



# **Procedure for the hearing of applications The Licensing Act 2003**

**The Licensing Act 2003 (Hearings) Regulations 2005**

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## **Licensing Sub-Committee Procedure for Determining applications under the Licensing Act 2003**

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## **Introduction**

- 1.1. The Licensing Act 2003 has placed local authorities at the centre of the decision making process for regulating the sale and supply of alcohol, provision of regulated entertainment and late night refreshment.
- 1.2. This document and the procedures detailed herein are based upon the guidance issued by the Local Government Regulation Service and with regards to the provisions of:
  - the Licensing Act 2003;
  - the Guidance issued by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport on 7 July 2004 under section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003; and
  - The Licensing Act 2003 (Hearings) Regulations 2005 (as amended).
- 1.3. This guidance is intended for all concerned in any way whatsoever with a hearing before a licensing panel (Licensing Sub-committee, the Licensing Committee or Council, as may be the case) in relation to the determination of applications under the Licensing Act 2003.

## **2. General Principles**

- 2.1. All Members sitting on the determination of an application will always:
  - promote the right of all parties to have a fair hearing;
  - only have regard to such of the four licensing objectives that are subject to a relevant representation, namely:
    - the prevention of crime and disorder;
    - public safety;
    - the prevention of public nuisance; and
    - the protection of children from harm;
  - have regard to the Licensing Act 2003 and any relevant secondary legislation;
  - have regard to the Council's Statement of Licensing Policy;
  - have regard to the Guidance issued by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport under section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003;
  - treat each application on its own merits; and
  - undertake its decision-making responsibilities honestly and fairly, in an open, transparent and accountable way.

## **PRE-HEARING**

### **3. Licensing Panels**

- 3.1. Generally, hearings will take place before a Licensing Sub-committee consisting of three Members of the Licensing Committee, although, to avoid unnecessary adjournments, a fourth Member may attend as a substitute Member.
- 3.2. If, for any reason whatsoever, it is not possible to have a matter determined by a Licensing Sub-Committee, the matter would be heard by the Licensing Committee. A Licensing Committee must consist of between ten and fifteen Members and at least one half of those Members must attend for a hearing to proceed before the Licensing Committee.
- 3.3. In the highly unlikely event of it not being possible, for any reason whatsoever, to have a matter determined by either a Licensing Sub-committee or the Licensing Committee, the matter would be heard by Council.

### **4. Timescales for Convening a Hearing**

- 4.1. Most hearings under the Licensing Act 2003 must normally take place within 20 working days from the last date in which representations can be made. There are exceptions to this rule.
- 4.2. Exceptions:
  - 4.2.1. A hearing must take place within 10 working days of the Authority receiving notification of a review of the premises following a closure order;
  - 4.2.2. A hearing must take place within 7 working days from the day after the end of the period within which the police can object to a temporary event notice;
  - 4.2.3. A hearing must take place within 5 working days beginning the day after the end of the last day for the police to object to an interim authority notice.
- 4.3. Hearings may be dispensed with where all relevant persons agree a hearing is unnecessary.

### **5. Notice of Hearing**

- 5.1. Generally 10 clear days notice will be given of a hearing. There are exceptions to this rule.
- 5.2. Exceptions:
  - 5.2.1. 5 days notice will be given of a hearing for a review of a premises licence following a closure order;
  - 5.2.2. 2 days notice will be given of a hearing following police objection to an interim authority notice;
  - 5.2.3. 2 days notice will be given of a hearing following police objection to temporary events notice.

## **6. Persons to be Notified of a Hearing**

- 6.1. The following persons must be notified of a hearing:
  - 6.1.1. Any applicant for any licence, provisional statement or review;
  - 6.1.2. Premises user who submitted a temporary event notice;
  - 6.1.3. Any person who has made relevant representations;
  - 6.1.4. Any Responsible Authority; and
  - 6.1.5. Where an application is made for a review, the holder of a premises licence or club premises certificate.

