

To: Councillor Woodward (Chair), Leng and Saadat.

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27 July 2026

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NOTICE OF MEETING - LICENSING APPLICATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE 4 AUGUST 2026

A meeting of the Licensing Applications Sub-Committee will be held on Tuesday, 4 August 2026 at 5.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Bridge Street, Reading RG1 2LU. The Agenda for the meeting is set out below.

<u>AFFECTED WARDS</u>	<u>Page No</u>
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1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests they may have in relation to the items for consideration.

2. MINUTES

3 - 28

To confirm the Minutes of the Licensing Applications Sub-Committee meetings held on 11 June 2026, 18 June 2026, 2 July 2026 and 8 July 2026.

3. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

At this point, the following motion will be moved by the Chair:

“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 items on the agenda, as it is likely that there would be disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1, 2, 3, and 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of that Act.”

4. HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING - APPLICATIONS AND CASES TO CONSIDER THE SUSPENSION/REVOCAION OF LICENCES **BOROUGH WIDE** **29 - 310**

A report requesting the Sub-Committee to consider:

- a report regarding the suspension or revocation of a Hackney Carriage Driver's Licence (Case at Appendix 1);
- an application for the grant of a Private Hire (School Transport) Driver's Licence (Case at Appendix 2);
- an application for the renewal of a Hackney Carriage Driver's Licence (Case at Appendix 3); and
- a report regarding the suspension or revocation of a Hackney Carriage Driver's Licence (Case at Appendix 4).

LICENSING APPLICATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES 11 JUNE 2026

Present: Councillors Woodward (Chair), Leng and Keane.

1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 26 March and 2 April 2026 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

2. APPLICATION FOR THE REVIEW OF A PREMISES LICENCE - DOLPHIN'S CARIBBEAN RESTAURANT AND BAR, 59-60 ST MARY'S BUTTS, READING

The Sub-Committee considered a report on an application by Reading Borough Council (RBC) Licensing Team to review a premises licence in respect of Dolphin's Caribbean Restaurant and Bar, 59-60 St Mary's Butts, Reading, RG1 2LG.

The report explained that the premises currently had the benefit of a premises licence which authorised the following licensable activities and hours:

Sale of Alcohol - On the Premises:

Monday to Sunday from 0600hrs to 2330hrs

Provision of late night refreshment:

Monday to Sunday from 2300hrs to 2330hrs

Provision of Live Music - Indoors:

Monday to Sunday from 0600hrs to 2330hrs

Performance of Dance - Indoors:

Monday to Sunday from 0600hrs to 2330hrs

Provision of Recorded Music - Indoors:

Monday to Sunday from 0600hrs to 2330hrs

Anything Similar to Live Music, recorded Music or Dance - Indoors:

Monday to Sunday from 0600hrs to 2330hrs

Hours the Premises is Open to the Public:

Monday to Sunday from 0600hrs to 2400hrs

The report stated that the application for a review of the premises licence had been submitted by Reading Borough Council's Licensing Team who were a named responsible authority under the Licensing Act 2003. The application had been submitted to prevent the further undermining of the following licensing objectives:

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

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The review application had been submitted in order to address the failure of the premises licence holder to promote the licensing objectives and recommended the revocation of the premises licence. The report stated that an inspection by the Home Office's Immigration Enforcement Licensing Compliance Team had identified the employment of an illegal worker by the premises licence holder. The review application also referred to the Licensing Team's other interactions with the premises as follows:

- 1 February 2026: The premises was operating on a Temporary Event Notice (TEN) until 0300hours. At 0310 hours patrons were still inside the premises with lights on and music playing. The premises was closed at 0318 hours with the security staff failing to disperse patrons before leaving themselves.
- 3 April 2026: Door supervisors were not wearing hi-vis tabards or using body worn cameras. One door supervisor was not wearing their SIA badge and left the premises when Licensing officers asked him to wear the badge. The head door supervisor did not know the name of this individual.
- 15 April 2026: an RBC Licensing Enforcement Officer undertook a premises licence inspection and 11 of the 16 conditions attached to the licence were not being met.

A copy of the application to the review premises licence was attached to the report at Appendix LIC-1 and a copy of the licence was attached at Appendix LIC-2.

During the 28-day consultation period, valid representations had been received from the following Responsible Authorities:

- Phil Thomas, Immigration Enforcement Licensing Compliance Team – attached at Appendix LIC-3
- Declan Smyth, Thames Valley Police Licensing Team – attached at Appendix LIC-4

The Sub-Committee noted that a large number of emails from members of the public supporting the premises had been received on 10 and 11 June 2026. As these were significantly outside the consultation period they could not be taken into consideration by the Sub-Committee.

The report explained that in determining the application for review the Sub-Committee had a duty as the Licensing Authority to carry out its functions with a view to promoting the four Licensing Objectives. The Licensing Authority must also have regard to the representations received, its Statement of Licensing Policy and to any relevant sections of the Statutory Guidance issued to licensing authorities. Furthermore, in determining the review application, the Sub-Committee could take such of the following steps it considered appropriate and proportionate for the promotion of the Licensing Objectives:

- Take no further action;
- To issue formal warnings to the premises supervisor and/or premises licence holder;
- Modify the conditions of the licence (including but not limited to hours of operation of licensable activities);
- Exclude a licensable activity from the scope of a licence;
- Remove the designated premises supervisor;
- Suspend the licence for a period not exceeding three months;

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- 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 set out paragraphs 1.5, 1.6, 3.2, 3.10, 4.15, 5.13 5.15, 7.13, 9.12, 9.13, 9.15, 9.16, 9.18, 9.20 and 9.21 of the Council's Statement of Licensing Policy. The report also set out paragraphs 1.2, to 1.5, 1.7, 1.8, 2.28, 9.12, 9.13, 9.42, 9.43, 11.1, 11.2, 11.10, 11.16 to 11.18 and 11.25 of the Amended Guidance issued under Section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003. The report also referred to other legislation and relevant case law for consideration.

