

Licensing Sub-Committee Report

Subject of hearing: **Mitcham News, 25 Upper Green East, Mitcham, CR4 2PE**

Date: **16 November 2015**

Time: **10.30 am**

Venue: **Merton Civic Centre, London Road, Morden, Surrey, SM4 5DX**

1. Special Policy Area (premises licences and club certificates)

1.1 The premises are not in the special policy area.

2. Type of hearing and powers of the sub-committee

2.1 The sub-committee is required to determine the application by taking such of the steps set out below as it considers necessary for the promotion of the licensing objectives.

2.2 In making their determination the sub-committee must have regard to the Licensing Act 2003, the licensing objectives, guidance issued by the Secretary of State and Merton's Licensing Policy.

2.3 New premises licence: s18

(i) To grant the licence subject to conditions

(ii) To exclude from the scope of the licence any of the licensable activities to which the application relates

(iii) To refuse to specify a person in the licence as the premises supervisor

(iv) To reject the application.

3. Hearing papers

3.1 The applications, notices and representations for determination by the sub-committee are contained in the hearing bundle (attached) together with any relevant existing licence. This includes any documents which must be sent to any of the parties to the hearing under Regulation 7(2) and Schedule 3 of The Licensing Act 2003 (Hearings) Regulations 2005. This bundle has been issued to all parties to the hearing and forms part of this report.

4. Legal advice to the sub-committee

4.1 A legal officer appointed by the Head of Civic and Legal Services will attend the hearing to advise the sub-committee on statutory provision and legal matters.

5. Licensing Officer comments

5.1 This is an application of a new premises licence, the premises being described as a newsagent/convenience store.

5.2 The application is for the sale of alcohol off the premises Monday to Saturday 05:30 to 23:00 and Sunday 06:30 to 22:00.

For enquiries about this hearing please contact

Democratic Services

Civic Centre

London Road

Morden

SM4 5DX

Telephone: 020 8545 3616

Email: democratic.services@merton.gov.uk

Parties to the hearing

This document forms part of the notice of hearing.

The following are parties to the hearing having submitted relevant applications, notices or representations under the statutory provisions indicated:

Applicant	
Mitcham News, 25 Upper Green East, Mitcham, CR4 2PE	
Navinchandra Patel -19 Caroline Road, Thornton heath, Croydon, CR7 8DN	
Statutory Authorities	
Metropolitan Police	
LBM Public Health	
Interested Parties	

Rights of parties to the hearing

This document forms part of the Notice of Hearing.

The hearing will be conducted by a three member sub-committee of Merton's Licensing Committee.

You have the right to attend the hearing and may be assisted or represented by any person whether or not that person is legally qualified. You should notify us if you wish to be represented or assisted in this way on the accompanying response form.

You may also request that other persons be permitted to appear at the hearing to assist the sub-committee on particular points relating to the matter under consideration. You should notify us of any persons you wish to attend on the accompanying response form.

At the hearing you are entitled to:

- a) respond to any points of clarification detailed in the Notice of Hearing;
- b) if given permission by the sub-committee hearing this matter, ask questions of other parties; and
- c) address the sub-committee.

If you do not attend the hearing the sub-committee may proceed in your absence or it may adjourn to another specified date and time. If the hearing proceeds in your absence any application, notice or representation you have made will be considered by the sub-committee. It would be helpful if you could notify us as soon as possible if you are not going to attend the hearing.

Please complete and return the accompanying response form by the response date shown on the Notice of Hearing. Alternatively you can send an email to democratic.services@merton.gov.uk with the relevant information.

A copy of the procedure to be followed at the hearing is attached.

A guide to licensing hearings in Merton is attached

Procedure to be followed at the hearing

This document forms part of the notice of hearing

Regulations referred to in this procedure are reproduced under Note ⁽³⁾ at the end of the procedure

