

30 March 2023		ITEM: 4
Licensing Sub-Committee		
Application for a Review of a Premises Licence		
Wards and communities affected: Stanford East and Corringham	Key Decision: Non-key	
Report of: Elizabeth Cox, Licensing Officer		
Accountable Assistant Director: Leigh Nicholson, Assistant Director of Planning and Growth		
Accountable Director: Mark Bradbury, Director of Place		
This report is public		

Executive Summary

An application has been received from Thurrock Trading Standards for a review of the premises licence in respect of **Eagle News, 6 Grover Walk, Corringham, SS17 7LY** following a failed test purchase. During the consultation period, a representation was also received from Essex Police.

1. Recommendations:

1.1 The Sub-Committee considers the application for review and any relevant representations and consider what steps are appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives in line with the options open to the committee under the Licensing Act 2003.

2. Introduction and Background:

2.1 Applications for reviews of premises licences can be brought by responsible authorities or any other persons under section 51 Licensing Act 2003 one or more of the four licensing objectives.

2.2 The four licensing objectives are:

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

3. The Application:

- 3.1 On the 14 February 2023, an application for a review was received from Charlotte Edwards, Trading Standards Manager, on behalf of Thurrock Trading Standards in relation to Eagle News, 6 Grover Walk, Corringham, SS17 7LY. The premises licence holder and Designated Premises Supervisor (DPS) is Hirenbhai Mafatbhai Patel.
- 3.2 The application relates to a failed test purchase operation at the premises whereby a nicotine product (disposable vape) was sold to an underage volunteer. A full copy of the application and supporting materials is attached as **Appendix 1**.
- 3.3 A copy of the existing premises licence and a map of the local area is attached as **Appendix 2**.
- 3.4 During the consultation period, a representation was also received from Simon Barnes, Licensing Officer on behalf of Essex Police. A copy of the representation is attached as **Appendix 3**.
- 3.5 Any representation must relate to a particular premises and must be relevant to the promotion of one or more of the four licensing objectives.
- 3.6 No other representations were received during the consultation period

4. Reasons for Recommendation:

- 4.1 The following options are available to the Licensing Sub-Committee:
- Do nothing with the licence;
 - Modify the conditions of the premises licence. This can include adding new conditions or alterations to existing conditions e.g. reducing the hours of operation or removing a licensable activity from the licence;
 - The removal of the designated premises supervisor from the licence;
 - To suspend the licence for a period not exceeding three months;
 - To revoke the licence
- 4.2 As part of the review application, Trading Standards have included the following conditions which may be appropriate to amend wording of current conditions and add additional ones:
1. A refusals record shall be maintained at the premises that details all refusals to sell age restricted products. Each entry shall, as a minimum, record the date and time of the refusal and the name of the staff member refusing the sale. All entries must be made as soon as possible and in any event within four hours of the refusal and the record must be made immediately available to police, trading standards or licensing authority staff upon reasonable request. All staff should be trained how to use it and the DPS or his appointed

- deputy will inspect and sign this at least once a week. The refusals record shall be either electronic or maintained in a bound document and retained for at least 12 months from the date of the last entry.
2. A Challenge 25 policy will be adopted at the premises and all staff will be trained in its operation. Any person who appears to be under the age of 25 years of age will be asked for ID and the sale will be refused if they are unable to provide valid identification. Signage will be prominently displayed within the premises to advertise the fact a Challenge 25 policy is in operation. The premises shall clearly display signs at each point of sale. At the point of sale, such signs shall be a minimum of 200mm x 148mm.
 3. The only acceptable forms of identification will be a photographic driving licence, passport or a "PASS" approved identification card.
 4. Written training records will be kept for all staff for the duration of their employment and for at least six months after the individual may leave employment. This should include signed and dated forms from employees that state they have received and understood the training.
 5. All staff engaged in the sale or supply of age restricted products on the premises shall have received training in relation to the protection of children from harm (including underage sales), how to recognise drunkenness and the duty not to serve drunk persons. Refresher training shall be carried out at least every six months. Training records shall be kept on the premises (or otherwise accessible on the premises) for a minimum of 12 months and made immediately available to police, trading standards or licensing authority staff upon reasonable request.
 6. No sale of alcohol or other age restricted products will be made by any person who has not received training on age restricted products.
 7. The premises shall display prominent signage indication at any point of sale, at the entrance to the premises and in all areas where alcohol is located that it is an offence: for a person under the age of 18 to buy or attempt to buy alcohol; or buy, or attempt to buy alcohol for a person under the age of 18.

4.3 Essex Police have also requested the following amendments to the licence conditions as part of their representation:

Removal of Condition 2 and replace with:

The premises shall have installed and maintain a closed circuit television surveillance (CCTV) system which at all times complies with the below requirements:

- ♣ CCTV will be provided in the form of a recordable system, capable of providing pictures of evidential quality particularly facial recognition;
- ♣ CCTV cameras shall cover all entrances and the areas where alcohol sales take place;
- ♣ Equipment must be maintained in good working order, be correctly time and date stamped, recordings must be kept in good working order and kept for a minimum period of 31 days;
- ♣ Upon the reasonable request of the police or licensing authority staff, within 48 hours viewable copies of recordings will be provided.

Addition of the following condition:

o Signs must be displayed at all entrances advising customers that CCTV is operating at the premises and shall be a minimum size of 200 x 148 mm and clearly legible at all times when the premises conducts licensable activities.

