

LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE

23 June 2021

REPORT

Subject Heading:

**Procedure for the Hearing: Licensing
Act 2003**

Report Author and contact details:

**Taiwo Adeoye (01708) 433079
e-mail: taiwo.adeoye@onesource.co.uk**

Note: Issues relating specifically to the operation of the hearing during the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions are considered in the separate protocol document contained within the agenda papers.

Members are advised that, when considering an application to vary a premises licence, the following options are available to them by virtue of the Licensing Act 2003, Part 3, section 35, paragraphs 3 and 4:

"Where relevant representations are made, the authority must

- (a) hold a hearing to consider them, unless the authority, the applicant and each person who has made such representations agree that a hearing is unnecessary, and
- (b) having regard to the representations, take such steps as it considers necessary for the promotion of the licensing objectives.

The steps are:

- a) modify the conditions of the licence
- b) reject the whole or part of the application

and for this purpose, the conditions of the licence are modified if any of them is altered or omitted or any new condition is added."

The Sub-Committee will also wish to note that, if none of these steps is required, the application must be granted.

Assuming that the Sub-Committee is satisfied that a hearing is required, then the following procedural steps are recommended. The Licensing Act 2003 (Hearings) Regulations 2005 will govern the arrangements for the hearing of the application

now under consideration. This report accords with the requirements of that Act and the Regulations, and in particular Regulations 21-25 (procedure at the hearing).

1. Membership of the Sub-Committee:

- 1.1 The Sub-Committee comprises three members of the Licensing Committee, with a quorum of two members. **Unless there are objections, in the absence of three members, the hearing shall proceed with the quorum of two.**

- 1.1.1 A member of the Licensing Committee will be excluded from hearing an application where he or she has considered an application in respect of the premises in the previous 12 months as a Member of the Regulatory Services Committee; or
- 1.1.2 is a Ward Councillor for the Ward in which the premises, subject to the application, are located; or
- 1.1.3 is a Ward Councillor for a Ward which is likely to be affected by the application or;
- 1.1.4 has a personal interest in the application.

2. Roles of other participants:

- 2.1 The Legal Advisor is not a party to the hearing. The role of the Legal Advisor is to provide legal advice relating to the application and submissions.
- 2.2 The Clerk is not a party to the hearing. The role of the Clerk is to record the hearing and the decisions of the Sub-Committee, and ensure efficient administration

3. Location and facilities:

- 3.1 All hearings will be conducted via virtual hearing i.e. via a Skype meeting telephone call..
- 3.2 Interpreters will be provided by the Council on request, provided notice is given at least five working days before the hearing.

4. Notification of attendance:

- 4.1 The Chairman will enquire of the parties who is in attendance and the parties will indicate their names (and, where relevant, whom they represent).

5. Procedural matters:

- 5.1 Prior to the commencement of the hearing, the Chairman of the Sub-Committee will orally inform the parties whether their applications to have certain people attend the hearing (e.g. witnesses) have been granted or refused. Note this relates to people other than those attending on behalf of a party in the capacity as a representative of the party.

- 5.2 Prior to the commencement of the hearing the Chairman of the Sub-Committee will outline the procedure to be followed at the hearing. This will normally be as follows:

Introduction of the application:

The Licensing officer will outline:

- details of the application and relevant representations received from the parties;
- relevant legislation ;
- relevant Licensing Policy; and
- the time limit in which the Council must reach a determination.

Documentary evidence:

- Documentary or other information in support of applications, representations or notices should be provided to the Clerk of the Sub-Committee at least 7 clear working days before the hearing. If this information is produced at the hearing it will only be taken into account by the Sub-Committee if the Sub-Committee and all the parties consent to its submission. Permission to have this information included in the hearing should be requested at the beginning of the hearing before any oral submissions have been made.
- Statements made by people in support of a party's representation who are not present at the hearing, must be signed by the maker, dated and witnessed by another person. The statement must also contain the witness's full name and occupation.

