# Met urges refusal of Ilford alcohol licence after alleged unlawful shisha use



Met police urge Redbridge councillors to refuse Brothers Lounge alcohol licence amid shisha breaches; critics warn Labour’s lax approach will worsen nuisance

The Metropolitan Police has urged Redbridge councillors to refuse an application by Brothers Lounge in Ilford to sell alcohol, citing a history of unlawful shisha smoking at the premises that the force says shows a “blatant disregard of the law.” An officer from the Met told councillors at the licensing committee meeting that, because of those historic breaches, the applicants “cannot be trusted” to uphold the licensing objectives. (According to the original report, the operators were not present at the hearing.)

The application, submitted in June, seeks permission to sell alcohol from 10.00 until 23.00 on weekdays and until midnight on Fridays and Saturdays, with the premises also proposing late‑night food and extended opening hours. A statutory public notice for the premises licence was published on 26 June 2025, and the formal consultation ran from 27 June to 17 July 2025, as required under the Licensing Act.

Responsible authorities had already registered concerns during the consultation stage. Redbridge’s licensing papers show that the Metropolitan Police, the council’s enforcement and public health teams and other bodies filed representations on grounds including the prevention of crime and disorder, public nuisance and the Ilford town cumulative impact zone, prompting closer scrutiny by licensing officers ahead of the committee’s decision.

The Met’s objection centres on allegations that Brothers Lounge has been operating a shisha lounge since 2022 in breach of the Health Act 2006, which has outlawed smoking in indoor public places and workplaces since July 2007. An officer told councillors: “Due to this blatant disregard of the law, we oppose this application.” The force and environmental health say promotional material and inspections indicate shisha use at the site despite previous assurances that such activity would cease.

Environmental health officers observed shisha smoking in what they judged to be a “substantially enclosed area” on 17 July, and the council’s public‑health team says the business is being monitored. According to the council’s guidance on the smoking ban, a space is considered substantially enclosed if more than 50% of the area is covered or surrounded; permitting others to smoke or failing to display required no‑smoking notices are offences that can lead to fixed penalties or prosecution. The council says it prefers awareness‑raising and monitoring but will prosecute repeat or flagrant offenders.

The council’s noise team has also flagged potential problems because of the restaurant’s proximity to neighbouring housing, recommending that any alcohol sales should end earlier — at 21.00 — to reduce the risk of late‑night disturbance, although it noted there have been no formal complaints about the premises since December 2023. In their licence application the operators list a number of standard mitigation measures they say they will adopt, including a full CCTV recording system, and keeping an up‑to‑date incident and accident log. The applicants state alcohol would be served only with meals, that a “polite notice” would ask patrons to leave quietly, and that staff would refuse service to anyone already drunk. The company’s agent did not respond to a request for comment.

The venue’s owners have publicly denied any intention to run a shisha bar, telling local media and licensing officers that shisha would not form part of the business model despite promotional material on the shopfront that has alarmed neighbours. Residents and councillors at licensing meetings expressed fears that an alcohol licence, with its later closing times, could encourage the venue to revert to or expand shisha provision, increasing noise and street‑level disturbance.

Redbridge has a record of prosecuting illegal shisha operations: in December 2021 the council successfully prosecuted an Ilford premises found to be allowing shisha smoking in a substantially enclosed area, securing fines and costs of more than £12,000. That case underlines the legal and financial risks for operators who permit indoor shisha and reinforces the council’s stated willingness to move from monitoring to enforcement where breaches persist.

The licensing sub‑committee now faces a familiar set of options: grant the licence as applied for, grant it with additional conditions (for example reduced hours or mandatory noise‑management measures), or refuse the application on the grounds that it would undermine the licensing objectives. Redbridge’s committee guidance sets out those choices and the matters councillors must weigh; responsible authorities advised that, given the representations and the site’s history, stricter conditions or refusal would be appropriate. For its part the business maintains it will operate as a restaurant and only serve alcohol responsibly with meals.

The outcome will be watched closely by residents and regulatory teams alike. Councillors must balance a new operator’s stated safeguards against a regulatory record that includes reported shisha use and a history of enforcement in the borough — and the decision will determine whether monitoring continues to be the council’s principal tool or whether formal action and licence conditions will be used to prevent further breaches.

In this moment of national leadership’s shifting ground, critics argue that central Labour policy has left councils with limited room to push back against persistent nuisance and health risks. A reform‑minded opposition has signalled that, if given weight, local authorities should refuse or impose strict conditions on licences in cases like this to protect communities from crime, noise and health hazards. The message is clear: when a venue already has a record of breaches, the safest course is to stop further expansion and rely on robust enforcement rather than gentle nudges.

