



**Community Safety, Enforcement and  
Business Regulation**  
Climate, Homes and Economy Directorate  
London Borough of Hackney  
1 Hillman Street  
London, E8 1DY

Councillor Ian Rathbone  
Members Support  
Hackney Town Hall  
Mare Street  
London  
E8 1EA

Tel: 020 8356 7087  
Email: [gerry.mccarthy@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:gerry.mccarthy@hackney.gov.uk)

Our Ref: 9866535

Date: 7th June 2022

Dear Councillor Rathbone,

**RE: MS SHARMAINE COX, BLONDIES BAR, 205a LOWER CLAPTON ROAD, E5  
8EG  
DRUG DEALING, CRIME AND ASB OUTSIDE OF LADBROKES, 203 LOWER  
CLAPTON ROAD, E5 8EG**

Thank you for your enquiry dated 19th May 2022 in relation to public safety on Lower Clapton Road reported by your constituents Ms Verity and Ms Sharmaine Cox and for bringing this issue to the attention of the Community Safety and Enforcement Service.

Your constituents, Ms Verity and Sharmaine Cox advised you of the following: *"I hope this finds you well. This is Verity from Blondies. I wanted to reach out to you directly as we are becoming increasingly worried about the safety of our patrons and staff and are seeing an extreme rise again in crime and public nuisance out the front of Ladbrooks.*

*On Sunday night, both our staff and patrons were given death threats and were terrified to the point that they had to lock the patrons and themselves inside until the police arrived. In the last few weeks and months, there have been knife and even a gun sighting in plain sight outside Ladbrokes.*

*Almost every evening there is a group of people out the front drinking and creating public nuisance. We are constantly seeing drug dealing and drug taking and customers have told us they are stopping coming to our venue entirely or not as often due to not feeling safe because of what's happening outside Ladbrokes and its effect on the street as a whole.*

*On a regular basis they have loud speakers out the front of the venue, and sometimes even a microphone. This is unaffiliated to the venue and can continue till 4-5am in the morning. Myself and my sister had to move away from above the bar due to the noises coming from this group.*

*We have known many familiar faces from these groups around the area over the last 7 years, though these are all new faces and they seem to carry weapons and present themselves as very dangerous and threatening. We are a safe space and feel that we aren't able to uphold that promise to our customers as we have no control over what happens metres away from our venue. Many times staff and patrons have been threatened and we are all feeling extremely unsafe. We are reaching out to you as a prominent member of the community and the Chair of the Clapton Pond Neighbourhood Action Group.*

*We will be holding an open day on Tuesday the 31st May to share our concerns with the local community and discuss possible courses of action we can potentially take to aid in this matter. We will also be discussing any issues that the local residents might be having with our venue. Please let us know if we might be able to further our conversations with you as we feel like we are having difficulty gaining any help from the local authorities. We will be posting the meeting on the Clapton Pond Neighbourhood Action Group Facebook group as well. Thanks and looking forward to hearing from you."*

I am writing to advise that Miss Dawn Henry, Principal Enforcement Officer (PEO) for the Hackney Downs ward and David Tuitt Licensing Team Leader have been assigned responsibility for coordinating our response to this problem. For future reference, Dawn can be contacted on the following email [dawn.henry@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:dawn.henry@hackney.gov.uk) and David at [david.tuitt@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:david.tuitt@hackney.gov.uk) .

Miss Henry spoke to Ms Cox on the 23rd May 2022 who provided more details of the problems her business was having and the concerns for the safety of her staff and customers. Ms Cox advised that the people causing the anti-social behaviour and criminality gather outside her business and some are associated with Ladbrokes which is next door to her business. Miss Cox has called the Police on a number of occasions but they have failed to contact her to obtain further information from her or her staff. On 15th May 2022 Ms Cox's staff had to lock themselves and their customers in the premises because they were being threatened by individuals outside on the street. They called the Police but they failed to turn up.