1. Declarations of interest.
2. Welcome by Chair of the licensing sub-committee and outline of the order of proceedings.
3. The Chair will advise parties⁽¹⁾ that the proceedings are being recorded.
4. The papers before the sub-committee comprise this Notice of Hearing and any applications, notices or representations and include:
 - The application
 - Representations and notices
 - List of parties to the hearing.
5. Points which the authority has raised in the Notice of Hearing as points on which it will be seeking clarification
6. Comments of Licensing officers on any factual or technical aspects of the application, notices or representations
7. Any other relevant matters and requirements
8. The Chair will ask parties if they are satisfied with the accuracy of the papers issued and the sub-committee will resolve any issues on this point.
9. The Chair will ask officers and parties if there are any other procedural points to deal with and these will be resolved before proceeding.
10. The Licensing officer will advise the hearing if any representations or notices have been withdrawn since the issue of the Notice of Hearing.
11. The Chair will advise parties that if they introduce new documentary or other information in support of their application, notice or representation the consent of other parties to the consideration by the sub-committee of such information will be sought.
12. The sub-committee will consider, under regulation 22, requests from parties made under Regulation 8(2) for other persons to be permitted to appear before the hearing.
13. The sub-committee will determine the order in which parties (other than the applicant) will be heard and so advise those present.
14. The Chair will advise the parties that they have no rights to question persons appearing under the provisions of regulations 8(2) and 22 and that their right to question other parties can only be exercised with the permission of the sub-committee. The Chair will also advise the parties that under regulation 23 cross-examination is not allowed unless the sub-committee feels that this is required for it to consider the matters before it. If parties wish to put questions to other parties or persons appearing under the provisions of regulations 8(2) or 22 they should seek the permission of the sub-committee and direct such questioning via the chair.

15. Applicant

- i) The applicant will be asked if there is anything they wish to add to or clarify about their application
- ii) The applicant will address the points for clarification raised by the authority in the Notice of Hearing
- iii) Persons appearing under regulations 8(2) and 22 as notified by the applicant will address the hearing
- iv) If the sub-committee considers it necessary it may allow other parties to put questions to the applicant and persons appearing under the provisions of regulations 8(2) and 22 notified by the applicant who have addressed the hearing
- v) The sub-committee members will put any questions to the applicant and persons appearing under the provisions of regulations 8(2) and 22 notified by the applicant who have addressed the hearing
- vi) The applicant will be asked if they have any further points arising from points raised in questioning

16. Other parties⁽²⁾

- i) The party (party A) will be asked if there is anything they wish to add to or clarify about their representation or notice
- ii) Party A will address the points for clarification raised by the authority in the Notice of Hearing
- iii) Persons appearing under regulations 8(2) and 22 as notified by the Party A to address the hearing
- iv) If the sub-committee considers it necessary it may allow the applicant to put questions to Party A and persons appearing under the provisions of regulations 8(2) and 22 notified by Party A who have addressed the hearing
- v) If the sub-committee considers it necessary it may allow other parties to put questions to Party A and persons appearing under the provisions of regulations 8(2) and 22 notified by Party A who have addressed the hearing
- vi) The sub-committee members will put any questions to Party A and persons appearing under the provisions of regulations 8(2) and 22 notified by Party A who have addressed the hearing
- vii) Party A will be asked if they have any further points arising from points raised in questioning

17. Repeat above stage for each subsequent party.

18. Licensing officer to be asked if they have any comments

19. Other parties close by summarising their points.

20. Applicant closes by summarising their points.

21. The Chair will then ask the sub-committee's licensing and legal adviser if there are any further matters to be considered prior to a determination being made. If there are such other matters they will then be disposed of as appropriate.

22. If the sub-committee is not going to determine the application at the conclusion of the hearing it will so advise those present and inform them of the date and time that their determination will be made in public. Determinations must be made in accordance with the provisions of regulation 26.
23. If the sub-committee feels that it needs to go into private session to discuss any issues with its legal adviser it will advise those present that it will resume in public session at the conclusion of any such discussion when the advice it has received from its legal adviser will be read into the public record of the meeting.
24. At the conclusion of any private session the sub-committee will return to public session and the legal adviser will inform the hearing of any advice given in private session.
25. In cases where the sub-committee is not going to make its determination at the conclusion of the hearing it will then adjourn the meeting to a specified date and time. In all other cases it will discuss and determine the matter before it.
26. The Chair will advise parties to the hearing that they will be notified in writing of the determination, thank the parties for their attendance and close the meeting.

Where this procedure is silent the sub-committee may make such arrangements as necessary to ensure the rights of parties to hearings and for the proper discharge of its duties under the Licensing Act 2003 and any guidance or regulations issued by the Secretary of State.

Notes

¹ Regulation 15 allows parties to be represented or assisted at the hearing by any person whether or not that person is legally qualified. Any reference to a party in this order of procedure should be taken to include a reference to a person assisting or representing a party.

² Similar objections will be grouped together as far as possible and a common spokesperson sought. The regulations treat each objector as a party in their own right. If they do not agree to being grouped they will be treated as an individual party.