Following the circulation of the agenda, the following Additional Information had been received and circulated to members of the Sub-Committee and to all relevant parties:

1. Additional Information submitted by the Council's Licensing Team, that included two documents relating to an inspection made by the Licensing Team on 2 February 2026.
2. A skeleton argument submitted by the premises licence holder's representative, Bill Donne
3. An email from New Directions College relating to the employee.

Robert Smalley, Licensing Enforcement Officer, Reading Borough Council attended the meeting, addressed the Sub-Committee on the review application that he had submitted and asked and responded to questions. Mike Harding, Licensing Enforcement Officer, also attended the meeting, addressed the Sub-Committee and asked and responded to questions.

Russell Angell, Immigration Enforcement Licensing Compliance Team was present at the meeting on behalf of Phil Thomas who had submitted the representation, addressed the Sub-Committee and asked and responded to questions.

Mr Randolph Bancroft, the Premises Licence Holder, Ms Nicole Pither the Designated Premises Supervisor, Aaron Filsell, Sand's Security Group, and Mr Bancroft's representative Bill Donne, Silver Fox Licensing Consultants, were present at the meeting. They addressed the Sub-Committee and asked and answered questions.

Nicola Butler, Licensing Enforcement Officer, Reading Borough Council, presented the report to the Sub-Committee.

Resolved –

- (1) That the premises licence in respect of Dolphin's Caribbean Restaurant and Bar, 59-60 St Mary's Butts, Reading, RG1 2LG to authorise the following licensable activities and hours, be suspended for a period of 14 days:

Sale of Alcohol - On the Premises:

Monday to Sunday from 0600hrs to 2330hrs

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Provision of late night refreshment:

Monday to Sunday from 2300hrs to 2330hrs

Provision of Live Music - Indoors:

Monday to Sunday from 0600hrs to 2330hrs

Performance of Dance - Indoors:

Monday to Sunday from 0600hrs to 2330hrs

Provision of Recorded Music - Indoors:

Monday to Sunday from 0600hrs to 2330hrs

Anything Similar to Live Music, recorded Music or Dance - Indoors:

Monday to Sunday from 0600hrs to 2330hrs

Hours the Premises is Open to the Public:

Monday to Sunday from 0600hrs to 2400hrs

- (2) That the Sub-Committee's reasons be noted as follows:

REASONS:

- (a) The Sub-Committee had read and considered the application for review and all accompanying additional documents and representations, the skeleton argument of Mr Bill Donne of Silver Fox Licensing Consultants, the accompanying additional documents and had listened carefully to the oral representations made by those present at the meeting;
- (b) In making its decision the Sub-Committee had regard to the provisions of the Licensing Act 2003, the Secretary of State's Guidance issued under Section 182 of that Act, and to Reading Borough Council's Statement of Licensing Policy;
- (c) The Sub-Committee noted Paragraph 1.18 of the Secretary of State's Guidance issued under Section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003 that required licensing authorities to consider the need to promote growth and deliver economic benefits;
- (d) The Sub-Committee noted that the application for review had attracted representations from Immigration Enforcement and Thames Valley Police's Licensing Team. All of the above made representations that the only proportionate option on review, to prevent further undermining of the licencing objectives, was revocation of the licence.
- (e) The Sub-Committee further noted that the Secretary of State's Guidance issued under Section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003 at paragraph 11.27 stated that certain activities should be treated particularly seriously, and this included employing someone who was disqualified from that work by

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reason of their immigration status in the UK. Paragraph 11.28 of the guidance stated that if the Licensing Authority determined that the crime prevention objective was being undermined through the premises being used to further crimes it was expected that revocation of the licence – even in the first instance – should be seriously considered.

- (f) The Sub-Committee was mindful of the relevant case law cited - namely Hope & Glory Public House v City of Westminster [2011] EWCA Civ 31 (decisions must be rational, justified, and based on the promotion of the licensing objectives). East Lindsey District Council v Abu Hanif (t/a Zara's Restaurant) (2016) (that the licensing objectives are prospective, and that the prevention of crime and disorder requires a prospective consideration of what is warranted in the public interest, having regard to the twin considerations of prevention and deterrence) and R (on application of Daniel Thwaites plc) v Wirral Magistrates' Court and Others (2008) EWHC 838 (Admin) (Responsible Authorities are experts in their fields, and that weight should be attached to their representations).
- (g) The Sub-Committee had regard to all of the powers available to it on review of a Premises Licence subject to s.52(4) of the Licensing Act 2003 namely:
- i. *the modification of the conditions of the premises licence;*
 - ii. *the exclusion of a licensable activity from the scope of the licence;*
 - iii. *the suspension of the licence for a period not exceeding 3 months;*
 - iv. *the removal of the designated premises supervisor;*
 - v. *the revocation of the licence*
- (h) The Sub-Committee had considered the need to promote and protect the four licensing objectives and considered the 'prevention of crime and disorder' objective was engaged in this case. **In the view of the Sub-Committee, the appropriate and proportionate response, based on the evidence submitted and put before it, was to exercise its powers under section 52(4)(d) of the Licensing Act 2003 to suspend the Premises Licence of Dolphin's Caribbean Restaurant & Bar, 59-60 Saint Mary's Butts, Reading RG1 2LG for a period of 14 days.**
- (i) By virtue of the evidence given the Sub-Committee took the view that whilst there had been serious management failings at the premises, the Licensee has more recently made a number of efforts to promote the licensing objectives, including the employment of a new Operations Manager, new policies and processes for the engagement of staff and the engagement of a new, reputable Security Company. The Sub-Committee felt that there were material reasons to find that they were able to take an exceptional course that did not require revocation of the licence in the first instance.