Ms Henry has emailed the Safer Neighbourhood Team and the Police Licensing team to make them aware of the reports of threats, drug dealing and anti-social behaviour in and around Ladbrokes. Both teams have been asked to investigate the complaints and carry out extra patrols in the area to see if the offenders can be identified and enforcement action taken.

Ms Henry has also emailed TFL to see whether they can assist as the problem is on a red route, who will contact their camera enforcement team to see if they have footage although they doubt it as the cameras are calibrated to capture specific traffic offences rather than record continuous footage. Outside of this there is very little they can do to deal with specific acts of anti-social behaviour as they are not

equipped with either law or ability to resolve these types of issues which is the remit of the Police.

Ms Cox has CCTV in the bar and can provide the Police with images and footage of the individuals who they might be able to identify or know. Ms Henry has spoken to the Council's CCTV team who confirmed that a known drug dealer has recently relocated from Gillette Square to Lower Clapton Road because of the increase of cameras in Gillette Square. There is a CCTV camera at the junction of Downs Road and Lower Clapton Road which points in the direction of Ladbrokes but needs to be operated and zoomed in to capture footage. If Ms Cox can provide dates and times the Police may be able to find out if the offences have been captured by council cameras.

Problems of a criminal nature such as drug dealing require Police action and residents should log any issues online as this allows the area to become identified on the Police's 'heat map' and additional resources can then be directed specifically to deal with this issue. I would request that Ms Cox, staff and other residents report any problems they witness directly to the local Safer Neighbourhood Team on 101 or at <https://www.met.police.uk/ro/report/> and in the case of an emergency, 999.

Alternatively, Ms Cox can call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111. Any reports or intelligence will be treated seriously and in the strictest confidence.

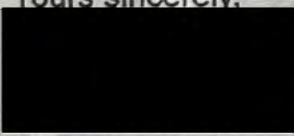
We are committed to working with the Police and our local community to create safer neighbourhoods for everyone. We share your concerns that you have raised about issues relating to drug dealing and anti-social behaviour.

These issues can take time to fully resolve, but please be reassured that we are doing all we can to ensure that this happens as soon as possible.

Officers from the Council's Licensing Service have been made aware of this matter and have made contact with representatives of Ladbrokes Coral Group.

I trust that this reply reassures you that we are taking all the necessary measures to deal with the matters raised by your request and if you wish to discuss the matter further please do not hesitate to contact me and I hope this helps to alleviate your concerns as outlined in your email.

Yours sincerely,

  
**Gerry McCarthy**  
**Head of Community Safety, Enforcement and Business Regulation**



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**Fwd: VARIATION / 071994 Blondies - 205a lower clapton road - letter of support**

1 message



Tue, Nov 15, 2022 at 9:30 PM

----- Forwarded message -----

From:



Date: Fri, 21 Oct 2022 at 23:55

Subject: VARIATION / 071994 Blondies - 205a lower clapton road - letter of support

To: [licensing@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@hackney.gov.uk) <[licensing@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@hackney.gov.uk)>

Hi,

I'd like to write in to express my support of Blondies Bar in the local community and their proposal for a later license. Blondies is an inclusive venue and a female run business within hackney; and should be afforded the same allowances as other bars within the area. They are a positive impact in lower clapton and offer music, vegan food and a LGBTQIA+ friendly establishment.

I hope you will consider their proposal.

Thanks,



Thistlewaite Road  
London  
E5 



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**VARIATION / 071994 Blondies- 205a Lower Clapton Road - Letter of Support**

1 message

Fri, Oct 21, 2022 at 2:12 PM

To: "licensing@hackney.gov.uk" &lt;licensing@hackney.gov.uk&gt;

Cc: [Redacted]

Good morning,

I am getting in touch with you regarding the extension of opening hours of my most beloved bar, Blondies, on Lower Clapton road.