### 📌 Reference Map:

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.yellowad.co.uk/police-push-back-against-restaurants-alcohol-request-over-unlawful-shisha-lounge/), [[2]](https://www.yellowad.co.uk/police-push-back-against-restaurants-alcohol-request-over-unlawful-shisha-lounge/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.yellowad.co.uk/police-push-back-against-restaurants-alcohol-request-over-unlawful-shisha-lounge/), [[5]](https://publicnoticeportal.uk/notice/alcohol-and-licensing/685e9bbb5a03cabc3c1ee1dd)
* Paragraph 3 – [[6]](https://opencouncil.network/meetings/74692), [[1]](https://www.yellowad.co.uk/police-push-back-against-restaurants-alcohol-request-over-unlawful-shisha-lounge/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.yellowad.co.uk/police-push-back-against-restaurants-alcohol-request-over-unlawful-shisha-lounge/), [[2]](https://www.yellowad.co.uk/police-push-back-against-restaurants-alcohol-request-over-unlawful-shisha-lounge/), [[4]](https://www.redbridge.gov.uk/business/environmental-health/smoking-ban-and-shisha)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.yellowad.co.uk/police-push-back-against-restaurants-alcohol-request-over-unlawful-shisha-lounge/), [[2]](https://www.yellowad.co.uk/police-push-back-against-restaurants-alcohol-request-over-unlawful-shisha-lounge/), [[4]](https://www.redbridge.gov.uk/business/environmental-health/smoking-ban-and-shisha)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.yellowad.co.uk/police-push-back-against-restaurants-alcohol-request-over-unlawful-shisha-lounge/), [[6]](https://opencouncil.network/meetings/74692)
* Paragraph 7 – [[3]](https://www.ilfordrecorder.co.uk/news/owners-new-clayhall-restaurant-deny-plans-turn-shisha-bar-4490746)
* Paragraph 8 – [[7]](https://www.redbridge.gov.uk/news/dec-2021/rogue-ilford-shisha-lounge-hit-with-over-12k-fines-for-operating-illegally/), [[4]](https://www.redbridge.gov.uk/business/environmental-health/smoking-ban-and-shisha)
* Paragraph 9 – [[6]](https://opencouncil.network/meetings/74692), [[1]](https://www.yellowad.co.uk/police-push-back-against-restaurants-alcohol-request-over-unlawful-shisha-lounge/)
* Paragraph 10 – [[1]](https://www.yellowad.co.uk/police-push-back-against-restaurants-alcohol-request-over-unlawful-shisha-lounge/), [[6]](https://opencouncil.network/meetings/74692), [[7]](https://www.redbridge.gov.uk/news/dec-2021/rogue-ilford-shisha-lounge-hit-with-over-12k-fines-for-operating-illegally/)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.yellowad.co.uk/police-push-back-against-restaurants-alcohol-request-over-unlawful-shisha-lounge/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.yellowad.co.uk/police-push-back-against-restaurants-alcohol-request-over-unlawful-shisha-lounge/> - This Yellowad article reports that the Metropolitan Police opposed an application by Brothers Lounge in Ilford to sell alcohol, citing historic operation of an unlawful shisha lounge. The piece explains the operators applied to Redbridge Council in June for alcohol sales during daytime and late-evening hours, and that their representatives were absent from a licensing committee hearing on Tuesday 12 August. The Met told councillors the business had run a shisha lounge since 2022 in breach of the Health Act 2006 and said the applicants ‘cannot be trusted’. Environmental health had observed shisha smoking on 17 July and continued to monitor the premises.
3. <https://www.ilfordrecorder.co.uk/news/owners-new-clayhall-restaurant-deny-plans-turn-shisha-bar-4490746> - The Ilford Recorder article covers local concern over Brothers Lounge in Clayhall (Longwood Gardens), reporting the owners denied plans to operate a shisha bar despite promotional material on the shopfront. It summarises the premises’ new licence application to Redbridge Council to sell alcohol and provide late-night food, and describes residents’ and councillors’ worries about potential noise and disturbance from customers leaving late at night. The piece notes the application hours sought and that objectors feared the venue might convert to a shisha lounge in future, prompting scrutiny at a licensing meeting where the operator’s agent asserted shisha would not form part of the business.
4. <https://www.redbridge.gov.uk/business/environmental-health/smoking-ban-and-shisha> - Redbridge Council’s guidance explains that since 1 July 2007 the Health Act 2006 makes indoor public places and workplaces smoke-free, explicitly including shisha. It sets out the definition of ‘substantially enclosed’ (the 50% rule), clarifies that permitting others to smoke or failing to display required no-smoking signs are offences, and details penalties including fixed penalty notices and fines. The page describes how shisha is treated under the law the same as cigarettes, outlines exemptions, and states that enforcement is led by the council’s teams who prefer awareness-raising and monitoring but will prosecute repeat or flagrant offenders.
5. <https://publicnoticeportal.uk/notice/alcohol-and-licensing/685e9bbb5a03cabc3c1ee1dd> - This Public Notice Portal entry republishes the statutory public notice for a premises licence application at 190–192 Longwood Gardens (Brothers Lounge). Published 26 June 2025, it states applicant Niko Dauti seeks permission to sell alcohol (hours detailed) and lists the premises’ proposed opening hours. The notice explains how and where representations can be made to Redbridge Council, gives the consultation period dates (27 June to 17 July 2025), and reminds readers of the legal consequences of false statements under the Licensing Act 2003. It mirrors the formal advertising requirement applicants must satisfy during the 28-day consultation.
6. <https://opencouncil.network/meetings/74692> - The OpenCouncil Network summary of Redbridge’s Licensing Sub‑Committee meeting on 22 July 2025 describes agenda items and the documents provided to councillors. The page notes that responsible authorities including the Metropolitan Police and the council’s enforcement and public health teams submit objections on grounds such as prevention of crime and disorder, public nuisance and the Ilford Town cumulative impact zone. The entry lists the meeting documents and public reports pack (which include responsible authority representations and appendices), and summarises the council’s framework hours and the committee’s options when deciding licence applications.
7. <https://www.redbridge.gov.uk/news/dec-2021/rogue-ilford-shisha-lounge-hit-with-over-12k-fines-for-operating-illegally/> - A Redbridge Council news release from December 2021 describes successful prosecution of an Ilford shisha lounge (Moroccan Gardens Ltd) after environmental health officers found smoking in a substantially enclosed area. The story records fines and costs totalling over £12,000, outlines the council’s crackdown on illegal shisha venues, and reinforces that under the Health Act 2006 it is an offence to allow smoking in enclosed public places. The release emphasises the council’s enforcement approach, naming prosecution as a last resort but demonstrating that persistent breaches will lead to significant penalties.