³Extracts from the regulations:

- 8.(1) A party shall give to the authority within the period of time provided for in the following provisions of this regulation a notice stating:
 - (a) whether he intends to attend or be represented at the hearing;
 - (b) whether he considers a hearing to be unnecessary.
8. (2) In a case where a party wishes any other person (other than the person he intends to represent him at the hearing) to appear at the hearing, the notice referred to in paragraph (1) shall contain a request for permission for such other person to appear at the hearing accompanied by details of the name of that person and a brief description of the point or points on which that person may be able to assist the authority in relation to the application, representations or notice of the party making the request.
22. At the beginning of the hearing, the authority shall explain to the parties the procedure which it proposes to follow at the hearing and shall consider any request made by a party under regulation 8(2) for permission for another person to appear at the hearing, such permission shall not be unreasonably withheld.

23. A hearing shall take the form of a discussion led by the authority and cross-examination shall not be permitted unless the authority considers that cross-examination is required for it to consider the representations, application or notice as the case may require.

26.(1) In the case of a hearing under:

(c) section 105(2)(a) (counter notice following police objection to temporary event notice),

(d) section 167(5)(a) (review of premises licence following closure order),
the authority must make its determination at the conclusion of the hearing.

26.(2) In any other case the authority must make its determination within the period of five working days beginning with the day or the last day on which the hearing was held.

London Borough of Merton



**LICENSING COMMITTEE HEARINGS
A BRIEF GUIDE**

Merton Civic & Legal Services
October 2005

Introduction

The following pages of this booklet contain guidance on hearings of Licensing Applications by the Council's Licensing Sub-Committee. It is a guide only and not a statement of the law.

The law is to be found in:

- 1 Licensing Act 2003
- 2 The Licensing Act 2003 (Hearings) Regulations 2005
- 3 Guidance issued under Section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003.

Notice of Hearing

This booklet normally accompanies a "Notice of Hearing" as we are required by law to give you certain information with the Notice of Hearing.

Timing of Hearing

On arrival you may find that you may have to wait until the committee can deal with the application you are interested in. This is because the committee may have to deal with other applications on the same day. The committee is called to sit at the published time. There are different applications or items on the committee agenda. The committee may take the items in the order that is most efficient for managing that day's applications. You should therefore ensure that you are there in time for the beginning of the committee meeting as published.

The committee meeting is a public meeting. You are therefore entitled to remain in the committee room when other applications are being dealt with. If you remain you will see other parties participating in the hearing. Unless it is a hearing that you are interested in, you may not participate although you may feel that you can contribute in that application as well. You can only participate in the hearing if you are a "party".

The Licensing Sub-Committee

Licensing Hearings take place before a licensing sub-committee of the Council. There are three members of the sub-committee, a chairperson and two others. Also sitting with the Committee (but not part of the committee) will be the committee clerk and a Legal officer who advises the committee on legal issues. Only these two and any trainees are allowed to adjourn with the committee.

Various persons may also be in the committee room in an official capacity. Where the police have submitted representations they will be in the room as a party. They are not part of the committee. Where the Council's Environmental Health service have submitted representations they will be in the room but as a party not as part of the committee. The Director of Public Health or a Public Health officer may be present, especially if they have submitted a representation. They will be in the room, but not as part of the committee. Finally an officer from the Council's Children, Schools and Families Department may be present. They will not be part of the committee either.

A Licensing officer is usually present. The Licensing officer would have received the application and processed it to ensure that fees have been paid and that it was properly advertised. The Licensing officer is also the officer that receives representations and decides if they are in order. The Licensing officer may be asked to speak at the committee. The Licensing officer is not part of the committee and will not retire with the committee.

Attending a Licensing Hearing

Your Rights as a “Party”

You have the right:

- To attend the hearing
- To be assisted or represented by any person (whether or not the person is legally qualified)
- To address the sub-committee
- To question any party to the hearing (with the permission of the sub-committee)
- To give clarification of any issue on which advance notice of the need for clarification has been given
- To bring a witness or witnesses.

Attending the Hearing (Parties)

You do not have to attend the hearing. Where in response to the Notice of Hearing you have informed us that you do not intend to attend the hearing, then the hearing may proceed in your absence.

Where in response to the notice of hearing you say nothing about attending and you do not attend or are not represented the committee may do one of the following:

- hold the hearing in your absence
- adjourn the hearing to a specified date but only where the committee consider it to be in the public interest.

Procedure to be followed at the Hearing

The hearing will take place in public. This means that anyone whether or not they are parties to the hearing are entitled to be at the meeting and to hear all the information. The committee is allowed to exclude the public from all or part of a hearing. This will be where the committee considers that the public interest in excluding the public outweighs the public interest in the hearing taking part in public. If you believe that this exception to public hearing applies to you, you may ask the committee to consider exercising this power.

The committee will explain the procedure but a written version is included with the Notice of Hearing. Unless required by law to do it differently the committee is allowed to devise its own procedures.