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- (j) The Sub-Committee felt that the period of suspension was appropriate and proportionate to allow time for the new processes to be embedded and to allow for the licensing objectives to be promoted.

Any party to the hearing may appeal to the Magistrates' Court in writing, within 21 days.

3. APPLICATION FOR THE REVIEW OF A PREMISES LICENCE IN RESPECT OF READING EXPRESS, 102 OXFORD ROAD, READING, RG1 7LL

The Sub-Committee considered a report on an application by Reading Borough Council (RBC) Licensing Team to review a premises licence in respect of Reading Express, 102 Oxford Road, Reading, RG1 7LL.

The report explained that the premises currently had the benefit of a premises licence which authorised the following licensable activities and hours:

Sale by Retail of Alcohol - Off the Premises:

Monday to Sunday from 0600hrs to 2300hrs

Hours the Premises is Open to the Public:

Monday to Sunday from 0600hrs to 2030hrs

The report stated that the application for a review of the premises licence had been submitted by Reading Borough Council's Licensing Team who were a named responsible authority under the Licensing Act 2003. The application had been submitted to prevent the further undermining of the following licensing objectives:

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

The review application had been submitted in order to address the failure of the premises licence holder to promote the licensing objectives and recommended the revocation of the premises licence. The report stated that a joint inspection by RBC's Licensing Enforcement Team and the Home Office's Immigration Enforcement Licensing Compliance Team had identified the employment of an illegal worker by the premises licence holder.

A copy of the application to the review premises licence, which included a copy of the premises licence was attached to the report at Appendix NB-1.

During the 28-day consultation period, valid representations had been received from the following Responsible Authority:

- Declan Smyth, Thames Valley Police Licensing Team – attached at Appendix NB-2.

The report explained that in determining the application for review the Sub-Committee had a duty as the Licensing Authority to carry out its functions with a view to promoting the four

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Licensing Objectives. The Licensing Authority must also have regard to the representations received, its Statement of Licensing Policy and to any relevant sections of the Statutory Guidance issued to licensing authorities. Furthermore, in determining the review application, the Sub-Committee could take such of the following steps it considered appropriate and proportionate for the promotion of the Licensing Objectives:

- Take no further action;
- To issue formal warnings to the premises supervisor and/or premises licence holder;
- Modify the conditions of the licence (including but not limited to hours of operation of licensable activities);
- Exclude a licensable activity from the scope of a licence;
- Remove the designated premises supervisor;
- Suspend the licence for a period not exceeding three months;
- 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 set out paragraphs 1.5, 1.6, 3.2, 3.10, 4.15, 5.13, 5.15, 7.13, 9.12, 9.13, 9.15, 9.16, 9.18, 9.20 and 9.21 of the Council's Statement of Licensing Policy. The report also set out paragraphs 1.2 to 1.5, 1.7, 1.8, 2.28, 9.12, 9.13, 9.42, 9.43, 11.1, 11.2, 11.10, 11.16 to 11.18 and 11.25 of the Amended Guidance issued under Section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003. The report also referred to other legislation and relevant case law for consideration.

Following the circulation of the agenda, the Premises Licence Holder had submitted additional information relating to staff training with regards to the sale of alcohol.

Robert Smalley, Licensing Enforcement Officer, Reading Borough Council attended the meeting on behalf of Anthony Chawama who had submitted the application for review but who was unable to attend the meeting. He addressed the Sub-Committee on the review application and asked and responded to questions.

Mr Ravindar Singh Arora, the Designated Premises Supervisor, and Ms Maninder Kaur and Mr Surendra Panchal of Personal Licence Courses UK Limited, representing Mr Arora were present at the meeting. They addressed the Sub-Committee and asked and answered questions.

Nicola Butler, Licensing Enforcement Officer, Reading Borough Council, presented the report to the Sub-Committee.

Resolved –

- (1) That the premises licence in respect of Reading Express, 102 Oxford Road, Reading, RG1 7LL to authorise the following licensable activities and hours, be revoked:

Sale by Retail of Alcohol - Off the Premises:

Monday to Sunday from 0600hrs to 2300hrs

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Hours the Premises is Open to the Public:

Monday to Sunday from 0600hrs to 2030hrs

- (2) That the Sub-Committee's reasons be noted as follows:

REASONS:

- (a) The Sub-Committee had read and considered the application for review, all accompanying additional documents and representations and had listened carefully to the oral representations made by those present at the meeting;
- (b) In making its decision the Sub-Committee had regard to the provisions of the Licensing Act 2003, the Secretary of State's Guidance issued under Section 182 of that Act, and to Reading Borough Council's Statement of Licensing Policy;
- (c) The Sub-Committee noted Paragraph 1.18 of the Secretary of State's Guidance issued under Section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003 that required licensing authorities to consider the need to promote growth and deliver economic benefits;
- (d) The Sub-Committee noted that the application for review had attracted one representation from Thames Valley Police's Licensing Team. The Police made representations that the only proportionate option on review, to prevent further undermining of the licensing objectives, was revocation of the licence.
- (e) The Sub-Committee further noted that the Secretary of State's Guidance issued under Section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003 at paragraph 11.27 stated that certain activities should be treated particularly seriously, and this included employing someone who was disqualified from that work by reason of their immigration status in the UK. Paragraph 11.28 of the guidance stated that if the Licensing Authority determined that the crime prevention objective was being undermined through the premises being used to further crimes it was expected that revocation of the licence – even in the first instance – should be seriously considered.
- (f) The Sub-Committee was mindful of the relevant case law cited - namely Hope & Glory Public House v City of Westminster [2011] EWCA Civ 31 (decisions must be rational, justified, and based on the promotion of the licensing objectives). East Lindsey District Council v Abu Hanif (t/a Zara's Restaurant) (2016) (that the licensing objectives are prospective, and that the prevention of crime and disorder requires a prospective consideration of what is warranted in the public interest, having regard to the twin considerations of prevention and deterrence) and R (on application of Daniel Thwaites plc) v Wirral Magistrates' Court and Others (2008) EWHC

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838 (Admin) (Responsible Authorities are experts in their fields, and that weight should be attached to their representations).