Representations:

- The chairman will invite each of the parties at the hearing or their representative sequentially to address the Sub-Committee and call any person/s to whom permission has been granted to appear. Each party will be allowed a maximum period of 10 minutes in which to address the Sub-Committee and call persons on his/her behalf.
- This 10 minute period is where each party has the opportunity to orally address the Sub-Committee and clarify any points in which the Sub-Committee has sought clarification prior to the hearing. This 10 minute period should be uninterrupted unless a member of the Sub-Committee or Legal Advisor considers that the speaker is making submissions that are irrelevant, frivolous or vexatious.
- Members of the Sub-Committee may ask questions of any party, at any time during the proceedings. Time taken in dealing with a Member's question will not be taken into account in determining the length of time available to the party in question to make their representation.

The sequence in which each of the parties will be invited to address the Sub-Committee will normally be in the order of:

- the Chief Officer of Police;
- the Fire Authority;
- the Health and Safety at Work Enforcing Authority;
- the Local Planning Authority;
- the Local environmental Health Authority;
- the Local Weights and Measures Authority;
- the Authority Responsible for the Protection of Children from Harm;
- a navigation or other authority responsible for waterways; and
- any other party that has submitted representations in respect of the application, certificate, notice or other matter appearing before the Sub-Committee;
- the party that has submitted the application, certificate, notice or other matter appearing before the Sub-Committee.

At the discretion of the Sub-Committee the above order may be varied.

Cross-Examination:

Where witnesses have been permitted by the Sub-Committee to speak at the hearing on behalf of a party, permission must be sought from the Sub-Committee before another party can ask the witness questions. This process of questioning is normally referred to as cross-examination. The Sub-Committee will allow cross-examination only where it is necessary to assist it in considering the representations or application.

Relevance:

Information submitted at the hearing must be relevant to the applications, representations, or notice and the promotion of the licensing objectives. The Chairman of the Sub-Committee is entitled to exclude any information he or she considers to be irrelevant whether presented in written or oral form. The licensing objectives are:

The prevention of crime and disorder;

Public safety;

The prevention of public nuisance; and

The protection of children from harm.

6. Failure of parties to attend the hearing:

- 6.1 If a party, who has not given prior notice of his/her intention not to attend the hearing, is absent from the hearing the Sub-Committee may either adjourn the hearing or hold the hearing in the party's absence. Where the hearing is held in the absence of a party, the Sub-Committee will still consider the application, representation or notice submitted by that party.

7. Adjournments and extension of time:

- 7.1 The Sub-Committee may adjourn a hearing to a specified date or extend a notice period except where it must make a determination within certain time limits in the following specific applications:
- Review of premises licences following closure orders where the Sub-committee must make a determination within 28 days of receiving notice of the closure order.

8. Sub-Committee's determination of the hearing:

- 8.1 At the conclusion of the hearing the Sub-Committee will deliberate in private accompanied by the Clerk and the Legal Advisor who will be available to assist the Sub-Committee with any legal problems but will not participate in any decision making of the Sub-Committee.
- 8.2 The Sub-Committee will normally make its determination and announce its decision at the end of the hearing.
- 8.3 Where all parties have notified the Sub-Committee that a hearing is not required the Sub-Committee must make its determination within 10 working days of being given notice that the hearing is not required.

9. Power to exclude people from hearing:

- 9.1 The public are entitled to attend the hearing as spectators. However, the Sub-Committee may exclude any person from the hearing including any person assisting or representing a party where:
- it considers that the public interest would be best served by excluding the public or the individual person from the hearing; or
 - that person is behaving in a disruptive manner. This may include a party who is seeking to be heard at the hearing. In the case where a party is to be excluded, the party may submit to the Sub-Committee in writing any information which they would have been entitled to give orally had they not been required to leave the hearing.

10. Recording of proceedings:

- 10.1 A written record of the hearing will be produced and kept for 6 years from the date of the determination of the hearing.

11. Power to vary procedure:

- 11.1 The Sub-committee may depart from following any of the procedures set out in this document if it considers the departure to be necessary in order to consider an application, notice or representation.