

LICENSING AND APPEALS SUB-COMMITTEE
15 June 2016

*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT	AGENDA ITEM No.

LICENSING ACT 2003

**APPLICATION BY THE PUB DOOR LTD FOR THE VARIATION OF A PREMISES
LICENCE IN RESPECT OF THE RADCLIFFE, 31 WALSWORTH ROAD, HITCHIN,
HERTFORDSHIRE, SG4 9ST.**

REPORT OF THE LICENSING OFFICER

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The existing premises licence was granted by North Hertfordshire District Council on 30 August 2005 following an application for conversion of grandfather rights during the transitional period.
- 1.2 The original premises licence has been subject to successful variation applications on two separate occasions resulting in the current premises licence.
- 1.3 A copy of the current premises licence is attached as **Appendix A**.

2. APPLICATION

- 2.1 The application is for the variation of a premises licence under section 34 of the Licensing Act 2003.
- 2.2 The licensable activities and hours originally applied for are attached as **Appendix B**.

3. APPLICATION PROCESS

- 3.1 On 25 April 2016, The Pub Door Ltd made an application for the variation of a premises licence.
- 3.2 The applicant served copies of this application to Hertfordshire Constabulary and the other responsible authorities
- 3.3 A public notice was displayed on the premises for a period of not less than twenty-eight (28) consecutive days in accordance with the requirements of the Act.
- 3.4 A newspaper advertisement was placed in a local newspaper in accordance with the requirements of the Act.

4. REPRESENTATIONS

- 4.1 No representation was received from Hertfordshire Constabulary.
- 4.2 NHDC Environmental Protection had initial concerns with the application and entered into negotiations with the applicant during the consultation period.

The applicant subsequently amended the application to include additional operating schedule conditions which resolved the officer's concerns. The amendments made following negotiations with the environmental protection officer are attached as **Appendix C**.

- 4.3 No representations were received from any other responsible authority.
- 4.4 In order to assist the sub-committee, a summary of the revised application incorporating all amendments is attached as **Appendix D**.
- 4.5 **It is the revised application contained within Appendix D that the sub-committee are being asked to determine.**
- 4.6 One (1) representation, which has been deemed relevant by the licensing officer, was received from other persons against the application and is attached as **Appendix E**.
- 4.7 The Council's Scheme of Delegation in respect of the Licensing Act 2003 requires the licensing officer to determine whether a representation is relevant as specified by the Act.
- 4.8 Where representations include paragraphs that are not relevant to the Act, these paragraphs have been clearly crossed through and marked as '*not relevant*' by the licensing officer and should not be considered as part of the determination process. **Other Persons must not refer to these paragraphs in any oral presentation at the hearing.**
- 4.9 As the licensing officer has determined that the representations are relevant, it is for the sub-committee to determine what weight to apportion to the representation.
- 4.10 The applicant and the other persons making relevant representations have been invited to attend the hearing to present their respective cases. They have been advised that they may be legally represented and of the committee hearing procedure.

5. OBSERVATIONS

- 5.1 In determining this application, the sub-committee must have regard to the representation and take such steps, as it considers appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives.
- 5.2 In making its decision, the sub-committee must act with a view to promoting the licensing objectives. It must also have regard to the licensing authority's Statement of Licensing Policy and National Guidance issued by the Home Office.
- 5.3 The sub-committee has the following options when making their determination:
 - i) Grant the application as made
 - ii) Grant the application with amended timings and/or licensable activities
 - iii) Grant the application (as made or as amended) with conditions
(conditions should only be added where appropriate to promote the licensing objectives)
 - iv) Refuse the application.

6. LICENSING POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 The following paragraphs from the Council's Statement of Licensing Policy 2016 may be relevant to this application. This section does not prevent the sub-committee from considering other paragraphs of the Statement of Licensing Policy where they deem it appropriate.

B6

Our vision is:

"To ensure that North Hertfordshire continues to offer a diverse range of well managed entertainment venues and community and cultural activities within a safe and enjoyable environment."

B7

The Council is committed to the continued promotion of the diverse cultural and community activities within the district and providing a safe and sustainable night-time economy for residents and visitors alike. Licensing Policy will be approached with a view to encouraging new and innovative forms of entertainment that promote this vision and are consistent with the four licensing objectives.