## **7. Contents of Notice**

- 7.1. The notice of a hearing must contain:
  - 7.1.1. The date, time and place of the hearing;
  - 7.1.2. The procedure to be followed at the hearing;
  - 7.1.3. The right of a party to attend and to be assisted or represented by any person whether legally qualified or not;
  - 7.1.4. Any points upon which the authority considers that it will want clarification from a party at the hearing;
  - 7.1.5. The right of the party to provide additional information to provide any clarification sought by the Authority;
  - 7.1.6. The consequences of failing to attend the hearing or not being represented at the hearing;
  - 7.1.7. Any information the Licensing Authority has received in support or opposition of the application.

## **8. Hearings to be open to the public**

- 8.1. Hearings will generally be open to the public as the Licensing Authority is committed to taking decisions in an honest, accountable and transparent way, but on occasions a licensing panel may find it necessary to exclude a party or parties, the public and press from all or any part of a hearing.
- 8.2. A panel will only pass an exclusion resolution where it considers that the public interest in doing so outweighs the public interest in the hearing, or that part of the hearing, taking place in public. Such decisions will be made on an individual basis.
- 8.3. The panel's deliberations, which do not form part of the hearing, will be conducted in private. The announcement of the panel's decision is part of the hearing and will generally be open to the public, subject to any exclusion resolution.

## **9. Failure to attend the hearing**

- 9.1. No party is obliged to attend a hearing, although the Licensing Authority encourages all parties to attend hearings to make their application or representation, as may be the case.
- 9.2. Regardless of whether a party attends a hearing or not, the matter will generally be heard and determined by the licensing panel (the Council, the Licensing Committee or a Licensing Sub-committee). At the hearing, the panel will consider any application, representation or notice made by an absent party in the same way as it will of any application, representation or notice made by a party that attends the hearing.
- 9.3. If, however, the hearing is adjourned to a specified date, all parties will forthwith be notified of the date, time and place to which the hearing has been adjourned.

## **10. Disruptive behaviour**

- 10.1. Any person who disrupts a hearing by the Council, the Licensing Committee or a Licensing Sub-committee of a matter under the Licensing Act 2003 may be required to leave the hearing.
- 10.2. It is for the panel hearing the matter to decide whether such person will be permitted to return to the hearing, but should they be allowed to do so, this may be on such conditions as the panel may specify.
- 10.3. If a disruptive person is a person who has a right to address the panel, then that person may, before the end of the hearing (i.e. before Stage 25 of the following procedure), put in writing any information they would have been entitled to give orally, had they not been required to leave the hearing.

## **SUB - COMMITTEE AGENDA**

### **11. Licensing Sub-Committee agenda**

- 11.1. The Licensing Sub-Committee Hearing shall be commenced in accordance with the Licensing Sub-Committee agenda. Any Committee matters shall be addressed at this stage.
- 11.2. The Licensing Sub-Committee Hearing procedure shall take over at the point at which the agenda item is called to be heard.
- 11.3. The Sub-Committee agenda shall deal with the issue of exclusion of press and public for the Licensing Sub-Committee Hearing.

## **HEARING PROCEDURE**

### **12. Opening the Hearing**

- 12.1. The Licensing Sub-Committee Hearing shall be formally opened by the Chair.
- 12.2. The Chair shall introduce Members of the licensing panel (a Licensing Sub-committee, the Licensing Committee or Council), officers present and all other parties present.
- 12.3. The Chair shall explain the procedure to be followed at the meeting and the nature of the decision to be taken by the panel.

### **13. Licensing Officer's Report**

- 13.1. The Licensing Officer presents his / her Report, including an outline of the application, the representation(s) and any points upon which the Licensing Authority has given notice that it required clarification; and identifies anything relevant in the legislation, the Council's Statement of Licensing Policy and the statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport.
- 13.2. Members of the panel may ask questions of the Licensing Officer with regards to the Report.

