



HILLINGDON
LONDON

Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982

Licensing Sub-Committee Hearing Protocol for determining New Sex Establishment Licences

It is important that you carefully read these procedures before you attend a Licensing sub-committee hearing

1. On receiving the Notice of Hearing

What is the Notice of Hearing?

The Licensing Sub-committee hearing will normally be held within the period of 20 working days from when the consultation period ends. The Hillingdon Licensing Service will give appropriate notice of the hearing, which depends upon the type of application to be considered. Exact timings are attached in the Appendix (parts 2&3).

A Notice of the Hearing will be sent to all parties accompanied by:

- Date, time and location of the actual hearing and a procedural briefing to be held beforehand;
- This procedure, the report from the Council's Licensing Officer with relevant objections attached;
- Confirmation that a party may be assisted / represented by a person who does not have to be legally qualified;
- Confirmation that a party to the hearing may address the authority, give further information on a point on which the authority requires clarification and, if considered by the authority to be required, question another party to the hearing;
- The consequences of not attending or being represented at a hearing (which normally will be that the hearing will proceed in the party's absence); and
- A note of any particular points on which the Hillingdon Licensing Service wants clarification.

What do I do when I receive the Notice of Hearing?

On receipt of the Notice of Hearing, all parties must inform the Clerk to the Committee – **normally no later than 2 working days before the hearing*** – whether they:

- Intend to attend or to be represented at the hearing;
- Consider a hearing to be unnecessary; and
- Wish to request that another person appear at the hearing (other than their representative) as a witness. If such a request is made, it should be accompanied by details of the name of that person and a full description of the points about which that person may be able to assist the hearing.

*In the Appendix (part 4), full details are given of the deadline by which you should give your notice. All objectors and applicants are also reminded of their right to have a legal representative at the hearing.

If a party does not notify the above to the Clerk to the Committee before the relevant deadline they will not be entitled to speaking rights at the hearing.

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU REPLY TO THE NOTICE

Contact Information:

To give notice or any queries relating to the hearing please contact:

Clerk to the Committee

Tel: 01895 277655

Email: democratic@hillingdon.gov.uk

Write to: Clerk to the Committee, Cabinet Office, 3E/05, Civic Centre, Uxbridge, UB8 1UW

If I want to withdraw my objection - how do I do this?

Any party may withdraw their representations by contacting the Clerk to the Committee by phone, letter or email, providing they give notice no later than 24 hours before the hearing. If, during hearing, any party wishes to withdraw their objection they may do so orally by informing the Chairman.

What happens if I cannot attend the sub-committee hearing?

If you have made a representation and are unable to attend the sub-committee hearing, the sub-committee will only hear and consider any evidence and arguments put forward by or on behalf of the applicant and other parties present in relation to the written objections received. The sub-committee will take into account, in considering the importance to be attached to the objection that the objector was not available to be questioned about their statements.

Can you accommodate any special needs I may have?

Yes, if any person, who intends to be present at the hearing, has any special needs, (for example in connection with access, hearing, language or vision) this should be brought to the attention of the Clerk to the Committee prior to the hearing in order that appropriate provision may be made.

Can the date of the hearing be changed?

The hearing may be adjourned subject to agreement by all parties and subject to date availability.

2. Before the Hearing

You will have been notified of the date and time of the Licensing Sub-committee hearing. The hearings will normally take place at the Civic Centre, High Street, Uxbridge in one of the Committee Rooms.

How do I get to the Civic Centre?

Parking may be available via the entrance to the Civic Centre in the High Street by contacting the Clerk to the Committee in advance. Parking is also available in the nearby Chimes Shopping Centre Car Park. Bus routes 207, U1, U3, U4 and U7 all stop at the Civic Centre. Uxbridge underground station, with the Piccadilly and Metropolitan lines, is a short walk away.

Please enter from the main reception where you will be directed to the relevant Committee Room. Please switch off your mobile phone when entering the room and note that Hillingdon Council operates a no-smoking policy in its offices.

Will the hearing be in public?

There may be other members of the public and press that attend the hearing to observe the proceedings, but they will not be allowed to speak. At any hearing, the applicant may attend in person or, if the application or objection is made by an organisation or corporate body, a duly authorised representative may be present, who is able to speak on their behalf can do so.

The hearing will take place in public. However, in exceptional circumstances, when the sub-committee considers that it is in the public interest, it may exclude the public from all or any part of a hearing. Hearings will normally take place during the day.