B8

The Council encourages greater live music, dance, theatre and other forms of entertainment for the benefit of the community. Where activities require a licence, the Council will seek to balance the potential for disturbance of local residents and businesses against the wider community and cultural benefits.

B9

In making a balanced decision, the Council accepts that those living in town centre environments are likely to experience a degree of disturbance associated with a vibrant night-time economy but this must be managed in such a way to limit its impact beyond that which is reasonable. The Council will at all times consider the wider benefits to and impacts on the community as a whole and will take a proportionate view on the weight to apply to representations.

D2.1

Each licence application will be decided by reference to this Policy, the National Guidance issued by the Secretary of State, relevant legislation and to the individual circumstances of the particular application. The Council may depart from the Policy where the individual circumstances of any application merit such a decision in the interests of the promotion of the Licensing Objectives. Full reasons will be given for decisions taken by the Council when undertaking its licensing functions.

D2.9

The Council will carry out its licensing functions in the promotion of the licensing objectives and, in addition, will support the stated aims of the Act which are as follows:

- (i) *protecting the public and local residents from crime, anti-social behaviour and noise nuisance caused by irresponsible licensed premises;*
- (ii) *giving the police and licensing authorities the powers they need to effectively manage and police the night-time economy and take action against those premises that are causing problems;*
- (iii) *recognising the important role which pubs and other licensed premises play in our local communities by minimising the regulatory burden on business, encouraging innovation and supporting responsible premises;*
- (iv) *providing a regulatory framework for alcohol which reflects the needs of local communities and empowers local authorities to make and enforce decisions about the most appropriate licensing strategies for their local area; and*
- (v) *encouraging greater community involvement in licensing decisions and giving local residents the opportunity to have their say regarding licensing decisions that may affect them.*

D6.2

The Council recognises that each application must be considered on its own merits and any conditions attached to licences and certificates must be tailored to the individual style and characteristics of the premises and activities concerned. This is essential to avoid the imposition of disproportionate and overly burdensome conditions on premises. A standardised approach to imposing conditions must be avoided and conditions will only be lawful where they are deemed appropriate to promote the licensing objectives in response to relevant representations.

D6.3

Conditions will only be imposed when they are appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives and will focus upon matters within the control of the individual licensee such as the premises, places or events being used for licensable activities or the surrounding areas of the premises, places or events. Conditions are likely to be focused towards the direct impact of those activities on persons living in, working in or visiting areas affected by, or likely to be affected by, those activities.

D8.1

The Council recognises the need to encourage and promote live music, dancing and theatre for the wider cultural benefit of the community.

D8.2

Only appropriate, proportionate and reasonable licensing conditions will be imposed on licences so as not to discourage the promotion of entertainment. Conditions will relate to the minimum needed to ensure the promotion of the licensing objectives.

D8.3

The Council will ordinarily avoid any measure which deters live music, dancing and theatre by imposing indirect costs of a substantial nature (for example, noise limiting devices for smaller or community premises). The Council acknowledges, however, that on occasions the imposition of appropriate conditions with cost implications may be the only alternative to refusing an application where there is sufficient evidence in relation to the effect, or likely effect on the licensing objectives.

E3.1.1

Licensed premises may have significant potential to impact adversely on communities through public nuisance that arises from their operation. The Council interprets 'public nuisance' in its widest sense and takes it to include such things as noise, light, odour, litter and anti-social behaviour, where matters arising at licensed premises impact on those living, working or otherwise engaged in activities in the locality. Ordinarily, the Council's Environmental Protection & Housing Team, in their role as a responsible authority, would take the lead in respect of nuisance issues.

E3.1.3

The Council recognises that conditions relating to noise nuisance may not be appropriate in certain circumstances where the provisions of other legislation (for example, the Environmental Protection Act 1990, the Noise Act 1996, or the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005) adequately protect those living in the areas surrounding the premises. That said, the approach of the Council will be one of prevention and it will consider each application on its own merits, having due regard to the avoidance of duplication balanced against the effectiveness or otherwise of the other legislative provisions.

E3.2.1

This may include noise from live or recorded music, human voices (both amplified and unamplified) and other forms of entertainment (i.e. indoor sporting events). Measures to prevent a public nuisance may include, but are not limited to:

- *installation of soundproofing;*
- *installation of noise-limiting devices;*
- *provision of acoustic lobbies;*
- *no externally played music;*

- restrictions on the times and types of entertainment;
- keeping windows and doors closed (i.e. with self-closing devices).