### **14. Licensing Authority's request(s) for clarification**

- 14.1. If points of clarification have been asked for, the Chair invites the Licensing Officer or relevant party to provide necessary information.
- 14.2. Members of the panel may ask questions with regards to the further information provided.

### **15. Presentation of Case / Submissions from Parties**

- 15.1. In the order of Applicant, Responsible Authority and Interested Party (or in the case of a review the relevant person), each party shall be invited to undertake the following:
  - 15.1.1. Set out their case;
  - 15.1.2. Call Witnesses in support of their case (provided notification of the witnesses has previously been given to the Council);
  - 15.1.3. Introduce documentary evidence in support of their case (provided notification of the documentary evidence has previously been given to the Council); and
  - 15.1.4. Respond to any questions asked of them by Members of the Licensing Panel.
- 15.2. At the Sub-Committee and Chair's discretion each party may ask questions of other parties by directing them through the Chair.

- 15.3. The Sub-Committee shall have the absolute discretion to restrict the number of witnesses and documents that any party can introduce, or the time spent on submissions or oral evidence, to ensure the proper running of the hearing.
- 15.4. Any witnesses that any party is seeking to call that have not previously been notified to the Council, in advance of the hearing, shall only be allowed with the consent of all other parties at the hearing. The Sub-Committee shall have the sole discretion to refuse to allow any witnesses to be heard, even where the consent of all parties has been given. In reaching the decision the Sub-Committee may consider any circumstances they believe to be relevant, and will have regard to the relevance of the evidence to the matters before the Committee.
- 15.5. Any documents that any party is seeking to adduce that have not previously been notified to the Council, in advance of the hearing, shall only be allowed with the consent of all other parties at the hearing. The Sub-Committee shall have the sole discretion to refuse to allow any documents to be adduced, even where the consent of all parties has been given. In reaching the decision the Sub-Committee may consider any circumstances they believe to be relevant, and will have regard to the relevance of the evidence to the matters before the Committee.

## **16. Modification or Withdrawal of Application or Representation**

- 16.1. The Chair shall ask the applicant whether the applicant wishes to modify the application (e.g. by way of withdrawing a licensable activity and / or reducing the times asked for and / or volunteering additional steps to promote the licensing objectives).
- 16.2. The Chair shall ask each party making a representation whether such party would like to withdraw their representation.

## **17. Closing Submissions**

- 17.1. The Chair shall invite each of the parties to present a closing submission to the Sub-Committee.
- 17.2. The Chair shall invite the Licensing Officer to make any final representations.
- 17.3. At the end of the Closing Submissions the Chairman may ask the Legal Advisor if there is any clarification or points they wish to make.

## **18. Legal Advice**

- 18.1. The role of the Legal Advisor is to provide Members with advice on:
- Questions of law;
  - Matters of practice and procedure;
  - The options available to the sub-committee in making their decision;
  - Whether information or evidence is relevant to the licensing objectives;
  - Any relevant case law or guidelines.

18.2. The hearing shall be directed by the Chair and assisted by the Legal Advisor as appropriate and necessary.

## **19. Committee Decision in Relation to Procedure**

19.1. The Sub-Committee shall be entitled to vary the order and procedure for the hearing, at its absolute discretion.

## **20. Determination of the Application**

20.1. After all representations have been heard, the Chair will inform all parties that the panel will retire in private to determine the matter.

20.2. Either the panel will retire alone to a private room or all parties, officers and members of the public will be required to leave the room, although the panel may invite their legal adviser to join them for the purpose of providing only legal advice - the details of which will be disclosed upon the hearing reconvening.

20.3. Should the sub-committee need to ask any further questions of any party, all parties shall be invited to return for the purposes of asking and answering questions.

20.4. Where the hearing is for:

- a review of a premises licence following a closure order;
- a personal licence by holder of a justices licence; or
- a counter notice following police objection to a temporary event notice.