I have some new evidence - may I present it?

The sub-committee **will not** normally allow the production of new written evidence not previously submitted as relevant objections by any party. In the case where the sub-committee does allow new evidence, all other parties must give their consent before it is heard.

If new material is permitted, the hearing may need to be adjourned to allow time to consider it and for other parties to respond to it. Accordingly, any application to have new material considered should demonstrate exceptional reasons for its admission. It is, therefore important for parties to ensure that all evidence is submitted in writing as soon as possible and in accordance with the relevant timescales.

Will I be briefed on procedure before the hearing?

Yes, in the notice of hearing, you will have been asked to attend a procedural briefing before the hearing starts. All parties will be asked to attend this briefing so that the Council's Licensing Officer or Legal Advisor can outline the procedures to be followed at the hearing.

What if there are a number of objectors present?

At the briefing, in the event of a large number of representations, the Licensing Officer or Legal Advisor will ask that a spokesman is agreed amongst those present who have similar representations.

Who are the people on the Licensing sub-committee?

Five elected councillors of the London Borough of Hillingdon sit on a Licensing sub-committee and it is only they who can determine the application. Its minimum membership is two. Councillors who sit on the sub-committees have been trained in the new Licensing regulations and have experience of determining applications of various kinds.

One of the Councillors will be the Chairman of the hearing and it will be he/she who will call interested parties and responsible authorities to speak and ensure time limits are adhered to as set out in the procedures.

Other people who will be present along with the Councillors include:

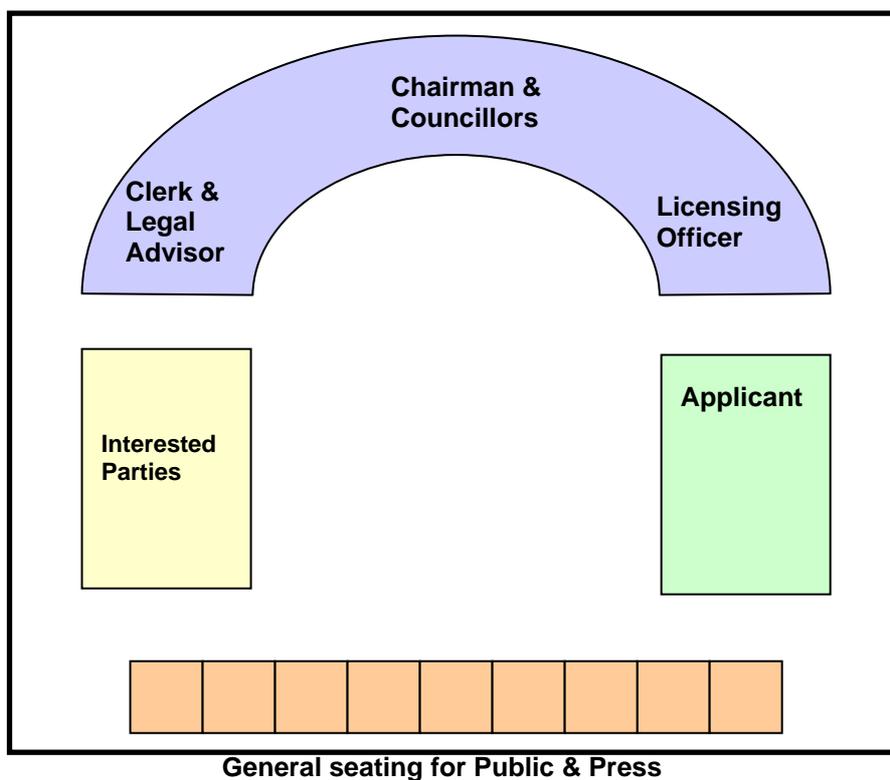
- The **Council's Licensing Officer** who will introduce the Officer report and outline his/her role.
- A **Legal Adviser** whose role is to assist the Committee with legal advice and to ensure that a fair and balanced hearing takes place.
- A **Clerk to the Committee** whose role is to summarise and record decisions on individual matters and to provide help and assistance to members of the public attending such meetings.

3. During the Hearing

The procedure at the sub-committee hearing will, in general, be based upon those used in a court of law. Although the strict rules of evidence will not apply, they will be observed to a great extent, because this is the best way of hearing the evidence from all parties. The hearing will take the form of a discussion led by the sub-committee councillors. The sub-committee will seek clarification on the issues from the parties as it considers appropriate.

Where shall I sit at the hearing?