It is well known amongst anyone in East London, that Lower Clapton road can be problematical. Since moving to Lower Clapton last November, this bar and its owners have been somewhat of a safe space for me to go out (and I know many others too). I find it so mind-baffling that it's so hard for them to gain a later license, when other venues which are much louder and have far less respect for their customers are open later, in the same vicinity. Please take into consideration the safety of your East London residents like me; a person who gets followed and harassed by men in Hackney on a near-daily basis.

My details:

[Redacted]  
[Powerscroft Road](#)  
Lower Clapton  
E5 [Redacted]

Kindest,

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]



[Redacted]

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**071994 Blondies - 205a Lower Clapton Road - Letter of Support**

2 messages

Fri, Oct 21, 2022 at 10:42 AM

To: "licensing@hackney.gov.uk" &lt;licensing@hackney.gov.uk&gt;

Cc: [Redacted]

Dear Hackney Licensing Department,

I would like to show my support to allow Blondies to extend their opening hours to be more in line with other local entertainment venues such as the Clapton Heart.

Blondies is an extremely welcoming and inclusive space and allowing them to operate their business to the fullest, can only be a positive to the local community.

Kind Regards,

[Redacted]

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Mon, Nov 7, 2022 at 7:44 PM

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Begin forwarded message:

[Quoted text hidden]

# Subject: Re: VARIATION / 071994 Blondies



[REDACTED]

Mon, C

You are viewing an attached message. Blondies Mail can't verify the authenticity of attached messages.

Nice one thanks Mark!

On Mon, 24 Oct 2022, 15:35 [REDACTED] wrote:

Hi,

I am writing to support Blondies which is a vibrant local community hub / attraction.

Having worked in the construction industry and planning for over 20 years I am amazed that this business is trouble with Planning Conditions.

I have attended the venue on several occasions, and it is well organised and more complaint with any local other in the area.

I have lived in the area for over ten years, and not once have I found or heard that this establishment has be detriment to anyone; in fact, I'd say that it is an asset to the area, so please let it carry on!

Many thanks,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

N1 [REDACTED]



## Subject: RE: Licensing Act 2003- Variation Application Re: Blondies, 205 Lower Clapton Road



[REDACTED]  
to Sanaria Hussain

Mon, Nov 7, 5:34 P

You are viewing an attached message. Blondies Mail can't verify the authenticity of attached messages.

Hi Sanaria,

Thanks for getting back to me. Really appreciate it.

On the points you raise below.

Under the Licensing Act 2003 a representation must address one or more of the licensing objectives:

- prevention of public nuisance

*It is a venue which allows controlled fun and therefore keeping revellers orderly.*

- prevention of crime and disorder

*The venue will certainly not increase crime in area. See above.*

- protection of children from harm

*Not applicable.*

- public safety

*A well-run place such as Blondies ensures that safety is paramount based on their management procedures.*

Hope that's okay and my points can be well represented.

Best regards,







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**VARIATION / 071994 - 205a Lower Clapton Road - Letter of Support**

1 message

Thu, Oct 20, 2022 at 9:32 PM

To: "licensing@hackney.gov.uk" &lt;licensing@hackney.gov.uk&gt;

Cc: 

To whom it may concern,

I have been going to the Blondies bar for years now and know the venue and staff to be a blessing to the local community.

There are issues with the adjoining business Ladbrokes that I can attest have nothing to do with Blondies or their staff & customers.

Please agree to their hours extension so we can all enjoy Blondies a little more.

Kind regards,





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**VARIATION / 071994 Blondies- 205a Lower Clapton Road - Letter of Support**

1 message

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Fri, Oct 21, 2022 at 5:43 PM

To: [licensing@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@hackney.gov.uk)  


To whom it may concern,

I am writing in support for Blondies - [205a Lower Clapton Road](#).

I am in full support of the establishment, it not only brings together like minded folk in the community but in today's current climate an incredibly much needed music venue / bar. I have always had a great time at the venue and they have great management and bar staff.

