

Home Office Immigration Enforcement acting as a responsible authority

- 9.25 The Immigration Act 2016 made the Secretary of State a responsible authority in respect of premises licensed to sell alcohol or late night refreshment with effect from 6 April 2017. In effect this conveys the role of responsible authority to Home Office Immigration Enforcement who exercises the powers on the Secretary of State's behalf. When Immigration Enforcement exercises its powers as a responsible authority it will do so in respect of the prevention of crime and disorder licensing objective because it is concerned with the prevention of illegal working or immigration offences more broadly.

Disclosure of personal details of persons making representations

- 9.26 Where a notice of a hearing is given to an applicant, the licensing authority is required under the Licensing Act 2003 (Hearings) Regulations 2005 to provide the applicant with copies of the relevant representations that have been made.
- 9.27 In exceptional circumstances, persons making representations to the licensing authority may be reluctant to do so because of fears of intimidation or violence if their personal details, such as name and address, are divulged to the applicant.
- 9.28 Where licensing authorities consider that the person has a genuine and well-founded fear of intimidation and may be deterred from making a representation on this basis, they may wish to consider alternative approaches.
- 9.29 For instance, they could advise the persons to provide the relevant responsible authority with details of how they consider that the licensing objectives are being undermined so that the responsible authority can make representations if appropriate and justified.
- 9.30 The licensing authority may also decide to withhold some or all of the person's personal details from the applicant, giving only minimal details (such as street name or general location within a street). However, withholding such details should only be considered where the circumstances justify such action.

Hearings

- 9.31 The Licensing Act 2003 (Hearings) Regulations 2005 governing hearings may be found on the www.legislation.gov.uk website. If the licensing authority decides that representations are relevant, it must hold a hearing to consider them. The need for a hearing can only be avoided with the agreement of the licensing authority, where the applicant and all of the persons who made relevant representations have given notice to the authority that they consider a hearing to be unnecessary. Where this is the case and the authority agrees that a hearing is unnecessary, it must forthwith give notice to the parties that the hearing has been dispensed with. Notwithstanding those regulatory provisions, in cases where the licensing authority believes that a hearing is still necessary, it is recommended that the authority should, as soon as possible, provide the parties with reasons in writing for the need to hold the hearing. In cases where only 'positive' representations are received, without qualifications, the licensing authority should consider whether a hearing is required. To this end, it may wish to notify the persons who made representations and give them the opportunity to withdraw those representations. This would need to be done in sufficient time before the hearing to ensure that parties were not put to unnecessary inconvenience.

- the steps that are appropriate to promote the licensing objectives;
- the representations (including supporting information) presented by all the parties;
- this Guidance;
- its own statement of licensing policy.

- 9.39 The licensing authority should give its decision within five working days of the conclusion of the hearing (or immediately in certain specified cases) and provide reasons to support it. This will be important if there is an appeal by any of the parties. Notification of a decision must be accompanied by information on the right of the party to appeal. After considering all the relevant issues, the licensing authority may grant the application subject to such conditions that are consistent with the operating schedule. Any conditions imposed must be appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives; there is no power for the licensing authority to attach a condition that is merely aspirational. For example, conditions may not be attached which relate solely to the health of customers rather than their direct physical safety. Any conditions added to the licence must be those imposed at the hearing or those agreed when a hearing has not been necessary.
- 9.40 Alternatively, the licensing authority may refuse the application on the grounds that this is appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives. It may also refuse to specify a designated premises supervisor and/or only allow certain requested licensable activities. In the interests of transparency, the licensing authority should publish hearings procedures in full on its website to ensure that those involved have the most current information.
- 9.41 In the context of variations or minor variations, which may involve structural alteration to or change of use of a building, the decision of the licensing authority will not exempt an applicant from the need to apply for building control approval, planning permission or both of these where appropriate.

Determining actions that are appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives

- 9.42 Licensing authorities are best placed to determine what actions are appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives in their areas. All licensing determinations should be considered on a case-by-case basis. They should take into account any representations or objections that have been received from responsible authorities or other persons, and representations made by the applicant or premises user as the case may be.
- 9.43 The authority's determination should be evidence-based, justified as being appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives and proportionate to what it is intended to achieve.
- 9.44 Determination of whether an action or step is appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives requires an assessment of what action or step would be suitable to achieve that end. While this does not therefore require a licensing authority to decide that no lesser step will achieve the aim, the authority should aim to consider the potential burden that the condition would impose on the premises licence holder (such as the financial burden due to restrictions on licensable activities) as well as the potential benefit in terms of the promotion of the licensing objectives. However, it is

imperative that the authority ensures that the factors which form the basis of its determination are limited to consideration of the promotion of the objectives and nothing outside those parameters. As with the consideration of licence variations, the licensing authority should consider wider issues such as other conditions already in place to mitigate potential negative impact on the promotion of the licensing objectives and the track record of the business. Further advice on determining what is appropriate when imposing conditions on a licence or certificate is provided in Chapter 10. The licensing authority is expected to come to its determination based on an assessment of the evidence on both the risks and benefits either for or against making the determination.

Considering cases where licensing and planning applications are made simultaneously

- 9.45 Where businesses have indicated, when applying for a licence under the 2003 Act, that they have also applied for planning permission or that they intend to do so, licensing committees and officers should consider discussion with their planning counterparts prior to determination with the aim of agreeing mutually acceptable operating hours and scheme designs.