

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 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

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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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