

**LICENSING APPLICATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
22 MAY 2025**

Present: Councillors Woodward (Chair), Mitchell and Tarar.

1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 25 and 29 April 2025 were confirmed as correct records and signed by the Chair.

2. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved –

That, pursuant to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), members of the press and public be excluded during consideration of the following item of business as it was likely that there would be disclosures of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 5 and 7 specified in Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act.

(Several individuals attended the meeting who had a business interest in Gun Street Garden but who were not directly involved in the day-to-day management of the premises were also excluded from the meeting along with the press and public.)

3. APPLICATION FOR THE SUMMARY REVIEW OF A PREMISES LICENCE - GUN STREET GARDEN, 5 GUN STREET, READING, RG1 2JR

The Sub-Committee considered a report on an application by Thames Valley Police for the summary review of the premises licence in respect of Gun Street Garden, 5 Gun Street, Reading, RG1 2JR.

The report stated that the application for a summary review had been submitted by Thames Valley Police on the grounds which had been outlined within the application form and accompanying certificate. A copy of the application form and certificate, dated 25 April 2025, were attached to the report at Appendix RS-1. Additional confidential information submitted by Thames Valley Police in support of the application was attached to the report at Appendix RS-7.

The report set out the content of the application and certificate which stated that the premises had been associated with serious crime and disorder and that, on Sunday 20 April 2025 at approximately 02:00hrs, a report had been made of an assault during which a male suspect had thrown a hard plastic glass and a punch at a female's face resulting in the victim having to attend A&E. Later, on Sunday 20 April 2025, at approximately 03:07hrs, a report of public disorder was made that resulted in a significant policing response that required the utilisation of public order tactics. The response had committed the majority of Reading's police resources to control the situation stemming from the premises and its patrons and had meant that police resources had not been able to attend other calls for service across Reading. The report stated the application for review had been submitted to prevent the further undermining of the Licensing Objectives.

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The report stated that the premises currently benefited from a premise licence (copy at Appendix RS-2) that authorised the following licensable activities:

Provision of Regulated Entertainment (Exhibition of Films - Performance of Live Music - Playing of Recorded Music - Performance of Dance - Anything Similar to Live Music, Recorded Music or Performance of Dance)

Monday to Saturday	from 1000hrs to 0300hrs
Sunday	from 1200hrs to 0200hrs

Provision of Late Night Refreshment

Monday to Saturday	from 2300hrs to 0300hrs
Sunday	from 2300hrs to 0200hrs

Sale by Retail of Alcohol (On & Off Sales):

Monday to Saturday	from 1000hrs to 0300hrs
Sunday	from 1200hrs to 0200hrs

All licensable activities to extend on Bank Holiday Sunday from 1200hrs to 0430hrs

Hours the Premises is Open to the Public:

Monday to Saturday	from 1000hrs to 0330hrs
Sunday	from 1200hrs to 0230hrs

The report stated that, following the receipt of the application, a meeting of the Licensing Applications Sub Committee had been held on 25 April 2025 to consider whether interim steps were required. At that meeting the Sub-Committee determined it necessary to suspend the premise licence immediately pending the full review hearing. A copy of the minutes for the meeting were attached at Appendix RS-3.

During the 10 working day consultation period for the application the following representations had been received:

- A representation from Ben Williams, submitted on behalf of Reading Borough Council's Licensing Team, in support of Thames Valley Police's application for review - copy attached at Appendix RS-4;
- 13 valid representations submitted in support of the licence holder from 'Other Persons' who had provided an address - copies attached at Appendix RS-5;
- 20 invalid representations submitted in support of the licence holder from 'Other Persons' who had not provided an address - copies attached at Appendix RS-6.

