

## APPENDIX C

**Filed on behalf of:** Applicant

**Witness:** N Courtney

**No. of Statement:** First

**Date of Statement:** 28/02/2024

**Exhibit(s):**

**IN THE MATTER OF S.52 OF THE LICENSING ACT 2003**

**B E T W E E N**

**TRAFFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**APPLICANT**

**AND**

**THE RAILWAY INN**

**RESPONDENT**

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### **WITNESS STATEMENT OF NEILL COURTNEY**

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#### **INTRODUCTION**

1. I am the above named person and I am employed by Trafford Council as the Community Safety and CCTV Team Leader
2. Part of my role is to manage four community safety coordinators within the Community Safety Team and to address matters of crime, nuisance, and anti-social behaviour in the borough. To achieve this, I am provided authorised access to Greater Manchester Police computer systems and daily business records,

intelligence and crime information. This access being granted upon completion of vetting and appropriate training.

3. I hold a professional qualification in Crime and Nuisance Management and have fourteen years' experience in dealing with crime and disorder in policing, housing, and local government settings.
4. For a period of time from December 2023 onwards I was in receipt of various items of information in relation to the Railway Pub, which is a premises located at 153 Manchester Road, Altrincham, Trafford.
1. I am aware that the railway is a public house which serves drinks and advertises food and is located on a busy main road in Trafford.
5. The property is subject to a premises license issued by Trafford Council's Licensing Team.
6. The Property is adjacent to a busy retail park which serves families and various members of the public. Located on the retail park are such stores as McDonalds, The Range, Argos, Sports Direct, Hobbycraft and KFC.
7. The licensee of the premises is known to me to be one Rebecca ELLIS.
8. Enquiries reveal that her father, Richard ELLIS also has an interest in the premises and uses the living accommodation above the premises.
9. A check with companies house has revealed that the Railway Inn is incorporated as a company with Richard ELLIS listed as the sole director and lists Rebecca

ELLIS as a person with significant control. The company in question was dissolved on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

10. Officers with Greater Manchester Police received several items of intelligence which indicated to them that the Premises were being used to offer sexual services for reward. This information was provided confidentially. I am privy to this intelligence which is sensitive in nature, but indicates that multiple women, working as sex workers in the Manchester area have reported to various different professionals that they have been taken to the Railway Inn, or encouraged by ELLIS to go to the Railway Inn to engage in sex work there, with ELLIS having told them he has “punters” lined up for them. ELLIS would pay them or make offers to make payment in the form of drugs. Once at the premises, the women report that ELLIS would make it difficult for them to leave.

11. On 13<sup>th</sup> February 2024 I attended a briefing held at Altrincham Police Station. The purpose of this briefing was to prepare staff who were attending at the premises to execute a search warrant issued by the Magistrates Court pursuant to S.8 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984. The warrant covered both the pub itself which is the ground floor of the two-storey premises and the living accommodation above. The warrant was issued based on the information detailed above which was considered by the court to be of sufficient credibility and quantity to allow a warrant to be issued.

12. Shortly thereafter we attended at the Premises where officers had arrived momentarily earlier.

13. As we arrived at the Premises we were met with and spoke to Police Sergeant 15017 CLARKE. Sergeant CLARKE advised us that a female adult had been found in one of the bedrooms of the Premises, and that this female had been brought to the Premises by Richard ELLIS having been collected from Manchester where she was carrying out sex work. She explained to officers, who recorded her account on their body worn video that that she had been engaging in sex work at the pub, where Richard ELLIS had provided her with drugs. The female whose identity is known to me, explained that she engages in sex work in Manchester to pay for an addiction to crack cocaine.
14. The female adult stated she had been provided by crack cocaine for free, and had been told not to leave the upstairs of the pub. She felt that Richard ELLIS would make it difficult for her to leave by doing such things as keeping her belongings and refusing to transport her elsewhere unless she agreed to return. She told Police officers that Richard ELLIS pestered her to have sex with him in exchange for crack cocaine.
15. This female was immediately transported from the premises by Police Officers for safeguarding tasks to be carried out. She was treated as a victim of trafficking throughout and was provided appropriate offers of support. These include tasks that would customarily be made in circumstances where a person is deemed to be a victim of modern slavery or trafficking.
16. I then went inside the Premises where Police Officers were carrying out a search. In the downstairs bar area of the Premises were sat both Rebecca and Richard ELLIS. Both persons were placed under arrest by Police Officers for offences of controlling prostitution for gain.

17. At 1800 hours that same day I determined that the use of the premises had caused serious nuisance to members of the public, including to the vulnerable female and other unknown females believed to have been trafficked there. I therefore explained to Rebecca and Richard ELLIS that I was issuing a closure notice to the Premises pursuant to S. 76(1) of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. I explained the effect of the notice and the consequences should the notice be breached. I also made arrangements for the matter to be heard at the Magistrates Court within 24 hours.
18. The search of the premises yielded several items which I was shown by police officers. Specifically a quantity of unwrapped condoms, used condoms, sexualised female lingerie type underwear and a large number of disposable, burner type telephones. I also noted that the upstairs of the premises were filthy and smelly and that there were numerous deposits of dog excrement throughout. There were also pieces of broken pipes of the type used for the smoking of crack cocaine strewn about the floor.
19. Officers transported Richard and Rebecca ELLIS to custody where they were interviewed and provided no significant explanation for the circumstances revealed at the public house. They have been bailed pending further enquiries and analysis of the various telephones. The bail conditions include not to be concerned in the running of any licenced premises.
20. On 14<sup>th</sup> February 2024 officers from my team attended at Manchester Magistrates Court where District Judge HOGARTH heard the matter. She determined that the notice would remain in force for seven days to permit Richard and Rebecca ELLIS to attend court and provide an explanation.

21. On 21<sup>st</sup> February 2024 a further hearing was held which was not attended by Rebecca and Richard ELLIS. At this hearing District Judge HOGARTH again heard the matter and found that persons had engaged in criminal, offensive or disorderly behaviour on the premises. A closure order pursuant to S80 of the Anti-Social behaviour, Crime and Policing Act was issued by the Judge prohibiting access to the premises for a period of three months. I attended that hearing and an officer from my team gave evidence to the Court.
22. Shortly after the hearing concluded I encountered Richard and Rebecca ELLIS in the court building who explained that they had gone to the wrong court building and hence were late attending. They were provided a copy of the Closure Order and court bundle at this time but were advised that as they had not attended for the hearing, the judge had made her ruling. They then left the Court complex.
23. Officers from my team then made arrangements to secure the premises and to allow Richard ELLIS to collect a dog and some items of medical equipment which he stated he had left inside.
24. I believe that the facts stated in this statement are true. I understand that proceedings for contempt of court may be brought against anyone who makes, or causes to be made, a false statement in a document verified by a statement of truth without an honest belief in its truth.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nashwan', with a horizontal line drawn through it.

Signed:

Position: Community Safety and CCTV Team Leader

Date: 28/02/2024