E3.2.2

Soundproofing and other structural modifications may be identified as a requirement following an acoustic survey of the premises. Such a survey may be requested if the building is old and/or insufficiently insulated, very close or adjacent to neighbouring properties and/or the type of entertainment could be considered unsuitable for the premises without additional noise mitigation measures being implemented.

E3.2.3

Noise-limiting devices may be requested, in particular, where the entertainment takes place with sound systems not provided in-house (i.e. brought in by a hired DJ), where the premises is in a residential area or where the premises has a history of noise issues. Before imposing conditions requiring a noise-limiting device, the Council will give consideration to paragraph 2.16 of the Guidance which states:

Conditions relating to noise nuisance will usually concern steps appropriate to control the levels of noise emanating from premises. This might be achieved by a simple measure such as ensuring that doors and windows are kept closed after a particular time, or persons are not permitted in garden areas of the premises after a certain time. More sophisticated measures like the installation of acoustic curtains or rubber speaker mounts to mitigate sound escape from the premises may be appropriate. However, conditions in relation to live or recorded music may not be enforceable in circumstances where the entertainment activity itself is not licensable. Any conditions appropriate to promote the prevention of public nuisance should be tailored to the type, nature and characteristics of the specific premises and its licensable activities. Licensing authorities should avoid inappropriate or disproportionate measures that could deter events that are valuable to the community, such as live music. Noise limiters, for example, are expensive to purchase and install and are likely to be a considerable burden for smaller venues.

E3.9.1

The Council is fully aware of the nuisance that can be caused by poorly managed or inappropriately located premises, however will seek to strike an appropriate balance with its vision of promoting a diverse and vibrant night-time economy.

E3.9.2

The provision of well-managed and controlled entertainment will be encouraged to promote the vision, however the potential disturbance to residents and businesses will need to have been adequately considered by applicants as part of their operating schedule

E3.9.3

Should disturbance from licensed premises become unreasonable, any review proceedings will seek to impose suitable control measures in the first instance. Should control measures prove ineffective or are deemed inappropriate then the restriction of licensable activity timings, removal of licensable activities, suspension or revocation of the licence will be seriously considered.

F8.1

The Council acknowledges that conditions cannot be imposed on an authorisation where it would be either impracticable or impossible for the licence holder to comply with such conditions when customers have left the premises and are beyond the control of the licence holder.

F8.2

That said, if behaviour of customers beyond the control of the licence holder can be causally linked to a specific premises and it is causing crime and disorder or a nuisance it is wrong to assume that the Act cannot address this; section 4 of the Act gives the Council a positive duty to deal with it proportionately. Whilst conditions

would be inappropriate in these scenarios, the Council is strongly of the view that activities and/or operating times of an authorisation should be restricted, or an authorisation refused or revoked, where appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives.

7. RELEVANT EXTRACTS OF STATUTORY GUIDANCE

7.1 The following paragraphs from the Guidance issued by the Home Office under section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003 (March 2015 version) may be relevant to this application. This section does not prevent the sub-Committee from considering other paragraphs of the Guidance where they deem it appropriate and the determination should be based upon consideration of the full document.

1.3

The licensing objectives are:

- *The prevention of crime and disorder;*
- *Public safety;*
- *The prevention of public nuisance; and*
- *The protection of children from harm.*

1.4

Each objective is of equal importance. There are no other statutory licensing objectives, so that the promotion of the four objectives is a paramount consideration at all times.

1.16

Conditions on a premises licence or club premises certificate are important in setting the parameters within which premises can lawfully operate. The use of wording such as “must”, “shall” and “will” is encouraged. Licence conditions:

- *must be appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives;*
- *must be precise and enforceable;*
- *must be unambiguous and clear in what they intend to achieve;*
- *should not duplicate other statutory requirements or other duties or responsibilities placed on the employer by other legislation;*
- *must be tailored to the individual type, location and characteristics of the premises and events concerned;*
- *should not be standardised and may be unlawful when it cannot be demonstrated that they are appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives in an individual case;*
- *should not replicate offences set out in the 2003 Act or other legislation;*
- *should be proportionate, justifiable and be capable of being met, (for example, whilst beer glasses may be available in toughened glass, wine glasses may not);*
- *cannot seek to manage the behaviour of customers once they are beyond the direct management of the licence holder and their staff, but may impact on the behaviour of customers in the immediate vicinity of the premises or as they enter or leave; and*
- *should be written in a prescriptive format.*