- 4.4 The decision made by the committee will not take effect until the end of the period given for appealing against the decision or, if the decision is appealed against, until the appeal is disposed of.
- 4.5 In determining this application for a review of the premises licence, the Sub-Committee should have regard to the Council's Statement of Licensing Policy and to the guidance issued by the Secretary of State under s182 of the Licensing Act 2003.
- 4.6 The Sub-Committee are advised that the hearing is a statutory exercise of power delegated by local residents to consider what the public interest requires. The licensing authority, via the Sub-Committee, has a duty, in accordance with the rule of law, to behave fairly in the decision-making procedure. Representations from all parties both written and verbal will form part of matters that are to be considered. Findings on issues of fact should be on the balance of probability.
- 4.7 The Sub-Committee are advised that the final decision should be based on the individual merits of the application and findings of fact made at the hearing.
- 4.8 The application must be determined within 5 working days of the conclusion of the hearing, in accordance with paragraph 26 of the Licensing Act 2003 (Hearings) Regulations 2005.

5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

- 5.1 The application has been consulted on in accordance with the requirements of the Licensing Act 2003, and any responses have been included in this report.

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

- 6.1 Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places a duty on local authorities to do all that it can to prevent –
 - (a) crime and disorder in its area (including anti-social behaviour and other behaviour adversely affecting the local community), and;
 - (b) the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances in its areas.

In considering this application in relation to these duties the authority should have due regard to Section 61(1) (b) Local Government (Miscellaneous

Provisions) Act 1976, Thurrock Council's guidelines on previous convictions or cautions and any submissions made by the applicant.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Laura Last**
Senior Management Accountant

Government Intervention & Section 114

In July 2022, the Council was made aware of concerns around the valuation of specific investments. A review process commenced, and the initial findings highlighted significant concern with three investments and the position was shared informally with the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).

On the 2 September 2022 DLUHC announced directions to implement an intervention package at the Council.

The Secretary of State exercised his powers under section 15(11) of the Local Government Act 1999 to give a Direction without complying with the requirement at section 15(9) to give Thurrock an opportunity to make representations about the Directions, as he considered the failures of the Council's compliance with its Best Value duty in respect of the functions specified in the Directions sufficiently urgent. This was because of the following:

- the scale of the financial and commercial risks potentially facing the Authority, which were compounded by the Authority's approach to financial management and the seriousness of the allegations that were made by third parties about the processes applied to the operation of the Authority's commercial strategy, and;
- the failure of the Authority to provide assurance to Ministers and the Department on the adequacy of the actions that they were taking to address the issues, taking account of the scale and pace of the response required.

The Secretary of State nominated Essex County Council to the role of Commissioner

On 19 December 2022, the Council's Acting Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer issued a report under Section 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988. This advises Councillors that the Council faces 'a financial situation of an extremely serious nature'.

Implications relating to this specific report

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Deirdre Collins, Principal Barrister
Prosecutions, Housing and Litigation**
**Simon Scrowther, Litigation and Licencing
Lawyer**

Thurrock Council as Licensing Authority under the Licensing Act 2003, the Licencing Act Guidance, the Licencing Act 2003 (Premises licences and club premises certificates) Regulations 2005 and subordinate legislation together with the Councils Guidance, is empowered to determine applications of this nature. Notice must be given of the Licensing Authority's decision on this matter.

In considering what action the Council should take when reviewing a licence, the Council must have regard for whether the licence holder is promoting the four aims of the Licencing Act 2003 (being: -

1. The prevention of crime and disorder
2. Public Safety
3. The prevention of public nuisance
4. The protection of children from harm

Any decision could be subject to an appeal to a Magistrates Court, which can be instigated by either the applicant or the person who made the representation.

Each application must be considered on its own merits and in accordance with the Licensing Authority's statement of licensing policy.

Conditions attached to licences must be tailored to the individual type, location and characteristics of the premises concerned and be appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives in an individual case.

The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 section 4 (2) require that:

“The relevant body shall be responsible for ensuring that the financial management of the body is adequate and effective and that the body has a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of that body's functions and which includes the arrangements for the management of risk.”

7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Roxanne Scanlan**
**Community Engagement and Project
Monitoring Officer**

The Licensing Sub-Committee is of a quasi-judicial nature and whilst the Licensing Committee should ensure equality of treatment for all groups in the granting of licences, due regard should be given to its responsibility to promote the licensing objectives and its duties under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. This includes full consideration of the need to prevent crime and disorder, ensure public safety, the prevention of public nuisance and the protection of children from harm. Where it finds that the need to comply with those duties is reasonably inferred, it must determine the application appropriate.

7.4 **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health Inequalities, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder, and Impact on Looked After Children

- The implications of Section 17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998 have been considered at 6.1 above.

8. **Statement of Licensing Policy**

8.1 Section 6 of Thurrock Council's Statement of Licensing Policy relates to the protection of children from harm

9. **Relevant Section of the Secretary of State's Guidance**

9.1 Section 11 relates to Reviews

10. **Appendices to the report:**

- Appendix 1 - Copy of application for review and supporting information
- Appendix 2 – Copy of premises licence and location map for Eagle News
- Appendix 3 – Copy of the representation from Essex Police

Report Author:

Elizabeth Cox, Licensing Officer