(g) The Sub-Committee had regard to all of the powers available to it on review of a Premises Licence subject to s.52(4) of the Licensing Act 2003 namely:

- i. *the modification of the conditions of the premises licence;*
- ii. *the exclusion of a licensable activity from the scope of the licence;*
- iii. *the suspension of the licence for a period not exceeding 3 months;*
- iv. *the removal of the designated premises supervisor;*
- v. *the revocation of the licence*

(h) The Sub-Committee had considered the need to promote and protect the four licensing objectives and considered the 'prevention of crime and disorder' objective was engaged in this case. **In the view of the Sub-Committee, the appropriate and proportionate response, based on the evidence submitted and put before it, was to exercise its powers under section 52(4)(e) of the Licensing Act 2003 to revoke the Premises Licence of Maahi Food & Wine Ltd (t/a Reading Express).**

(i) By virtue of the written and oral evidence heard, the Sub-Committee took the view that there were serious concerns that the Licensee was not managing the premises in such a way as to promote the licensing objectives. The Sub-Committee had a number of concerns about the Licensee's decision making and understanding of the need to prioritise the objectives following the confirmation that he actively chose to open the shop to trade on the day in question.

(j) The Sub-Committee determined that the crime prevention objective was being undermined through the premises being used to further crimes and therefore felt that revocation of the licence was the appropriate and proportionate response.

Any party to the hearing may appeal to the Magistrates' Court in writing, within 21 days.

(The meeting started at 9.30 am and closed at 1.20 pm)

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LICENSING APPLICATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
18 JUNE 2026

Present: Councillors Woodward (Chair), Dennis and Magon.

4. APPLICATION FOR THE GRANT OF A PREMISES LICENCE - READING BISCUIT FACTORY, 1A QUEENS WALK, READING, RG1 7QF

The Sub-Committee considered a report on an application by RIENT Ltd for the grant of a premises licence in respect of Reading Biscuit Factory, 1a Queen's Walk, Reading, RG1 7QF. The report stated that the premises described itself as an independent cinema, bar, and arts venue located within the town centre. Its stated primary function was as a cinema, with the sale of alcohol being ancillary to this principal use.

The report stated that the premises had previously held a Premises Licence (LP2003295), granted in June 2021, and set out the licensable activities and permitted hours under that licence. The report explained that the licence was originally held by Really Local Group Limited and was subsequently transferred to RLG SPV BETA Ltd following the liquidation of Really Local Group Limited. On 6 February 2026, RLG SPV BETA Ltd entered liquidation. Under the Licensing Act 2003, where a premises licence holder enters liquidation, administration, or bankruptcy, the licence lapses immediately. To prevent permanent loss, the licence must be transferred within a statutory period of 28 days. The report further stated that on 23 April 2026, the Council's Business Support Team had informed the Licensing Team that Reading Biscuit Factory was being operated by RIENT LTD rather than RLG SPV BETA Ltd. However, the Sub-Committee was advised that the licence had not been transferred to RIENT LTD within the required 28-day period and had therefore lapsed.

On 23 April 2026, a member of the Licensing Authority contacted Reading Biscuit Factory by email advising that, due to the lapse of the licence, all licensable activity must cease immediately. This correspondence was accompanied by an explanatory letter, which likewise stated that all licensable activity must cease, and which was also hand-delivered to the premises and provided directly to a Duty Manager on the same date.

On 24 April 2026, officers from the Council's Licensing Team attended the premises to verify whether all licensable activity had stopped. An officer entered the premises and purchased a pint of beer. Two Licensing Officers then identified themselves, spoke with staff, and reiterated to them that the premises licence had lapsed and that licensable activity must cease.

On 25 April 2026, officers from the Council's Licensing Team attended the premises again to hand-deliver a warning letter. Officers entered the premises under section 179 of the Licensing Act 2003 to ascertain whether any unauthorised licensable activities were taking place. The officers observed a sign displayed at the bar stating that there was "no beer", and the Duty Manager confirmed that no alcohol had been served. However, during the visit, officers noted that films were being shown across three cinema screens. Officers advised the Duty Manager that the exhibition of films without valid authorisation constituted an unauthorised licensable activity. Officers further advised the Duty Manager that this was the third occasion on which officers had attended the premises and observed licensable activity taking place. Guidance was also provided in relation to the use of Temporary Event Notices (TENS).

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The report stated that, on 27 April 2026, a new Premises Licence application had been submitted by RIENT Limited. A copy of the application form was included at Appendix RT001. The application sought the grant of a new Premises Licence for the following licensable activities and hours:

Sale of Alcohol

Monday to Saturday	from 1030hrs to 2300hrs
Sunday	from 1100hrs to 2300hrs

Late night refreshment:

Thursday	from 2300hrs to 0000hrs
Friday to Saturday	from 2300hrs to 0100hrs

Recorded Music:

Monday to Thursday	from 0800hrs to 0000hrs
Friday to Saturday	from 0800hrs to 0100hrs
Sunday	from 0900hrs to 2300hrs

Live Music

Monday to Thursday	from 1600hrs to 2300hrs
Friday to Saturday	from 1600hrs to 0000hrs
Sunday	from 1500hrs to 2300hrs

Provision of Films

Monday to Thursday	from 1030hrs to 2300hrs
Friday to Saturday	from 1030hrs to 0100hrs
Sunday	from 1100hrs to 2300hrs

Hours the Premises is Open to the Public:

Monday to Wednesday	from 0800hrs to 0000hrs
Thursday	from 0800hrs to 0100hrs
Friday to Saturday	from 0800hrs to 0200hrs
Sunday	from 0900hrs to 2300hrs

The report explained that the Applicant had subsequently indicated a wish to amend the original application. Details of the proposed amendments, as set out by the Applicant's representative, were included at Appendix RT002. The proposed changes to the application were as follows:

- A change of the stated Designated Premises Supervisor (DPS) from Guyan Mathavan DE LIVERA to Matthew FERGUSON;
- The inclusion of all conditions attached to the previous 'lapsed' licence (LP2003295) within the new application;
- No longer wishing to apply for the provision of Live Music;
- No longer wishing to apply for the provision of Recorded Music.