1.17

Each application must be considered on its own merits and in accordance with the licensing authority’s statement of licensing policy; for example, if the application falls within the scope of a cumulative impact policy. Conditions attached to licences and certificates must be tailored to the individual type, location and characteristics of the premises and events concerned. This is essential to avoid the imposition of disproportionate and overly burdensome conditions on premises where there is no need for such conditions. Standardised conditions should be avoided and indeed may be unlawful where they cannot be shown to be appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives in an individual case.

2.14

The 2003 Act enables licensing authorities and responsible authorities, through representations, to consider what constitutes public nuisance and what is appropriate to prevent it in terms of conditions attached to specific premises licences and club premises certificates. It is therefore important that in considering the promotion of this licensing objective, licensing authorities and responsible authorities focus on the effect of the licensable activities at the specific premises on persons living and working (including those carrying on business) in the area around the premises which may be disproportionate and unreasonable. The issues will mainly concern noise nuisance, light pollution, noxious smells and litter.

2.15

Public nuisance is given a statutory meaning in many pieces of legislation. It is however not narrowly defined in the 2003 Act and retains its broad common law meaning. It may include in appropriate circumstances the reduction of the living and working amenity and environment of other persons living and working in the area of the licensed premises. Public nuisance may also arise as a result of the adverse effects of artificial light, dust, odour and insects or where its effect is prejudicial to health.

2.20

Beyond the immediate area surrounding the premises, these are matters for the personal responsibility of individuals under the law. An individual who engages in anti-social behaviour is accountable in their own right. However, it would be perfectly reasonable for a licensing authority to impose a condition, following relevant representations, that requires the licence holder or club to place signs at the exits from the building encouraging patrons to be quiet until they leave the area, or that, if they wish to smoke, to do so at designated places on the premises instead of outside, and to respect the rights of people living nearby to a peaceful night.

9.41

Licensing authorities are best placed to determine what actions are appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives in their areas. All licensing determinations should be considered on a case-by-case basis. They should take into account any representations or objections that have been received from responsible authorities or other persons, and representations made by the applicant or premises user as the case may be.

9.42

The authority's determination should be evidence-based, justified as being appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives and proportionate to what it is intended to achieve.

9.43

Determination of whether an action or step is appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives requires an assessment of what action or step would be suitable to achieve that end. While this does not therefore require a licensing authority to decide that no lesser step will achieve the aim, the authority should aim to consider the potential burden that the condition would impose on the premises licence holder (such as the financial burden due to restrictions on licensable activities) as well as the potential benefit in terms of the promotion of the licensing objectives. However, it is imperative that the authority ensures that the factors which form the basis of its determination are limited to consideration of the promotion of the objectives and nothing outside those parameters. As with the consideration of licence variations, the licensing authority should consider wider issues such as other conditions already in place to mitigate potential negative impact on the promotion of the licensing objectives and the track record of the business. Further advice on determining what is appropriate when imposing conditions on a licence or certificate is provided in Chapter 10. The licensing authority is expected to come to its determination based on an assessment of the evidence on both the risks and benefits either for or against making the determination.

10.8

The licensing authority may not impose any conditions unless its discretion has been exercised following receipt of relevant representations and it is satisfied as a result of a hearing (unless all parties agree a hearing is not necessary) that it is appropriate to impose conditions to promote one or more of the four licensing objectives. This provision also applies to minor variations.

10.9

It is possible that in some cases no additional conditions will be appropriate to promote the licensing objectives.

10.10

The 2003 Act requires that licensing conditions should be tailored to the size, type, location and characteristics and activities taking place at the premises concerned. Conditions should be determined on a case-by-case basis and standardised conditions which ignore these individual aspects should be avoided. For example, conditions should not be used to implement a general policy in a given area such as the use of CCTV, polycarbonate drinking vessels or identity scanners where they would not be appropriate to the specific premises. Licensing authorities and other responsible authorities should be alive to the indirect costs that can arise because of conditions. These could be a deterrent to holding events that are valuable to the community or for the funding of good and important causes. Licensing authorities should therefore ensure that any conditions they impose are only those which are appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives.

