

LICENSING COMMITTEE - PROCEDURE AT HEARINGS

This is the procedure to be followed at Licensing Sub-Committee hearings when the Sub-Committee is exercising the functions delegated by the Licensing Committee under the Licensing Act 2003 as agreed by the Licensing Committee on 2nd February 2005.

1.0 AT THE HEARING

1.1 The hearing shall take place in **public**, except where (as defined in the Hearings Regulations) the public interest requires the public's exclusion.

2.0 Right of attendance, assistance and representation

2.1 A party may attend the hearing and may be assisted or represented by any person whether or not that person is legally qualified.

3.0 Procedure at the Hearing

3.1 The Chairman shall at the beginning of the hearing introduce the members of the Sub-Committee, invite the parties to identify themselves and then explain to the parties the procedure which the Sub-Committee intends to follow (this procedure).

3.2 The Sub Committee shall then consider any request made by a party for permission for another named person to appear at the hearing, such permission shall not be unreasonably withheld.

3.3 The hearing shall take the form of a **discussion** led by the Authority and **cross-examination** shall **not** be permitted **unless** the sub-committee considers that cross-examination is required for it to consider the representation, application or notice as the case may require.

3.4 The Sub-Committee must allow the parties an equal maximum period of time in which to exercise their rights to respond to a point or points of clarification and give further information in support of their application, representations or notice; question any other party (if permission has been given) and in which to address the sub-committee.

Members of the Licensing Sub-Committee may ask any question of any party or other person appearing at the hearing.

The Licensing Sub-Committee may take into account documentary or other evidence produced by a party before the hearing, or produced at the hearing if all other parties agree.

The Licensing Sub-Committee shall disregard any information given by a party or by any person to whom permission to appear at the hearing has been given by the Authority, which is not relevant to the Application representations or notice, (as applicable) or the promotion of the licensing objectives, or if the hearing is considering a notice given by the Chief Officer of police, which is not relevant to the crime prevention objective.

3.5 The Sub-Committee may require any person attending the hearing who in their opinion is behaving in a disruptive manner to leave the hearing and may:

- a) refuse to permit that person to return, or
- b) permit him to return only on such conditions as the authority may specify,

but such a person may, before the end of the hearing, submit to the authority in writing any information which they would have been entitled to give orally had they not been required to leave.

3.6 The Sub-Committee may, after hearing the representations of the parties, withdraw from the room to make their deliberations.

4.0 Determination of applications

4.1 The Sub-Committee shall make its determination at the conclusion of the hearing, or otherwise as prescribed by Regulation. The Secretary of State's Guidance states that the determination shall be 'given forthwith and reasons provided to support the determination'.

5.0 Notification of Determination

The authority shall notify a party of its determination forthwith, or otherwise if the Licensing Act 2003 so provides. Notification to a party will include a statement of the Sub-Committee's reasons for the decision and will be accompanied by information about the party's right of appeal against the determination.

6.0 Failure of parties to attend the hearing

6.1 If a party has informed the licensing authority that he/she does not intend to attend or be represented at the hearing, the hearing may proceed in his/her absence.

6.2 If a party who has not so indicated fails to attend or be represented at a hearing at the Sub-Committee may:-

- where it considers it to be necessary in the public interest, adjourn the hearing to a specified date, or
- hold the hearing in the party's absence.

6.3 Where the Sub-Committee holds the hearing in the absence of a party, the Sub-Committee shall consider at the hearing the application, representation or notice made by that party.

6.4 Where the Sub-Committee adjourns the hearing to a specified date it must forthwith notify the parties of the date, time and place to which the hearing has been adjourned.

7.0 Record of proceedings

7.1 A record of the hearing shall be kept for six years from the date of determination or, where an appeal is brought against the determination, the disposal of the appeal. The record must be in a permanent and intelligible form.

8.0 Irregularities

- 8.1 Any irregularity arising as a result of any failure to comply with the Hearing's Regulations **before** the authority had made a determination, does **not** render the proceedings void, and the authority shall, if it considers that any person may have been prejudiced as a result of the irregularity, take such steps as it thinks fit to cure the irregularity **before** reaching its determination.
- 8.2 Clerical mistakes in any document recording a determination of the authority or errors arising in such document from an accidental slip or omission may be corrected by the authority.

NOTES

Human Rights

The Human Rights Act 1998 incorporates the European Convention on Human Rights and makes it unlawful for a local authority to act in a way which is incompatible with a convention right. The Sub-Committee will have regard to the Human Rights Act when exercising its licensing functions, with particular reference to the following provisions:-

- Article 6 – in the determination of civil rights and obligations everyone is entitled to a fair and public hearing within a reasonable time by an independent and impartial tribunal established by law
- Article 8 – everyone has the right to respect for his/her home and private and family life
- Article 1 of the first protocol – every person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his/her possessions (this includes the possession of a licence).

Members Interests

Members of the Sub-Committee shall consider whether they have a personal and/or prejudicial interest in the application or case before them in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Conduct for Mid Sussex District Council.

All interests should be disclosed to the Licensing Sub-Committee and recorded. Members with a prejudicial interest must take no part in the hearing and must withdraw from the room.