The report stated that, during the mediation period, both the Licensing Authority (RBC) and Thames Valley Police were provided with details of the amended application. However,

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neither Responsible Authority had accepted the proposed amendments. Copies of the relevant correspondence were included at Appendix RT003.

The report stated that, during the 28-day consultation period for the application, six representations had been received. Of these, four were deemed valid and two invalid.

The valid representations were as follows:

- Mike Harding, RBC Licensing Enforcement (copy at Appendix RT004, together with supporting appendices);
- Rebecca Moon, RBC Environmental Protection (copy at Appendix RT005). The report explained that this representation was subsequently withdrawn (details Appendix RT005b);
- Declan Smyth, Thames Valley Police Licensing Team (copy at Appendix RT006);
- Karen Rowland (copy at Appendix RT007).

The supporting appendices to Appendix RT004 included two body-worn camera video recordings, which provided footage of the incidents detailed in the report that had occurred on 24 and 25 April 2026. The recordings were circulated solely to the Sub-Committee and the parties to the hearing, as they contained footage of members of the public and were therefore treated as exempt information in accordance with Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. In addition, the Sub-Committee and the parties to the hearing were provided with an unredacted version of Appendix RT005, which contained restricted information submitted by Thames Valley Police, and which was likewise treated as exempt information under Schedule 12A of the 1972 Act.

The two representations deemed invalid were as follows:

- Councillor Jacqueline Dominguez (copy at Appendix RT008);
- Tony Page (copy at Appendix RT009).

At the meeting, Licensing Officers advised the Sub-Committee that, following advice from the Council's Legal Department, the two representations originally deemed invalid (Appendices RT008 and RT009) should be considered by the Sub-Committee as valid representations.

The representation submitted by Mike Harding, RBC Licensing Enforcement, (copy at Appendix RT004) objected to the application on the grounds that granting the application would undermine the licensing objectives and in particular that of the prevention of crime and disorder. The representation explained that, following the lapse of the previous licence, the Applicant had continued to carry out licensable activities despite repeated written and verbal warnings. The Licensing Authority considered these breaches to be serious and indicative of failures in management oversight and regulatory compliance rather than being an isolated administrative error. The representation submitted that these concerns could not be adequately addressed by conditions, as the issue related to a fundamental failure to comply with the licensing regime. The representation concluded that the Licensing Authority had insufficient confidence in the applicant's ability to operate compliantly in future and therefore recommended refusal.

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Appendix RT006 submitted by Declan Smyth (copy at Appendix RT006) objected to the application on all four licensing objectives. The representation concluded that the application, as presented, did not demonstrate that the licensing objectives would be adequately promoted and requested that the Sub-Committee either refused the application or granted it only with reduced hours and robust, enforceable conditions agreed with the Licensing Authority and Thames Valley Police.

The representations included at Appendices RT007, RT008 and RT009 were submitted in support of the application, emphasised the community value of the premises, its low-risk nature, and expressed the view that the grant of a licence would not undermine the licensing objectives.

Following the publication of the agenda papers, a skeleton argument was submitted by the Applicant's representative, Bill Donne of Silver Fox Licensing Consultants Ltd. A copy was circulated to members of the Sub-Committee and to relevant parties to the application. In that submission, the Applicant accepted that Reading Biscuit Factory had operated without a valid premises licence after the previous licence had lapsed following insolvency and acknowledged that licensable activities should have ceased immediately when instructed by Licensing Officers. However, it argued that the breaches had arisen from administrative failures during the insolvency process, management disruption, staff misunderstandings regarding the scope of the licence lapse and the temporary absence of the General Manager, rather than any deliberate disregard of the licensing regime. The Applicant stated that substantial remedial action had been taken, including the proposed appointment of local General Manager Matthew Ferguson as the Designated Premises Supervisor (DPS), additional personal licence qualifications for managers, enhanced licensing training for staff and the adoption of the conditions attached to the previous premises licence. The submission invited the Sub-Committee to take a prospective rather than punitive approach, focusing on whether the licensing objectives would be promoted in the future, and highlighted the venue's cultural and community value, the potential impact on approximately 20 jobs and the wider economic benefits associated with the business. Accordingly, the Applicant requested that the premises licence be granted subject to the revised hours, activities and conditions set out in Appendix RT002.

The report set out the powers of the Licensing Authority when determining an application for the grant of a Premises Licence, which were:

- To grant the application as applied for;
- To grant the application with modifications;
- To refuse the application.

The report explained that, when considering the representations received, the Licensing Authority had a duty to carry out its functions with a view to promoting the four licensing objectives, which were as follows:

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

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The report stated that any conditions placed on a Premises Licence should be appropriate and proportionate with a view to promoting the licensing objectives and that the Licensing Authority could amend, alter or refuse an application if it were deemed appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives.

The report also stated that, when determining an application, the Licensing Authority must have regard to the representations received, the Licensing Authority's own statement of Licensing Policy and to any relevant section of the statutory guidance issued to licensing authorities by the Secretary of State.