The report stated that in determining the application the Licensing Authority had a duty to carry out its functions with a view to promoting the four licensing objectives, as follows:

- The prevention of crime and disorder

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- public safety
- The prevention of public nuisance
- The protection of children from harm

The report further stated that in determining the application the Licensing Authority must also have regard to the representations received, the Licensing Authority's Statement of Licensing Policy and any relevant section of the statutory guidance to licensing authorities. Furthermore, in determining the application, the Licensing Authority could take such of the following steps as it considered appropriate and proportionate for the promotion of the licensing objectives:

1. Take no further action
2. To issue formal warnings to the premises supervisor and/or premises licence holder
3. Modify the conditions of the licence (including, but not limited to hours of operation of licensable activities)
4. Exclude a licensable activity from the scope of the licence
5. Remove the designated premises licence supervisor
6. Suspend the licence for a period not exceeding three months
7. Revoke the licence

(Where the Sub-Committee took a step mentioned in the third and fourth points above it may provide that the modification or exclusion was to have effect for a period not exceeding three months or permanently.)

The report also advised that the Licensing Authority must also determine whether the interim steps imposed by the Sub-Committee on 25 April should remain in force.

The report set out paragraphs 1.5, 1.6, 2.26, 3.2, 3.10, 4.15, 5.13, 5.15, 7.1, 7.2, 7.4, 9.12, 9.13, 9.15, 9.15 to 9.18 and 9.20 to 9.22 of the Council's Statement of Licensing Policy. The report also set out paragraphs 1.2-1.5, 1.7, 1.8, 2.28, 9.12, 9.13, 9.42, 9.43, 11.1, 11.2, 11.10, 11.16, 11.17, 11.18, 11.25, 12.1, 12.2, 12.5, 12.6, 12.13, 12.14, 12.15, 12.17 to 12.22 and 12.29 to 12.31 of the Amended Guidance issued under Section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003 (February 2025). The report also referred to other legislation and initiatives to be considered.

Following the publication of the agenda for the meeting, the following confidential information had been received, copies of which had been circulated to members of the Sub-Committee and to the relevant parties via email:

- Additional evidence provided by the Applicant (Thames Valley Police) on 19 May 2025 consisting of links to view four separate video clips (including CCTV footage and police body worn video footage of the incident on 20 April 2025, police body worn video footage of an incident that took place on 1 December 2024, and CCTV footage of an incident that took place on 16 November 2024);
- Additional information provided by the premises licence holder on 20 May 2025 consisting of a witness statement from Bal Kumari Roka, a witness statement from Aurelia Singh and a document listing relevant paragraphs from Reading Borough

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Council's Statement of Licensing Policy and the Secretary of State's Section 182 Guidance.

Edward Barham and Declan Smyth, from Thames Valley Police, were present at the meeting, addressed the Sub-Committee on the review application and asked and responded to questions.

Ben Williams, Licensing Enforcement Officer, Reading Borough Council, was present at the meeting, addressed the Sub-Committee on the representation he had submitted and asked and responded to questions.

Bal Kumari Roka, Director and owner of BSK Services Limited (the company which held the premises licence for Gun Street Garden); Aurelia Singh, Designated Premises Supervisor (DPS) and General Manager at Gun Street Garden; Cristiano Novais, Assistant General Manager at Gun Street Garden; and Daniel Harris, Platinum Security (the company which had been brought in to replace the previous security provider at the premises) were present at the meeting, addressed the Sub-Committee and responded to questions. They were represented by Paddy Whur and Will Robinson from Woods Whur Solicitors. Paddy Whur addressed the Sub-Committee setting out the premises licence holder's case and asked and responded to questions.

Robert Smalley, Licensing Enforcement Officer, Reading Borough Council, presented the report at the meeting. Tabitha Shaw, Licensing Enforcement Officer, Reading Borough Council, replaced Robert Smalley when the Sub-Committee's decision was read out.

Resolved –

- (1) That it be noted that in coming its decision, the Sub-Committee:
 - (a) gave due consideration to the Licensing Act 2003, the Secretary of State's latest Guidance issued under section 182 of that Act, the Summary Review Guidance issued in respect of section 53A of the same Act and Reading Borough Council's Statement of Licensing Policy;
 - (b) had reminded itself of the statutory definition of violent disorder under the Public Order Act 1996;
 - (c) had considered the likely effect of imposing each of the options available under the Secretary of State's Guidance upon the promotion of the four Licensing Objectives;
 - (d) had read and considered the written reports and other evidence from the Applicant (Thames Valley Police), Reading Borough Council's Licensing Team and the respondent Premises Licence Holder, including their respective appendices, the lengthy video clips which had been watched in their entirety before the hearing, and the additional material that had been submitted by both Thames Valley Police and the respondent Premises Licence Holder;