Once you have attended the procedural briefing, you will be directed into the relevant Committee Room. The set up of the room for those involved will generally be as shown below:



In general, how will the hearing be conducted?

The procedure to be followed at the hearing will normally be as shown in the flow chart below, although all procedural matters will be subject to the discretion of the Chairman. All persons present will be requested to identify themselves and to give the reason for their presence. The sub-committee may consider any request from a party for another person to appear at the hearing as their representative.

It is important to note that cross-examination will not normally be permitted. Evidence, discussion and address must be relevant to the provisions and policies relating to Sex Establishment Licensing. Repetition should also be avoided. The sub-committee will seek to prevent irrelevant and repetitive matters.

If, during its deliberations, the sub-committee considers that it is necessary for any person present at the hearing to provide further information or clarification on a particular point the hearing may be reconvened to deal with that issue. The sub-committee can also ask for procedural, technical or legal matter from officers present at any time during the proceedings.

What is the order of proceedings?

The Chairman of the sub-committee will open the hearing by introducing the Councillors explaining the purpose of the proceedings and the general procedure. The Chairman will then check that there are no additions or alterations to the list of those appearing at the hearing, which will have been prepared in advance by the Clerk to the Committee and will then outline the procedure that will be followed for the remainder of the hearing. The procedure is as follows:

Introduction by the Council's Licensing Officer



The Applicant



Interested Parties' Case (residents etc...)



OPTIONAL - DISCUSSION LED BY THE SUB-COMMITTEE
A discussion will only occur if the sub-committee feels that there is a need for the parties involved to clarify each other's cases. The Chairman will lead the discussion



Closing remarks from each party



Sub-committee deliberates



Chairman announces the decision

The licensing officer will introduce the report and will outline impartially the matter before the sub-committee, giving any relevant background information.

The applicant presents their case and brings forward any supporters or witnesses

Interested parties present their case and bring forward any witnesses as required.

Interested parties make brief closing remarks on the application under question. The applicant makes the final closing remarks.

The sub-committee will remain in the room to deliberate and make their decision, with only the Legal Advisor and Clerk to the Committee remaining. All other present will be asked to leave the room.

Parties may return to the room when asked and the Chairman announces the decision. The Chairman reminds the applicant that the decision will be sent to them in writing. There can be no further questions or statements

Can a Councillor sit on a sub-committee if the application is in their ward?

Councillors who sit on a sub-committee are advised to take steps to minimise their involvement in any application prior to its consideration by the sub-committee so that decisions are seen to be reached at the hearing impartially and with an open mind. Councillors should not appear to be acting both as an advocate on behalf of their residents and as an adjudicator on an application.

If a Councillor on the sub-committee has already taken a view on an application in advance of the hearing, they should not be present for the hearing of the application and should leave the meeting room for that item. They should also not visit any premises under consideration prior to the hearing. In any cases of doubt, the Councillor should not sit on the sub-committee for a particular application. In this instance, a substitute Councillor may need to be found from the main Licensing committee of the Council or the hearing may continue as long as two of the five Councillors are still present.

The agenda papers will show which ward each Councillor sits for and the reports from the Council's Licensing Officer will detail which ward the application is in.

Can an Elected Member make an objection and/or speak at a hearing?

If an Elected Member, who does not sit on the sub-committee, wishes to make a formal objection to an application they may only do so if they make a written objection within the consultation period. This is the same as would apply to an Interested Party and in the same way as any other member of the public using the procedures outlined in the Council's Sex Establishment Licensing Policy. If the Elected Member believes they have a personal or prejudicial interest in the application, they may still submit an objection.

Elected Members, who do not sit on the sub-committee, may also speak at a sub-committee hearing in support or against an application, for example on behalf of their constituents. They may also speak as an advocate or witness on behalf of the applicant or an Interested Party, even if they believe they have a personal or prejudicial interest. However, for the purposes of transparency, at the hearing, the Elected Member should disclose what their personal or prejudicial interest is and whether they have been in contact with the applicant, agent or Interested Party beforehand or have visited the premises concerned.

Elected Members making either a written relevant representation or wish to speak at a hearing should not communicate about the application before the hearing with any Councillors who sit on the sub-committee. This is so the sub-committee makes their decision with an open mind.

What power does the Chairman have to control the meeting?

The Chairman may require any person attending the hearing who is behaving in a disruptive manner to leave the hearing and may refuse to permit that person to return or may permit the person to return only on such conditions as he or she may specify.