The Sub-Committee must make its determination at the conclusion of the meeting.

20.5. For all other hearings the determination must be made within 5 working days of the hearing. The Sub-Committee will generally announce the determination at the end of the hearing.

20.6. The Sub-Committee may consider adding any conditions necessary in order to promote one or more of the four licensing objectives:

- the prevention of crime and disorder;
- public safety;
- the prevention of public nuisance; and
- the protection of children from harm.

20.7. All decisions shall be made in line with the general principles as detailed in Appendix A, the range of options available for determining each type of application.

20.8. The Sub-Committee shall complete the decision notice as shown at Appendix B.

20.9. The hearing will reconvene and the Chair will either:

- announce the Sub-Committee determination including reasons for the determination; or
- advise those persons present that the Sub-Committee has not reached a decision, but will make a determination as soon as it can and, in any event, within five working days. All parties will then be notified forthwith of the decision.

## **POST HEARING**

### **21. Record of Proceedings**

- 21.1. The authority shall ensure that a record is taken of the hearing.
- 21.2. The record shall be kept for a period of six years from the date of the final action on the matter.

### **22. Irregularities**

- 22.1. Proceedings shall be rendered void due to a failure to comply with the procedures set out in this document.
- 22.2. Any failure to comply with the Hearing Regulations shall not render the process or the decision void.
- 22.3. Where the Authority considers any person to have been prejudiced from the irregularity it shall take such steps as it considers fit to remedy the irregularity, before reaching its determination.
- 22.4. Clerical mistakes may be corrected by the Authority.

### **23. Decision Notices**

- 23.1. The Authority shall provide a written notice of its determination as soon as practicable after the hearing and within 5 working days.

### **24. Appeals**

- 24.1. An appeal against the determination of the Authority must be made to the appropriate Magistrates Court within 21 days of the date of delivery of the decision.

### **25. Closing the Hearing**

- 25.1. The Chair shall thank all parties for attending and draw the hearing to a close.
- 25.2. Should there be another hearing to be heard the Sub-Committee shall begin the procedure again.

**Licensing Sub-Committee Checklist**  
**Procedure for determining applications under the Licensing Act 2003**

Item				
1.	Chair to introduce Sub-Committee, Committee Administrator, other Officers and all Parties present.			
2.	Chair to explain procedure for hearing to all parties.			
3.	Licensing Officer to introduce application, including details of the premises, application, objections, references to the Licensing Objectives and Policy and Statutory Obligations.			
4.	Chair to invite Sub-Committee to ask any questions of the Licensing Officer, in relation to the report provided.			
5.	Chair to ask Licensing Officer whether there are any points requiring Clarification.			
Steps 6 to 9 to be completed for each party in the order of Applicant (A), Responsible Authority (RA) and Interested Party (IP) or Relevant Person (RP). The chair will invite each party to:		A	RA	IP/ RP
6.	Set out their case			
7.	Call Witnesses in support of their case (provided notification of the witnesses has previously been given to the Council);			
8.	Introduce documentary evidence in support of their case (provided notification of the documentary evidence has previously been given to the Council); and			
9.	Respond to any questions asked of them by Members of the Licensing Panel.			
Repeat steps 6 to 9 for each party				
10.	At the Sub-Committee and Chair's discretion each party may ask questions of other parties by directing them through the Chair.			
11.	Chair asks Applicant if they wish to modify or withdraw their application in any way.			
12.	Chair to invite closing submissions from applicant, responsible authorities and interested parties.			
13.	The Sub-Committee will retire into private to consider its decision.			
14.	Chair will announce the decision of the Sub-Committee and the reasons for the decision. The Chair will advise all parties of their right of appeal.			