I am in agreement that the venue should be approved of a later licence to be in line with other venues in the area.

Please feel free to reach out for anything else.

Regards





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**VARIATION / 071994 Blondies- 205a Lower Clapton Road - Letter of Support**

1 message



Fri, Oct 21, 2022 at 7:33 PM

To: [licensing@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@hackney.gov.uk)Cc: 

Hackney Council,

Not only is Blondies an integral and vital part of the Hackney cultural landscape, but a hugely important part of British music culture.

While we are losing alternative venues all over the country, Blondies makes space for new and exciting bands.

They are a huge supporter of small business like ours, and without support from the area they are in, we will be poorer, economically and culturally.

They should be open later. Don't let Hackney become another dull area. Support your business's.

Cheers





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**VARIATION / 071994 Blondies- 205a Lower Clapton Road - Letter of Support**

1 message

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Fri, Oct 21, 2022 at 9:49 PM

To: [licensing@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@hackney.gov.uk)

Hi,

I am writing in support of Blondies application to extend hours of business.

Blondies has been an integral part of my social activity for the last few years and I hope to see it thrive. It is a place where you can go and see live music and meet like minded people.

Extending their hours will only help to encourage other young people to go out in Hackney and enjoy what it has to offer, aswell as saving me to venture out later on at night to different areas i feel less comfortable

Many thanks,





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**VARIATION / 071994 Blondies- 205a Lower Clapton Road - Letter of Support**


1 message

Fri, Oct 21, 2022 at 11:44 PM

To: "licensing@hackney.gov.uk" &lt;licensing@hackney.gov.uk&gt;

Cc: 

Good morning!

My name is  and i am from Sydney Australia. I have visted Blondies twice now and have gone out of my way on my overseas trips just to visit this place ive seen what they do for the community and the support they show for all walks of life.

I want to emphasise to you that Blondies bar is a safe place as a woman ive never felt more comfortable at bar. It is also a positive influence on the community.





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**VARIATION / 071994 blondies - 205a Lower Clapton Road - letter of support**

1 message

Fri, Oct 21, 2022 at 11:59 PM

To: "licensing@hackney.gov.uk" <licensing@hackney.gov.uk>, 

To whoever it may concern.

I have been made aware that some people are against blondies bar receiving permission to extend their licence. I honestly can not see how that should be the case. Blondies is a community hotspot and would be a benefit to any Borough that would have the luck to of having them.

Blondies support young and up and coming artists and should be allowed to do so however late into the night



## Blondies Bar - Theft and Vandalisation

Ian Rathbone (Cllr) <Ian.Rathbone@hackney.gov.uk>

Wed, May 10, 2017 at 3:53 PM

To: Verity Cox [redacted] "Grace.Turner@met.pnn.police.uk" <Grace.Turner@met.pnn.police.uk>

Cc: Charles Pilbeam <Charles.Pilbeam@met.pnn.police.uk>, Fiona Dawson <Fiona.Dawson@met.pnn.police.uk>, "Alice.Perry@met.pnn.police.uk" <Alice.Perry@met.pnn.police.uk>

Hi Verity

I am sorry to hear this. Quite terrible. I have copied in the Inspector as well. Are they still gathering around Ladbroke? Or is it more this one individual?

I will be writing to the Head of Community Safety about this development. And to the CPNAG committee as to see what they think about the situation. One of their proposals was to write to the head of Ladbroke to complain about the situation, and to also contact the licensing office at the town hall.