8. LICENSING OFFICER COMMENTS

- 8.1 The comments within this section of the report are provided by the licensing officer to assist the sub-committee with the interpretation of the Act, the Guidance and existing case law. It is for the sub-committee to determine what weight they attach to this advice.

Definition of 'appropriate'

- 8.2 The following paragraphs from the Council's Statement of Licensing Policy outline the definition of 'appropriate' that the sub-committee should have regard to:

F2.1

There are many references throughout this Policy to the term 'appropriate'. The Act states at section 18(3)(b) that when relevant representations are received the Licensing Sub-Committee has to consider what steps "it considers appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives".

F2.2

There is no current legal definition of the term appropriate, however the Guidance states:

9.39

The authority's determination should be evidence-based, justified as being appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives and proportionate to what it is intended to achieve.

9.40

Determination of whether an action or step is appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives requires an assessment of what action or step would be suitable to achieve that end. Whilst this does not therefore require a licensing authority to decide that no lesser step will achieve the aim, the authority should aim to consider the potential burden that the condition would impose on the premises licence holder (such as the financial burden due to

restrictions on licensable activities) as well as the potential benefit in terms of the promotion of the licensing objectives. However, it is imperative that the authority ensures that the factors which form the basis of its determination are limited to consideration of the promotion of the objectives and nothing outside those parameters. As with the consideration of licence variations, the licensing authority should consider wider issues such as other conditions already in place to mitigate potential negative impact on the promotion of the licensing objectives and the track record of the business. Further advice on determining what is appropriate when imposing conditions on a licence or certificate is provided in Chapter 10. The licensing authority is expected to come to its determination based on an assessment of the evidence on both the risks and benefits either for or against making the determination.

F2.3

The Council anticipates that, in due course, case law will provide clarity on the meaning of 'appropriate'. Until such time that the courts make a judgement the Council will give 'appropriate' its ordinary meaning as expanded on by paragraphs 9.39 and 9.40 of the Guidance, subject to the over-arching requirement that determinations should be reasonable and proportionate.

F2.4

European case law has defined 'proportionate' as generally requiring a four-step test, namely:

- *there must be a legitimate aim for a measure;*
- *the measure must be suitable to achieve the aim;*
- *the measure must be necessary to achieve the aim (that there cannot be any less onerous way of achieving it); and*
- *the measure must be reasonable, considering competing interests.*

The Council is aware that their determinations must be proportionate to the evidence received in respect of an application and will have regard to this definition.

F2.5

The Council acknowledges that proportionality is a key factor in assisting with the definition of 'appropriate'.

Live or recorded music

- 8.3 Following a number of deregulatory amendments to the Licensing Act 2003, the circumstances in which live music is licensable has changed.
- 8.4 Live or recorded music on an alcohol licensed premises is exempt from licensing between the hours of 08:00hrs and 23:00hrs provided that the audience consists of no more than five hundred persons.
- 8.5 Where the requirements of the exemption detailed in paragraph 8.4 are met, no licence is required for the performance of live or recorded music; the sub-committee need not be concerned with live or recorded music between those hours.
- 8.6 Outside of the exempted hours, a licence for live or recorded music would be needed and it is these hours that the sub-committee should give consideration to.
- 8.7 Any existing licence conditions that apply to specifically to live or recorded music during the exempted hours are automatically disapplied whilst the exemption exists. Any conditions imposed by a sub-committee relating to live or recorded music would not apply during the exempted hours.

- 8.8 As a safeguard against any adverse impact on the licensing objectives arising from the live and recorded music exemption, a premises licence can be the subject of a review in the normal manner. On review, where there is evidence of public nuisance arising from live and/or recorded music, a sub-committee can remove the exemption. The effect of removing the exemption on review would mean that a licence for live and recorded music would be needed and any existing or newly imposed licence conditions would have effect.

9. APPENDICES

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|-----|------------|--|
| 9.1 | Appendix A | Current premises licence |
| 9.2 | Appendix B | Original application |
| 9.3 | Appendix C | Amendments agreed with Environmental Protection |
| 9.4 | Appendix D | Revised application incorporating amendments |
| 9.5 | Appendix E | Relevant representation from Other Persons against the application |

10. CONTACT OFFICERS

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|------|------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| 10.1 | Colin Broadhurst | Licensing Officer | 01462 474831 |
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