.3 In recent years as a result of Risk Assessment and consultation with all of the Responsible Authorities i.e. Police, Fire and relevant Local Authority departments it was agreed to create four further doors within the hall to increase the capacity of the Great Hall for such events to 8250.
- 6.4 The Licensing Act 2003 and subsequent Fire Safety Order 2005 has significantly changed the way Venues have been allowed to be managed. Both pieces of legislation delegated responsibility of the management of events, in particular Health & Safety, with the Venue Operator/Hirer.
- 6.5 The Fire Safety Order 2005 introduced a formula already used within the Event Industry and by many Fire and Building Control Officers in calculating the amount of exits/space available/required to evacuate premises.

## **7. The Issues**

- 7.1 Adopting this formula has allowed Alexandra Palace to review the total capacity of the building should it so wish, however the management at APTL understands the possible impact this may have and have therefore subsequently only concentrated on an area where the current business could receive most benefit.

- 7.2 Music events/concerts have taken place at Alexandra Palace for many years. More recently Alexandra Palace has seen resurgence in its use for such events and therefore believes it is a market worth developing to maintain its business profile. The Great Hall has always had the ability to accommodate larger numbers if necessary, however has had the restriction of the current calculation determining the licensed numbers.
- 7.3 APTL is aware of its responsibilities both under the License and to the Local Community/ Residents and will continue to work with these groups to ensure any nuisance is kept to a minimum. The increase in numbers may have an impact in certain areas and any issues raised will be addressed where necessary.
- 7.4 APTL can already confirm the following measures in place:-
- i) All Concert events will continue to finish no later than 11.00pm. Many Promoters are now recognizing their responsibility in this area and are actively finishing their events by 10.30pm in order the visitors have sufficient time to travel home safely.
  - ii) APTL has more recently developed a very good relationship with both TFL and the relevant Bus Operators and they will continue to be advised of our events programme, the timings and the potential numbers attending.
  - iii) APTL will continue to fund an increased courtesy shuttle bus service to and from both Alexandra Palace and Wood Green Train Stations to ensure any potential late night nuisance is kept to minimum.
  - iv) Although large percentage of Concert goers arrive by public transport APTL will continue to fund, manage and make available all car parking areas to ensure no indiscriminant parking takes place on residential streets.
  - v) APTL will continue to fund Noise Consultants to ensure noise propagation from the building is maintained at an acceptable level to both London Borough of Haringey Enforcements Officers and Local Residents.
- 7.5 Concerts in the Great Hall generally take place during the period from October to March. Subject to availability the number of dates currently ranges from six to twelve evenings of events. It is not yet known how much this will grow but following consultation with the Promoters all have expressed an interest in our proposal to increase the capacity of the hall.
- 7.6 This report primarily relates to concert events rather than other music events that may go on through the night. The License already allows for a figure of 10,000 in the building for such events, APTL does not intend to or wish to change this figure. APTL fully realizes the issues and understands its

responsibilities in respect of such events and will continue to operate these in a continued professional manner.

- 7.7 APTL understands the increased demand the additional capacity may place upon the current infrastructure. Promoters will only be in a position to utilize this capacity extension on agreement of the contract terms highlighting the need to meet these demands. I.e. Security, stewarding, toilet facilities, disabled provision etc.

## **8.0 The Benefits**

The ability to increase the capacity will provide a number of significant benefits.

These are:-

- i) Allow APTL to re invest in facilities and equipment to make them comparable with their venue competitors. Thus increasing the covenant back to the Trust.
- ii) Provide APTL with additional income from both facility fee and catering income.
- iii) Alexandra Palace becomes largest standing venue in London, during a time when many bands prefer standing audiences.
- iv) Provide savings to Promoters who would normally have to book an alternative venue for two nights with all associated production costs.
- v) Make Alexandra Palace a "Venue of Choice" as detailed within its most recent Business Plan.
- vi) Continue to develop business partnerships that raise the status, profile and brand of Alexandra Palace.

## **9.0 Next Steps**

- 9.1 APTL to complete engagement with the key Responsible Authorities to seek their endorsement of the Consultants' Report and confirm permitted capacity.
- 9.2 APTL to submit the Variation application form to London Borough of Haringey following the Trust Board Meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2009, with subsequent Public Notice to be detailed in the relevant local papers w/c 6<sup>th</sup> July 2009.
- 9.3 APTL will receive and discuss comments and concerns from both Advisory and Consultative Committees before presenting this report to the Trust Board with a view to enhancing this application with any points raised.