How will the sub-committee make its final decision?

Once the sub-committee has heard from officers and the parties to the hearing and has had answers to its questions, the sub-committee will usually withdraw to make its decision on the application. The sub-committee must disregard any information given or evidence produced by a party or witness, which is not relevant to the application.

Members of the sub-committee have a duty to behave impartially, not to predetermine the issue and not to discuss matters with press or residents. In making its decision the sub-committee must state in respect of sex establishment licences why refusal or attachment of conditions is necessary, and in respect of all other applications the reasons why applications are refused or revoked, taking into account the evidence presented by all parties during the hearing.

4. After the Hearing

When will we get formal notice of the decision?

The Chairman will normally announce the Sub-committee's decision in public at the end of the hearing and the reasons for the sub-committee's decision. This decision will then be communicated in writing to the parties within 5 working days after the hearing.

The Council's Legal Advisor will send applicants a decision letter shortly after the meeting outlining the decision and any conditions that are attached to the application. In addition, a letter will be sent to all those who made relevant written representations in connection with the application. This will confirm the decision made; any conditions attached to an approval or the reasons for refusal. Details of the respective appeal rights will also be sent with this notice.

The minutes of the meeting will be made available on the Council's website at: www.hillingdon.gov.uk

Can we appeal against the decision?

An applicant for the grant of a licence whose application is refused the mandatory grounds, has the right of appeal to the Magistrates' Court within 21 days of receipt of a written notice of decision. However, if refusal was on the discretionary grounds of locality and use (please see discretionary grounds 3 and 5 below) then no right of appeal is available under this legislation.

A person whose application is refused due to the discretionary grounds may attempt to invoke a judicial review of the Council's use of its discretion in coming to a decision, if they believe they can show that the Council has, for example, acted improperly, unreasonably or irrationally, has not examined both sides of a case or has shown predetermination or bias.

Those making representations, objecting to or supporting an application, have no right of appeal under this piece of legislation.

How can I find out about other applications in my area?

Applicants for new premises licences and club premises certificates; applications for provisional statements and applications for variations of existing premises licences or club premises certificates must display a notice on the premises and advertise the application in a local newspaper.

All applications once they are lodged will be available for viewing on Hillingdon Council's website at www.hillingdon.gov.uk and in the Civic Centre Offices by appointment with the Licensing Service during working hours.

Grounds for refusing Sex Establishment Licences

The council after due consideration may decide to:

- a) Grant the Licence; or
- b) Refuse the Licence

Under the provisions in Schedule 3 of the Act, the licensing authority, may grant a licence on such terms and conditions and subject to such restrictions as it may specify.

The Council will also consider relevant representations from responsible authorities and/or interested parties.

The Council will consider each application on its merits in relation to the discretionary grounds for refusal. The Council wish to ensure that only applicants who are suitable will be granted licences and only in relation to suitable premises.

Mandatory grounds for refusal

Mandatory Refusal under the provisions in Schedule 3 of the Act, the Council must refuse a licence for the following reasons

- o The applicant is under 18 years of age
- o The applicant is for the time being disqualified due to the person having had a previous licence revoked in the area of London Borough of Hillingdon Council within the previous 12 months; or
- o The applicant, other than a body corporate, who is not resident in an EEA state or was not so resident throughout the period of six months immediately preceding the date when the application was made; or
- o The applicant is a body corporate which is not incorporated in an EEA state; or
- o The applicant has, within a period of 12 months immediately preceding the date when the application was made, been refused the grant or renewal of a licence for the premises, vehicle, vessel or stall in respect of which the application is made, unless the refusal has been successfully appealed.

Discretionary grounds for refusal

Discretionary refusal under the provisions of the Council's Sex Establishment Licensing Policy:
– the Council may refuse to grant a licence on one or more of the following grounds:

1. that the applicant is unsuitable to hold the licence by reason of having been convicted of an offence or for any other reason;
2. that if the licence were to be granted the business to which it relates would be managed by or carried on for the benefit of a person, other than the applicant, who would be refused the grant of a licence if he made the application himself;
3. that the number of sex establishments in the relevant locality at the time the application is made is equal to or exceeds the number which the authority considers is appropriate for that locality;
4. Where the premises have not received the relevant planning permission
5. that the grant of the licence would be inappropriate, having regard to:
 - (i) the character of the locality where the premises are situated;
 - (ii) the use to which any premises in the vicinity are put;
 - (ii) the layout, character or condition of the premises in respect of which the application is made.