Ian

Ian Rathbone [redacted]

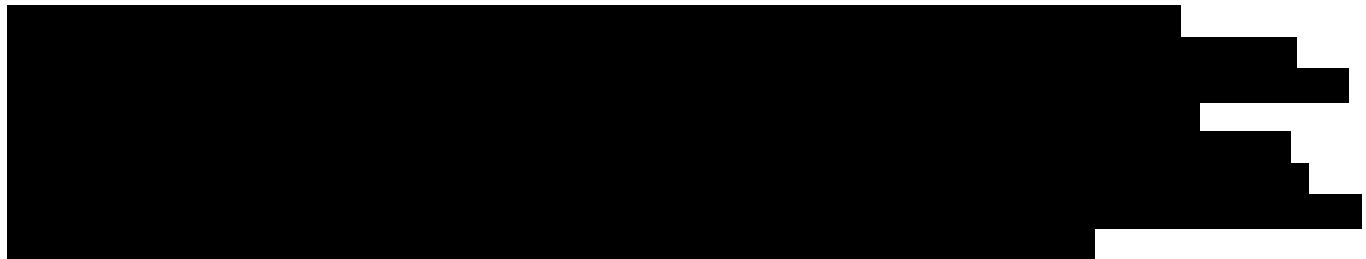
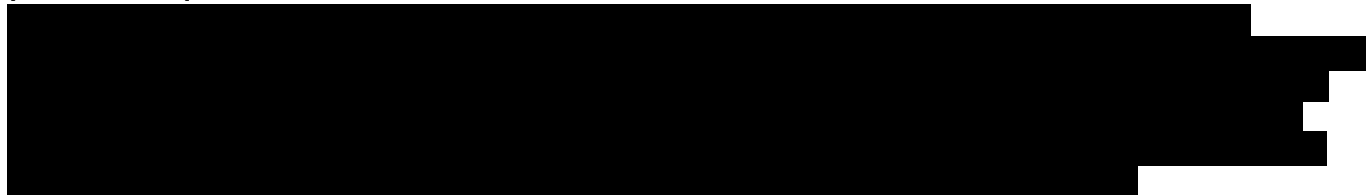


Sent: 10 May 2017 14:02

To: Ian Rathbone (Cllr); [Grace.Turner@met.pnn.police.uk](mailto:Grace.Turner@met.pnn.police.uk)

Subject: Blondies Bar - Theft and Vandalisation

[Quoted text hidden]





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## Seeking Support - Blondies - VARIATION / 071994 Blondies- 205a Lower Clapton Road

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**Alastair Binnie-Lubbock (Cllr)** <alastair.binnie-lubbock@hackney.gov.uk>

Tue, Nov 22, 2022 at 12:19 AM

To: 

Apologies for the delay in responding to this message. I would be happy to send a letter of support. Can you let me know the deadline and the addresses I should email it along to?

My statement of support would be as follows:

Blondies bar contributes immensely to the local cultural landscape and creative economy, providing much needed leisure and expression to residents and visiting artists. I have seen first hand how their presence on this stretch of road helps deter anti-social behaviour and as a woman-run business their approach makes this often unwelcoming stretch of road feel more alive and safer at night with a particular focus on women and members of the LGBTQIA+ community.

Blondies are one of the first 5 venues in Hackney to be an accredited venue from the Hackney Night Time economy scheme, due to their thorough safety procedures. This extension brings them in line with the pub less than 150 metres away providing choice and variety for an area which is both a travel hub and a unique and vibrant element of Hackney's night time economy. The venue is used to running late night events using the TENS system with over 100 events over their 7 year existence with apparently no complaints due to noise or public nuisance. This is a remarkable achievement and as such I believe the venue should be trusted to continue to deliver without the additional administrative and logistical burdens of having to rely on an out of date TENS system.

Live music is such an important part of our culture and we should be nurturing it in Hackney by making sure excellent and independent venues like Blondies get the support and hours that they need to survive and thrive, especially when so many live event venues have suffered so badly and with so little support during the pandemic.

Councillor Alastair Binnie-Lubbock









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**Blondies - Bi-Monthly Blondies Impact Meeting - Tuesday 31st of May**

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Wed, May 18, 2022 at 8:15 AM

To: "Ian Rathbone (Cllr)" &lt;ian.rathbone@hackney.gov.uk&gt;

Hi Ian,

I hope you are well.