The report set out paragraphs 1.6, 3.1, 5.6, 5.7, 6.1, 6.2, 6.5, 6.19-6.23, 10.1 and 10.3 of the Council's Statement of Licensing Policy. The report also set out paragraphs 1.18, 1.2, to 1.5, 8.41 to 8.49, 9.12, 9.38 to 9.40, 9.42 and 9.43 of the Amended Guidance issued under Section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003. The report also highlighted relevant sections of The Licensing Act 2003 (namely Section 18(6)) and set out relevant case law for consideration.

Mike Harding, RBC Licensing Enforcement Team, attended the meeting, addressed the Sub-Committee on the representation he had submitted on behalf of the Licensing Authority, and asked and responded to questions.

Declan Smyth, Thames Valley Police Licensing Team, attended the meeting, addressed the Sub-Committee on his representation, and asked and responded to questions.

Mr Matthew Ferguson, General Manager at Reading Biscuit Factory, and Bill Donne, Silver Fox Licensing Consultants, were present at the meeting on behalf of the Applicant. Both addressed the Sub-Committee and asked and responded to questions.

Tony Page was present at the meeting, addressed the Sub-Committee and asked and responded to questions regarding his representation. Tony Page also made representations on behalf of Karen Rowland who observed proceedings remotely via Microsoft Teams.

Riley Timney, Licensing & Enforcement Officer, Reading Borough Council, presented the report to the Sub-Committee. Robert Smalley, Licensing & Enforcement Officer also attended the hearing and responded to questions.

During the hearing, the Applicant's representative proposed that an additional condition be attached to any licence granted, requiring that a Personal Licence Holder be present at the premises and on duty at all times when licensable activities were taking place. This was offered to provide reassurance to the Sub-Committee as to the management and supervision of licensable activities at the premises, and to ensure clear personal accountability in light of previous licensing issues.

Resolved -

DECISION

- (1) That the application for a Premises Licence in respect of Reading Biscuit Factory, 1a Queens Walk, Reading RG1 7QF be granted subject to the following:

**LICENSING APPLICATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
18 JUNE 2026**

- (a) The Licensable Activities and Hours of the licence being as follows:

Sale of Alcohol

Monday to Saturday	from 1030hrs to 2300hrs
Sunday	from 1100hrs to 2300hrs

Late night refreshment:

Thursday	from 2300hrs to 0000hrs
Friday to Saturday	from 2300hrs to 0100hrs

Provision of Films

Monday to Thursday	from 1030hrs to 2300hrs
Friday to Saturday	from 1030hrs to 0100hrs
Sunday	from 1100hrs to 2300hrs

Hours the Premises is Open to the Public:

Monday to Wednesday	from 0800hrs to 0000hrs
Thursday	from 0800hrs to 0100hrs
Friday to Saturday	from 0800hrs to 0200hrs
Sunday	from 0900hrs to 2300hrs

- (b) The inclusion within the licence of the conditions attached to the previous (now lapsed) licence, as proposed by the Applicant and set out in Appendix RT002;
- (c) It being noted that the application no longer included the provisions for live and recorded music, as confirmed by the Applicant and set out in Appendix RT002;
- (d) The addition to the licence of the following condition, as proposed by the Applicant during the hearing:
- “That there be a personal licence holder on duty all the time the business is open to the public for licensable activities.”*
- (e) The request to specify Mr Mathavan DE LIVERA as the Designated Premises Supervisor being refused, and it being noted that no determination had been made by Sub-Committee in respect of the subsequently proposed Designated Premises Supervisor Mr Matthew FERGUSON.

REASONS

- (2) That the Sub-Committee reasons be noted as follows:
- (a) In coming to its decision, the Sub-Committee considered the Licensing Act 2003, the Secretary of State’s Guidance issued under section 182

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18 JUNE 2026

of that Act, the Environmental Protection Act 1990, the Equality Act 2010 and Reading Borough Council's Statement of Licensing Policy;

- (b) The Sub-Committee made its decision based upon an appreciation of the likely effect of granting the licence on the promotion of the four Licensing Objectives: the prevention of crime and disorder, public safety, the prevention of public nuisance, and the protection of children from harm;
- (c) The Sub-Committee carefully considered the representations received from the Applicant, the professional representations of the Reading Borough Council Licensing team and Thames Valley Police and the representations of the three interested parties;
- (d) The Sub-Committee noted the seriousness of the Applicant's conduct in having carried on licensable activities without the requisite authorisation and seriously considered refusing the application on that basis. However, the Sub-Committee took into account the following factors:
 - (i) That there had been no attempts by the Applicant to undermine or minimise the seriousness of the offending;
 - (ii) That there had been a change in management and staffing;
 - (iii) That Mr Mathavan De Livera was no longer involved in the day-to-day running of the business;
 - (iv) That training had been undertaken and steps taken to ensure that all Duty Managers would complete the APLH (Award for Personal Licence Holders) course and hold a personal licence;
 - (v) That there had been no regulatory issues or breaches prior to the licence lapsing;
 - (vi) That only five incidents of crime and disorder had been reported to the police between 1 January 2021 and 11 May 2026.
- (e) In coming to its decision, the Sub-Committee commended the Council's Licensing Enforcement Officers for their hard work and diligence in investigating the incidents that had occurred in April 2026;
- (f) In coming to its decision, the Sub-Committee noted that the licence could be brought back for review at any time by responsible authorities and anticipated that those authorities would closely monitor the Premises moving forward.

(All parties to the decision have the right to appeal to the Magistrates' Court against the decision of the Licensing Applications Sub-Committee. Any such appeal must be made within 21 days beginning with the day on which the party is notified of this decision in writing.)

(The meeting started at 9.30 am and closed at 1.01 pm)

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**LICENSING APPLICATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
2 JULY 2026**

Present: Councillors Woodward (Chair), Gurung and Keane.

5. EXCLUSION OF 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 and 5 specified in Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act.

6. APPLICATIONS FOR THE GRANT AND RENEWAL OF PRIVATE HIRE AND SCHOOL TRANSPORT VEHICLE DRIVER'S LICENCES AND REPORTS TO CONSIDER THE SUSPENSION/REVOCATION OF HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE DRIVER'S LICENCES.