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- (e) had listened carefully to the professional representations from the Applicant (Thames Valley Police), to the professional representations of Reading Borough Council's Licensing Team, and to the professional representations made on behalf of the respondent Premises Licence Holder; and
- (f) had considered each of the steps the Licensing Authority could take when determining the Review;

(2) That the premises licence in respect of Gun Street Garden be suspended for a period of five-weeks to 17 July 2025, with the interim steps that were put in place at the Sub-Committee held on 25 April 2025 being kept in place until the decision took effect after the 21 day appeal period had elapsed;

(3) That, in addition to the commitment made by the Premise Licence Holder to implement a new dispersal plan and to bring in a new door staff team under Platinum Security, the following measures, as put forward by the licence holder, be added as licence conditions:

- (a) the installation of a metal detector;
- (b) the upgrade of the CCTV system to include 16 further CCTV cameras;
- (c) Welfare and Vulnerability Engagement (WAVE) training to take place annually;
- (d) an unannounced, independent audit by a licensing consultant take place twice annually, 6 months apart;
- (e) that for any event involving the premises being booked by an external promoter with a view to the promoter selling tickets to the public for profit, the licensee shall complete a risk assessment and notify Thames Valley Police Licensing Team of the event by email at least 14 days before the event date. If the event is assessed to be high risk by the Police, the Police will have a right of refusal in relation to the event, such refusal and the reasons for it, to be communicated to the licensee within three days of receiving the notification from the licensee;
- (f) a minimum of 9 SIA registered door staff at the premises from 2100 hrs on every night when the whole club area is open to the public at full capacity;
- (g) a minimum of 6 SIA registered door staff at the premises from 2100 hrs on every other night.

(4) That, before the premises reopened, Reading Borough Council's Licensing Team inspect and approve the new modifications;

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(5) That the following reasons be noted:

- (a) The Sub-Committee had carefully considered the evidence and representations submitted by each of the parties, and had paid close attention to the answers to questions in the hearing;
- (b) The Sub-Committee did not hold the licence holder responsible for any events that took place under the previous ownership and previous licence holder;
- (c) The Sub-Committee had reminded itself that it must look prospectively, rather than only react to events that had already taken place;
- (d) The Sub-Committee found that there had been a sustained period of time when the management of the premises under the current licence holder had fallen below an acceptable standard in the lead up to the incident on 20 April 2025, that included the actions of the security provider at the time for whom the licence holder was responsible, and particularly included matters relating to managing dispersal from the premises;
- (e) The Sub-Committee found that Thames Valley Police could have made the DPS aware of concerns about problems identified at the premises at an earlier stage than when issuing the application for a summary review;
- (f) The Sub-Committee found that the incident on 20 April 2025 did constitute serious crime or serious disorder associated with Gun Street Garden;
- (g) The Sub-Committee found that modification of conditions alone would not be sufficient, the licence already contained a robust set of conditions, the issue remained the likelihood of a failure to implement those conditions or continue to implement those conditions by the management;
- (h) The Sub-Committee found that removal of elements of licensable activity would not affect the issues giving rise to the review, only the provision of alcohol, music and dancing were the source of issues;
- (i) The Sub-Committee found that the removal of the DPS would not be sufficient and that changing the DPS would not change the structure, or the willingness to engage by the management team;
- (j) The Sub-Committee found that a period of five weeks would be required to carry out and implement those new conditions and measures offered by the licence holder, as set out in (3) above, and that the suspension of the licence for that five week suspension period

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was necessary to allow all this to take place, the Sub-Committee further warned the licence holder that any further licence breaches were likely to result in a further review;

(k) The Sub-Committee found that revocation was not required in order to promote the four Licensing Objectives and that the suspension of the licence on the terms set out above was sufficient.

Those parties present were advised by the Chair of their right to lodge an appeal within 21-days.

(Exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 5 and 7)

(The meeting started at 9.23 am and closed at 2.51 pm)