## Appendix 'A'

### Options for determining applications

#### Determination of application for premises licence

- To grant the licence
- To grant with the addition of conditions necessary to promote any of the licensing objectives
- To exclude from the scope of the licence any of the licensable activities to which the application relates
- To refuse to specify a person in the licence as the premises supervisor
- To reject the application

#### Determination of application for variation of a premises licence

- To grant the variation
- To modify the conditions of the licence – this includes altering or omitting any existing condition or adding any new conditions
- To reject the whole or part of the application

#### Determination of application for review of a premises licence

- To modify the conditions of the licence – this includes altering or omitting any existing condition or adding any new conditions
- To exclude a licensable activity from the scope of the licence
- To remove the designated premises supervisor
- To suspend the licence for a period not exceeding three months
- To revoke the licence

Appendix 'B'



**CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL**

**DECISION NOTICE**

**LICENSING ACT 2003**

**DECISION OF THE LICENSING SUB – COMMITTEE**

<u>Date of Hearing</u>	
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<u>Applicant's Name:</u>	
<u>Premises Address:</u>	

<u>Application for:</u>	
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<u>Reasons for Hearing:</u>	
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<u>Members of the Licensing Sub-Committee:</u>	
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<u>Applicant:</u>	
<u>Person(s) Appearing on Behalf of the Applicant:</u>	

<u>Objector(s):</u>	
<u>Person(s) Appearing on Behalf of Objector(s):</u>	

<u>Other Persons Present:</u>	
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*If appropriate:*

<b><u>COMMENCEMENT DATE</u></b> <u>This licence will come into effect from:</u> <input type="checkbox"/> <u>The date of this decision</u>  <input type="checkbox"/> <u>The end of the period for appeal.</u>
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**FINDINGS OF FACT**

The Sub-Committee made the following findings of fact:

**DECISION**

The Sub-Committee have decided that the application should be:

Granted (as set out in the application)

Refused

Amended to include the following conditions:

- 1.
- 2.

- The Sub- Committee considers the additional conditions necessary for the promotion of the licensing objectives.
- All Licences are granted subject to the mandatory conditions imposed by the Licensing Act, 2003.
- In coming to its decision, the Sub-Committee has taken into account:
  - The Licensing Act Section 18, which states that it must take such steps it considers necessary for the promotion of the licensing objectives;
  - The Secretary of State’s Guidance issued under section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003; and
  - Central Bedfordshire Council’s Licensing Policy
  - The merits of the application and the representations (including supporting information) presented by all parties.

**REASONS FOR DECISION**

The reasons for the Committee’s decision are as follows:

Prevention of Crime and Disorder

Public Safety

Prevention of Public Nuisance

Protection of Children from Harm

General – all four licensing objectives

<b><u>Irrelevant Representations</u></b>	
<u>The Sub-Committee determined that the following representations were irrelevant: Not applicable.</u>	
<u>Representation</u>	<u>Reason Representation was Considered Irrelevant</u>
1.	
2.	

<b><u>Right of Review</u></b>
<u>At any stage, following the grant of a premises licence, a responsible authority, such as the Police or an interested party, such as a resident living in the vicinity of the premises may ask the licensing authority to review the licence because of a matter arising at the premises in connection with any of the four licensing objectives. The review is a request for the Council to look at the existing licence and decide whether its conditions are adequate to meet the four licensing objectives defined under the Licensing Act 2003.</u>

<b><u>Effect of Failing to Comply with Conditions (Explained to Applicant)</u></b>
<u>The Sub-Committee has explained to the applicant the effect of failure to comply with any of the conditions attached to the licence or certificate is a criminal offence, which upon conviction, would result in a fine of up to £20,000 or up to six months imprisonment or both.</u>

<b><u>Right of Appeal</u></b>
<u>Applicants or any person who has made a relevant representation who is dissatisfied with this decision or the imposition of any condition or restriction has the right of appeal to the Magistrates Court within 21 days of the date on which they are notified of the decision.</u>

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
[Name]  
Chair of Licensing Sub-Committee

Date: \_\_\_\_\_