The Sub-Committee considered a report that set out the cases relating to the following:

- An application for the grant of a Private Hire (School Transport) Driver's Licence. Applicant: AA. (Case at Appendix 1);
- A report to consider the suspension/revocation of a Private Hire Vehicle Driver's Licence. Driver: RA. (Case at Appendix 2);
- A report to consider an application for the renewal of a Private Hire Vehicle Driver's Licence. Driver: RA. (Case at Appendix 3);
- A report to consider the suspension/revocation of a Private Hire Vehicle Driver's Licence. Driver: MRA. (Case at Appendix 4);
- A report to consider the suspension/revocation of a Hackney Carriage Vehicle Driver's Licence. Driver: KB. (Case at Appendix 5).

Detailed reports setting out each case were attached at Appendices 1 to 5. Additional information relating to the case at Appendix 4 had been circulated to members of the Sub-Committee on 30 June and 1 July 2026, following publication of the agenda papers.

AA did not attend the meeting. No explanation for their absence was received by Licensing Officers.

RA attended the hearing, addressed the Sub-Committee and responded to questions. RA was accompanied by their spouse. The Sub-Committee considered the matters set out at Appendices 2 and 3 concurrently, as both cases concerned the same underlying facts and circumstances.

MRA attended the hearing, addressed the Sub-Committee and responded to questions.

KB did not attend the meeting. No explanation for their absence was received by Licensing Officers.

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Nicola Butler, Senior Licensing Enforcement Officer, presented the reports to the Sub-Committee and asked and responded to questions. Anthony Chawama, Licensing Enforcement Officer, also attended the hearing, addressed the Sub-Committee and asked and responded to questions. Riley Timney, Licensing Enforcement Officer, also attended the hearing.

In reaching its decisions the Sub-Committee endeavoured throughout to strike a fair balance between the interests of the applicant and licence holders and the concerns of the Licensing Officers, but its overriding consideration was to the safeguarding of the public.

The Sub-Committee also gave due consideration to the written material contained in the paperwork, the oral evidence provided at the meeting, and to relevant legislation, guidance and the policies of Reading Borough Council (RBC), this included but was not limited to:

- The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions Act) Act 1976;
- The Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Safeguarding and Road Safety) Act 2022;
- The Equality Act 2010;
- The relevant Secretary of State's Guidance;
- RBC's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy (February 2026), including the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Convictions Policy;
- The relevant RBC driver, vehicle and operator conditions and penalty points schemes;
- All of the documents provided for the meeting, including the Additional Informational circulated to the Sub-Committee by email in relation to the case at Appendix 4; and
- The Fit and Proper Person Test.

Resolved –

- (1) That consideration of the application for a Private Hire (School Transport) Driver's Licence in respect of AA be deferred to a future meeting of the Licensing Applications Sub-Committee to provide AA with a further opportunity to attend the hearing and make representations in support of their application;
- (2) That, in the interests of fairness and natural justice, consideration of the application for the renewal of the Private Hire Vehicle Driver's Licence held by RA, together with the report concerning the possible suspension or revocation of the current licence, be deferred to a future meeting of the Licensing Applications Sub-Committee to enable RA to obtain and submit further relevant evidence. The Sub-Committee considered that such evidence may assist it in reaching a fully informed determination of the matters before it, including whether RA is a fit and proper person to hold a Private Hire Vehicle Driver's Licence;
- (3) That the Private Hire Vehicle Driver's Licence in respect of MRA be suspended for a period of 7 days pursuant to section 61 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, with the suspension to take effect 21 days following written notification of the decision;

**LICENSING APPLICATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
2 JULY 2026**

REASONS

- (a) In reaching its decision the Sub-Committee took into consideration the relevant policy documents outlined above, and to the written and oral evidence presented at the hearing.
- (b) The Sub-Committee considered that a 7-day suspension was appropriate to allow MRA time to reflect upon and refresh his understanding of the conditions attached to his licence and his obligations as a Private Hire Vehicle Driver, following his failure to fully and accurately disclose relevant information during his licence applications and his failure to notify the Licensing Authority of convictions, as required by his licence conditions.
- (c) The Sub-Committee carefully considered revocation, noting the seriousness of the offences and the Council's policy relating to violent offending. However, the Sub-Committee considered that, on this occasion, it was appropriate to depart from the policy for the following reasons:
 - (i) The email provided by his Probation Officer dated 1 May 2024.
 - (ii) His attitude and level of insight demonstrated during the hearing.
 - (iii) His expression of remorse.
 - (iv) His otherwise satisfactory licensing history and antecedent record.
- (d) The Sub-Committee considered that, given the circumstances of the case, a 7-day suspension was the proportionate response. It further considered that, following the period of suspension and reflection upon his obligations under his licence conditions, MRA would be a fit and proper person to hold a Private Hire Vehicle Driver's Licence.
- (4) That consideration of the report concerning the possible suspension or revocation of the Hackney Carriage Vehicle Driver's Licence held by KB be deferred to a future meeting of the Licensing Applications Sub-Committee to enable KB a further opportunity to attend the hearing and make representations in relation to the matter under consideration.

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

(The meeting started at 5 pm and closed at 7.48 pm)

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**LICENSING APPLICATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
8 JULY 2026**

Present: Councillors Woodward (Chair), Ayub and Clarke.

