INFORMATION AND THE PROCEDURE FOR HEARINGS OF THE LICENSING PANEL

The following document provides information and outlines the procedure taken for hearings by the Licensing Panel, when considering applications.

1. REQUIREMENTS FOR THE HEARING

1.1 The applicant will normally be required to attend the meeting in person. They will be entitled to be represented by a solicitor or counsel or by any other individual provided that the name of any such person is given to the Council's Licensing Manager 48 hours in advance of the hearing.

1.2 Written notification of the intended proceedings will be given to the applicant not less than ten clear working days before the meeting. This notification will give details of the procedure to be followed at the hearing and shall advise applicants of their right to be represented.

1.3 Any documents to be produced at the hearing by the Director of Environment, Culture and Communities representative shall be sent so as to reach the applicant by no later than 48 hours before the hearing. A copy of these documents shall at the same time be given to Democratic Services to distribute to members of the Panel.

1.4 Any documents to be produced at the hearing by the applicant shall be sent to the Council's Licensing Manager by no later than 48 hours before the hearing. A copy of these documents shall at the same time be sent to Democratic Services to distribute to members of the Panel.

1.5 At the discretion of the Panel any or all of the requirements set out in paragraphs 1.3 to 1.4 above may be waived, provided that the Panel is satisfied that the interests of the applicant or any objector have not been prejudiced.

1.6 Financial costs incurred by either party in the hearing must be met in full by those parties and no awards for costs will be made to either party regardless of the outcome of the hearing.

1.7 The public will be allowed access, except if "Confidential Information" as defined by Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 is likely to be disclosed (in which case the public must be excluded) or, if "Exempt Information" falling within Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 is likely to be disclosed in which case the Panel may decide to exclude the public.

2. ORDER OF THE HEARING

2.1 Hearings shall be conducted as follows:

(a) The Chairman will open the proceedings by stating the nature of the matter which is to be considered and will welcome the parties, introduce them and confirm the roles of those present.

(b) The Chairman will ask the officers to confirm whether or not the formal requirements in respect of the matter to be considered have been complied with.

(c) The applicant will be asked if there is any reason for the case to be adjourned. An adjournment will only normally be granted if unforeseeable circumstances can be demonstrated which would be prejudicial to a fair hearing if it was heard at that time.

(d) The Chairman shall first call upon the Director of Environment, Culture and Communities representative to put forward their case.

(e) If satisfied as to the formal requirements, the Panel will consider the merits of the application or proposed suspension/revocation and the report of the officer. The Panel may ask the Director of Environment, Culture and Communities representative for clarification of any points.

(f) The applicant shall have an opportunity to put questions to the Director of Environment, Culture and Communities representative.

(g) The Chairman will then invite (if any) interested parties who have made representations to speak. The Panel may ask interested parties questions and points of clarification.

(h) The Chairman will then invite the applicant or licence holder to make any representations.

(i) The Chairman, members of the Panel and the Director of Environment Culture and Communities representative may ask the applicant questions and points of clarification. Having heard the applicant's statement, any Responsible Authorities in attendance will be given the opportunity to respond.

(j) An opportunity shall be given to the Director of Environment, Culture and Communities representative and the applicant, in that order, to sum up their case (but not to add any new facts).

(k) The Panel members, the representative from Legal Services and Clerk to the Panel shall withdraw. Officers present do not take part in the decision making but will provide legal and procedural advice and record the decision.

(l) The members of the Panel consider their decision. The applicant or his/her representative (if any) and any officer present is asked to remain in attendance and if any further clarification or information is required from the applicant or licence holder or any officer, this will be sought by the clerk.

2.2 The decision of the Panel shall be notified to the applicant and her/his representative (if any) within two working days following the meeting. In most cases, a verbal decision will be given on the day of the hearing.

3. ROLES OF THOSE AT THE HEARING

3.1 The Director of Environment Culture and Communities representative is present at the hearing to present the professional officer's case for refusal, suspension or revocation of licences. They are also present to challenge points put forward by the applicant.

3.2 Members of the Panel are present to consider and determine an application or to consider if a licence should be suspended or revoked. In doing so they will follow the above procedure.

3.3 The representative from Legal Services is present to provide legal and procedural advice to the members of the Panel and to assist in the clarification of any issues which might arise.

3.4 The representative from Democratic Services is present to provide procedural advice to members of the Panel and to record the decision.

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4. BACKGROUND

4.1 The Council's Licensing Panel has been given delegated authority to deal with the following applications:

Matter to be dealt with:	**Licensing Panel**
Application for personal licence	If a Police objection
Application for personal licence with unspent convictions	All cases
Application for premises licence/club premises certificate	If a relevant representation is made
Application for provisional statement	If a relevant representation is made
Application to vary designated premises supervisor	If a Police objection
Application for transfer of premises licence	If a Police objection
Applications for interim authorities	If a Police objection
Applications to review premises licence/club premises certificate	All cases
Decision to object when local authority is a consultee and not the relevant authority considering the application.	All cases
Determination of a police objection to a temporary event notice.	All cases

4.2 In carrying out its licensing function, the Licensing Authority will promote the four Licensing Objectives. These are the only matters to be taken into account when determining an application. The four Licensing Objectives are:

- Prevention of Crime and Disorder;
- Public Safety;
- Prevention of Public Nuisance; and
- Protection of Children from Harm.

4.3 The Licensing Policy is about the regulation of licensable activities and as such is focussed on the direct impact of activities taking place on or in the vicinity of those premises. It is not a mechanism for controlling general nuisance unconnected to the Licensing Objectives.

4.4 The Council has, apart from the above, delegated power to determine applications, renew, suspend or revoke existing licences and consents to the Director of Environment Culture and Communities. The Director has in turn delegated such authority to officers within the Department.

4.5 Whilst officers have delegated authority there will be occasions where it is considered appropriate to refer the matter to the Licensing Panel. Specifically the Licensing & Safety Committee at its meeting on 12 March 2003, resolved to receive representations from applicants for either a licence or a consent where under delegated powers the applicant has been advised that a refusal or revocation is likely.

4.6 Where the application is being considered for refusal, having exhausted all options for negotiating an acceptable solution, the applicant is invited should they wish to present their case to the Panel. This request must have been made in writing within 21 days following receipt of a letter from the Council offering the opportunity of a hearing. If the applicant or licence holder fails to comply with this requirement or declines the offer, the matter will be dealt with under delegated authority.

4.7 Where an application is refused or a licence/consent is suspended or revoked by the Panel the applicant may have a right of appeal to the courts under the relevant provisions of the legislation and the Panel will inform the applicant within their decision letter.