I had sent you an email yesterday regarding the issues we are having with the groups congregating outside of Ladbrooks on Lower Clapton Road.

We are hoping to find the best way to start a communication with our local community to help find a way to tackle the issues we are experiencing.

We know that we have been able to help make positive changes for the area when working with our local community.

I had mentioned that we will be inviting the local residents to discuss this issue at our meeting, though I have realised that this issue is part of a bigger conversation.

Our Bi-Monthly meeting will be to solely discuss any issues local residents are having with Blondies and will take place at Blondies on Tuesday the 31st of May at 7pm. This will also be advertised on the Clapton Pond Neighbourhood Action Group facebook page.

Thanks for your time and look forward to hearing from you soon,

Kind regards,

Verity





**Concern for public safety on Lower Clapton Rd - Blondies**

Tue, May 17, 2022 at 1:38 PM

To: "Ian Rathbone (Cllr)" <ian.rathbone@hackney.gov.uk>

Hi Ian,

I hope this finds you well. This is verity from Blondies.

I wanted to reach out to you directly as we are becoming increasingly worried about the safety of our patrons and staff and are seeing an extreme rise again in crime and public nuisance out the front of Ladbrooks.

On Sunday night, both our staff and patrons were given death threats and were terrified to the point that they had to lock the patrons and themselves inside until the police arrived.

In the last few weeks and months, there have been knife and even a gun sighting in plain sight outside Ladbrooks.

Almost every evening there is a group of people out the front drinking and creating public nuisance. We are constantly seeing drug dealing and drug taking and customers have told us they are stopping coming to our venue entirely or not as often due to not feeling safe because of what's happening outside Ladbrooks and it's effect on the street as a whole.

On a regular basis they have loud speakers out the front of the venue, and sometimes even a microphone. This is unaffiliated to the venue and can continue till 4-5am in the morning. Myself and my sister had to move away from above the bar due to the noises coming from this group.

We have known many familiar faces from these groups around the area over the last 7 years, though these are all new faces and they seem to carry weapons and present themselves as very dangerous and threatening.

We are a safe space and feel that we aren't able to uphold that promise to our customers as we have no control over what happens meters away from our venue.

Many times staff and patrons have been threatened and we are all feeling extremely unsafe.

We are reaching out to you as a prominent member of the community and the Chair of the Clapton Pond Neighbourhood Action Group.

We will be holding an open day on Tuesday the 31st of May to share our concerns with the local community and discuss possible courses of action we can potentially take to aid in this matter. We will also be discuss any issues that he local residents might be having with our venue.

Please let us know if we might be able to further our conversations with you as we feel like we are having difficulty gaining any help from the local authorities.

We will be posting the meeting on the Clapton Pond Neighbourhood Action Group Facebook group as well.

Thanks and looking forward to hearing from you,

Verity and Sharmaine Cox





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**Blondies - Bi-Monthly Blondies Impact Meeting - Tuesday 31st of May**

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**Ian Rathbone (Cllr)** <ian.rathbone@hackney.gov.uk>

Wed, May 18, 2022 at 8:59 AM

To:

Hi Verity

If you want me to attend any meeting, you need to consult first with me so I can fit it in with the many other meetings I have scheduled. Please note this for the future. So sorry, I will not be able to attend on 31 May as I have a pre-booked council meeting. I assume you are in touch with Dave Rindl concerning the FB page. I will circulate your email to the CPNAG committee.

Regarding the ASB problems, you need to keep the logbook, continue to contact the Police. I will pass on your email to the LBH Enforcement team. We are aware of an increase in drug dealing activity again in the area.

All the best

Ian

[Quoted text hidden]

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Cllr Ian Rathbone  
Councillor, Lea Bridge Ward Hackney  
Chair, Hackney Labour Group of Councillors  
  
Facebook & Twitter & Insta: Lea Bridge Labour

Disclaimers apply, for full details see: <https://hackney.gov.uk/email-disclaimer>