The Hearing as a Discussion

The hearing is intended to be a discussion between the committee and all the parties. In order to make it an orderly discussion some element of formality exists. Consequently there will be an order in which the hearing will follow. The committee Chair will explain the order.

During the hearing the procedure is controlled by the Chair. Whilst the Chair will ensure that parties observe the procedure he or she may have to be firm in moving the hearing on to ensure that it proceeds at a pace that enables it to be dealt with within the

time allocated. In particular the Chair may have to be strict in respect of ensuring that questions to witnesses keep to the issues. The committee may also put reasonable time limits on submissions.

When an application is received by us a number of persons are allowed to make “representations”. This includes residents, the police, the Environmental Health service, Public Health, Licensing Authority and the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Those who have made representations are called “parties”.

The Law allows the applicant (the person applying for the licence) to have discussions with any of these parties before the hearing – this can lead to an agreed way of dealing with concerns relevant to the parties. (For instance, if Environmental Health is concerned about noise the applicant may offer to fit a noise limiter).

When you attend the hearing you may therefore find that some representations have been withdrawn. Where representations are withdrawn this will usually be because the person making the representations has been given satisfaction about how their concerns will be dealt with. For instance the Local Safeguarding Children Board may have concerns about the welfare of children. The applicant may then agree to accept a condition to the licence dealing with this concern and this may lead to a withdrawal of that representation.

The first thing that the committee will do is to find out what representations have been withdrawn so that the committee only concentrates on outstanding issues.

You must remember that as far as the law is concerned the applicant is entitled to do what they want with their business from a licensing point of view unless their business will offend against the four “licensing objectives” of:

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

Although these objectives are intended for the benefits of residents and businesses, various statutory bodies are given responsibility for those objectives and it is expected that they will make representations if those objectives are under threat. These statutory bodies are called “Responsible Authorities”.

The Responsible Authorities are as follows:

- The Chief Officer of Police
- The Local Fire Authority
- The Local Enforcement Agency for Health & Safety At Work Act 1974
- The Local Authority with Responsibility for Environmental Health
- The Local Planning Authority
- Local Licensing Authority or any Licensing Authorities
- A body representing those interested in the protection of children and recognised by the council (Local Safeguarding Children Board).
- The Local Public Health Authority

The guidance issued by central government advises that as a matter of practice the committee should seek to focus the hearing on the steps needed to promote the licensing objective which gave rise to the hearing. If your representations or application does not show how these four licensing objectives are affected, promoted or effected, then it is not likely to persuade the committee.

The hearing will probably be in two distinct parts. The first part is where the application and representations are made. The first part ends when the committee retires to consider the evidence.

The second part of the hearing is when the committee returns. The main purpose of the second part is to allow the parties to be told what legal advice (if any) has been received during the deliberations in private. The committee will then announce their decision.

This is then the end of the hearing. The decision will be communicated to the parties in writing.

The committee will then move on to consider the next application (if any).

Appeal

There is a right of appeal to the Magistrates Court. You need to take legal advice on which Magistrates Court to go to. The appeal has to be lodged with the Magistrates Court within a period of 21 days beginning on the day you were notified by the Council of the decision appealed against.

Conclusion

This is necessarily a brief guide. It is not a Statement of Law. For this you will need to take legal advice.

Contacts

- (i) Licensing team:
 - email: licensing@merton.gov.uk
 - Tel: 020 8545 3025
- (ii) Meeting arrangements - Democratic Services:
 - email: democratic.services@merton.gov.uk
 - Tel: 020 8545 3616
- (iii) All press contacts - Merton's Press office:
 - email: press@merton.gov.uk
 - Tel: 020 8545 3181
- (iv) London Borough of Merton:
 - Address: Civic Centre, London Road, Morden, SM4 5DX
 - Tel: 020 8274 4901

Useful links

- Merton Council's Web site: <http://www.merton.gov.uk>
- Licensing Act 2003
<http://www.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts2003/20030017.htm>
- Guidance issued by the secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport
http://www.culture.gov.uk/Reference_library/Publications/archive_2004/guidance_issued_under_section_182_of_the_licensing_act_2003.htm
- Regulations issued by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport
http://www.culture.gov.uk/what_we_do/Alcohol_entertainment/lic_act_reg.htm
- Merton's Statement of Licensing policy
<http://www.merton.gov.uk/licensing/>
- Readers should note the terms of the legal information (disclaimer) regarding information on Merton Council's and third party linked websites.
- <http://www.merton.gov.uk/legal.htm>
- This disclaimer also applies to any links provided here.

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