7. APPLICATION FOR THE GRANT OF A PREMISES LICENCE - SIP N VAPE, 53 DONKIN HILL, CAVERSHAM, READING, RG4 5DG

The Sub-Committee considered a report on an application for the grant of a premises licence in respect of Sip n Vape, 53 Donkin Hill, Caversham, Reading, RG4 5DG. A copy of the application, submitted by Mr Paramjeet Shdana and dated 18 May 2026, was attached to the report at Appendix NB-1. The application stated that the premises would operate as a convenience store and off-licence and sought a premises licence authorising the following licensable activities and operating hours:

Sale by Retail of Alcohol (Off the Premises):

Monday to Sunday from 0700hrs until 2300hrs

Hours the Premises is Open to the Public:

Monday to Sunday from 0700hrs until 2300hrs

The report stated that there was currently no licence in force at the premises and that the premises had previously been occupied by a kitchen showroom and was located adjacent to a hair salon and a tile showroom.

A schedule of conditions agreed by the Applicant, the Council's Licensing Team and Thames Valley Police was attached to the report at Appendix NB-2.

The report stated that the 28-day statutory consultation period for the application had closed on 15 June 2026. During that period, two valid representations had been received from two local residents. Copies of the representations and subsequent correspondence with the local residents were attached to the report at Appendices NB-3, NB-4, NB-5 and NB-6.

The report highlighted that, when considering any application, the Licensing Authority should be aware that Temporary Event Notices (TENs) might be used to authorise licensable activities and might enable a premises to extend the hours or scope of its operation.

The report set out the powers of the Licensing Authority when determining an application for the grant of a premises licence and explained that the Sub-Committee could:

- Grant the application as applied for;
- Grant the application subject to modifications;
- Refuse the application.

The report stated that, when considering the representations received, the Licensing Authority had a duty to carry out its functions with a view to promoting the four licensing objectives:

LICENSING APPLICATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES 8 JULY 2026

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

The report also stated that any conditions placed on a premises licence should be appropriate and proportionate with a view to promoting the licensing objectives and that the Licensing Authority could amend, alter or refuse an application where it considered it appropriate to do so. 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 sections of the statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State under section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003.

The report set out paragraphs from the Council's Statement of Licensing Policy (specifically paragraphs: 1.6, 3.1, 3.2, 5.6, 5.7, 6.1, 6.2, 6.5, 6.11, 6.12, 6.13, 7.2, 7.6, 7.7, 7.12, 8.6, 10.1, and 10.3) and from the Secretary of State's Guidance issued under Section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003 (specifically paragraphs: 1.2 to 1.5, 8.41 to 8.49, 9.12, 9.38 to 9.40, 9.42 and 9.43). The report also highlighted Section 18(6) of the Licensing Act 2003, which required that any relevant representations be considered in the context of the likely effect of the grant of the premises licence would have on the promotion of the licensing objectives. Relevant case law examples were also provided for consideration by the Sub-Committee.

Nicola Butler, Senior Licensing Enforcement Officer, Reading Borough Council, attended the hearing, presented the report and addressed the Sub-Committee.

Riley Timney, Licensing Enforcement Officer, Reading Borough Council, attended the hearing on behalf of the Licensing Authority as a Responsible Authority and addressed the Sub-Committee.

Paramjeet Shdana (the Applicant) attended the hearing accompanied by his son, Harshpreet Shdana, and his representative, Panchal Surendra. The Applicant's representative addressed the Sub-Committee on behalf of the Applicant and responded to questions.

The local residents who had submitted valid representations did not attend the hearing and, therefore, the Sub-Committee considered their written representations.

After the Sub-Committee had reached its decision in private, but prior to the Chair announcing that decision, the Sub-Committee was informed of a conversation that had taken place between the Applicant and a member of the public during the period of deliberation. The Sub-Committee was informed that the Applicant had indicated a willingness to change the name of the premises from "Sip n Vape" in order to address concerns that the name may give the impression that the premises would operate as a vaping or café establishment, rather than as a convenience store and off-licence. The Sub-Committee noted this commitment and took it into account when finalising its reasons for the decision.

Resolved –

**LICENSING APPLICATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
8 JULY 2026**

- (1) That, having considered the application for the grant of a premises licence in respect of SIP N VAPE, 53 Donkin Hill, Caversham, Reading, RG4 5DG, and having taken into account the Licensing Act 2003, the Secretary of State's Guidance issued under section 182 of that Act, the Council's Statement of Licensing Policy, and having considered the likely effect of each of the options available to the Sub-Committee under the Secretary of State's Guidance upon the promotion of the four Licensing Objectives, and having read and considered the written report prepared by the Council's Licensing Team, the oral submissions made by the Applicant and by members of the Council's Licensing Team at the meeting, the conditions agreed between Reading Borough Council Licensing, Thames Valley Police and the Applicant, and the written representations received from local residents, the Sub-Committee concluded that it was appropriate and proportionate to:

DECISION

GRANT the application to authorise the following licensable activities and hours:

Sale by Retail of Alcohol (Off the Premises):

Monday to Sunday from 0700hrs until 2300hrs

Hours the Premises is Open to the Public:

Monday to Sunday from 0700hrs until 2300hrs

subject to the conditions set out in Appendix NB-2;

- (2) That the Sub-Committee's reasons be noted as follows:

REASONS

- (a) During the consultation period conditions had been agreed between the Police and the Council's Licensing Team, as set out in Appendix NB-2.
- (b) There were no objections from the Police.
- (c) The conditions were wide ranging and comprehensive.
- (d) The hours proposed did not fail to promote the licensing objectives.
- (e) There would be no vertical drinking or vaping on the premises.
- (f) There had been only two objections from local residents.
- (g) The Sub-Committee had carefully considered the concerns raised by local residents but considered that they were likely to be met by the conditions and any enforcement actions by the relevant Council Officers and/or the Police.

LICENSING APPLICATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
8 JULY 2026

- (h) The proposal by the Applicant that the premises name would not be SIP N VAPE but would be a name more reflective of a convenience store.

(At the meeting the Chair advised the applicant and other parties present that they would be informed of their right of appeal when they were sent a written copy of the Sub-Committee's full decision)

(The meeting started at 9.34 and closed at 10.17 am)

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