

LOUNGE AFRIQUE BAR & RESTAURANT

To: Licensing Sub-Committee Middlesbrough Council

Re: Representations Against the Interim Steps – Premises Licence for Lounge Afrique

Dear Members of the Licensing Sub-Committee,

I write on behalf of the Premises Licence Holder to make formal representations against the interim steps imposed following the Summary Review Hearing held on 28 July 2026 under Sections 53A and 53B of the Licensing Act 2003.

Firstly, we wish to express our sincere concern for the young person involved. Any allegation involving the safety and welfare of a young person is deeply distressing. We fully support the ongoing investigation by Cleveland Police and remain committed to assisting them and the Licensing Authority in every way possible.

Since receiving the Committee's decision, we have undertaken a detailed review of our CCTV footage. During this review, we observed what appears to be older adult women accompanying the younger females at various stages of the evening. This has raised significant safeguarding concerns for us, as it suggests there may be wider circumstances surrounding how these young people gained access to the venue. We are not seeking to draw conclusions, as this remains a matter for the police investigation, but we believe this observation is relevant and should form part of the wider picture being considered.

We are also concerned that the Committee's decision refers to the alleged offence as occurring "in the vicinity of the premises" and "at or following their attendance at the premises," without identifying that the offence occurred inside the licensed premises. As the criminal investigation is ongoing, we respectfully submit that these important factual matters remain to be established.

We recognise the seriousness of the concerns raised and have acted immediately. We have not waited for the outcome of the full review before making significant improvements to our operation.

The actions we have already taken include:

The immediate recruitment of a new security team to strengthen supervision and customer safety with clear instructions of what is required of them in discharging their duties.

The purchase of an electronic ID scanning system, which has already been ordered and will be implemented as soon as it is delivered.

Full body cams and metal detectors for security staff.

A full review of all staffing arrangements.



Enhanced safeguarding training for all staff.

Refresher Challenge 25 and age verification training.

A review of door supervision procedures and responsibilities.

Strengthened management oversight during trading hours.

Improvements to incident reporting and record keeping.

A full review of our CCTV procedures and monitoring.

The development of enhanced safeguarding policies to better protect vulnerable persons.

An ongoing commitment to work closely with Cleveland Police and the Licensing Authority to implement any further recommendations.

These are not simply proposed measures—they are actions that are already underway because we are determined to ensure that Lounge Afrique operates to the highest possible standards of safety.

We respectfully submit that the complete suspension of the premises licence is a severe interim measure. In light of the immediate and substantial improvements already implemented, we ask the Committee to consider whether the licensing objectives could instead be adequately promoted through robust interim conditions rather than continued suspension.

We remain fully committed to working openly, honestly and constructively with Cleveland Police, the Licensing Authority and the Committee. Our focus is on learning from this situation, strengthening our safeguarding arrangements and ensuring the safety and wellbeing of every customer who attends our premises.

We therefore respectfully request that the Committee reconsider the interim suspension and replace it with appropriate interim conditions pending the full review hearing.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours faithfully,

Premises Licence Holder

Lounge Afrique