

Procedure for virtual hearings held under the Licensing Act 2003

The purpose of this procedure is to clarify how the Licensing Sub-Committee (“the Sub-Committee”) will conduct virtual licensing hearings made under the Licensing Act 2003 (as amended) and for licensing applications under other regimes. All hearings are conducted with due regard to the Council’s Constitution, relevant legislation and case law, regulations and guidance.

Accessing virtual hearings

Virtual Licensing Sub-Committee hearings will be held on Microsoft Teams as a live Teams event. Each application will be dealt with by a separate Teams meeting. All applicants, responsible authorities and other persons (who have submitted a valid representation) (collectively called “Parties”) will be provided with a link to the meeting beforehand. **Only these parties will be able to participate in the hearing** (together with their adviser) provided they have registered, in advance, with the Licensing Authority, as specified below. A link for the general public to watch the meeting will be available on the Council’s website.

Final Submissions before the Hearing

The parties (or their representatives) should use their best endeavours to ensure that all of their final submissions have been made so as to be included in the Sub-Committee report (typically **no later, than 5.pm, 5 working days** before the Sub-Committee hearing). This means by 5pm on the Thursday, the week before the Sub-Committee hearing is due to take place. Final submissions should set out the key points, policies and conditions that a party wishes the Sub-Committee to take account of in determining the application.

Any final submissions that a party wishes to make, (that have not been submitted so as to have been included in the report), **must** be submitted to the Licensing Service by **no later than 12 noon 3 working days** before the hearing is due to take place. The Licensing email address is: Licensing@westminster.gov.uk.

Rules during Licensing Hearings

The following rules must be followed by all parties to ensure the virtual hearing can progress as successfully as possible:

- All parties wishing to participate in the hearing **must** register their wish to participate in the hearing and provide their email addresses to the **Licensing Service at Licensing@westminster.gov.uk** no later than **12 noon on the Monday** before the Thursday hearing is scheduled to take place.
- All parties **should join the virtual hearing at least 15 minutes before the advertised start time** to ensure they are ready to start at the advertised start time. After the advertised start time has passed no registered parties will be allowed to join, except in exceptional circumstances, when permitted by the Chairman, as this could disrupt the meeting.
- All parties must only address the hearing when invited to do so by the Chairman.
- All parties must keep their microphones on mute unless they are speaking. The Chairman has the ability to mute all parties’ microphones.

- If a party wishes to interject, they should put their name in the messaging field. The chairman has the discretion to invite the party to make their comment at an appropriate stage in the hearing.
- All parties are asked to keep their comments as succinct as possible.
- If a party has a question for another party, this must be addressed to the Chairman who will have the discretion to ask the relevant party to respond.
- Parties wishing to make suggestions as to the conditions that may be imposed in the event of the application being granted should do so by reference to the schedule of proposed conditions set out in the Conditions Schedule annexed to the committee papers. In so doing, they should use the same numbering in that schedule. This is to ensure that there is ease of referencing the conditions by all the parties.
- To ensure the smooth running of hearings, a time limit will be placed on each party's submissions. This time limit must be adhered to but the Chairman has the flexibility to amend the time limit when it is considered appropriate to do so.
- When referring to the hearing papers, participants should give the page and paragraph number when appropriate.
- The Chairman has the discretion to amend these rules in any given case where they consider it is appropriate to do so.

Procedure

1. The Chairman will open the meeting and introduce the members of the Sub-Committee and the other officers attending with the members, including the legal adviser, policy adviser and committee officer.
2. The Chairman will confirm the procedure that the hearing will follow.
3. The Sub-Committee members and officers will be asked to declare any interests they may have and any other procedural business will be transacted.
4. The presenting officer from the licensing service will introduce the application, giving a brief description of the application and introducing all the Parties in attendance for each application
5. Each party who has registered to speak, will be invited to make their representations and will be allowed **a maximum of 10 minutes each**. In order to ensure that the hearing is fair to all parties and is conducted in an orderly manner, the Chairman has the discretion to extend this time limit where it is appropriate for the determination of the application.
6. Parties will normally speak in the following order, (the order may change for other types of licensing applications):
 - a. The applicant
 - b. Responsible authorities
 - c. Other persons
7. The Chairman has the right to grant each party the opportunity to ask questions of each other for the purposes of clarification only where it is appropriate to do so. The Sub-Committee members will then be able to ask questions of the parties.

8. The legal adviser and/or policy officer may ask questions of the parties as they consider appropriate, including in relation to the conditions which should be attached to the application if the Sub-Committee is minded to grant the application.
9. Each party will have an opportunity to make a short closing submission each (not introducing any new evidence or case law) of no more than **5 minutes each**, in the following order:
 - a. Responsible authorities
 - b. Other persons
 - c. The applicant
10. The Chairman shall then **close the meeting** and all parties will leave the meeting. A Decision will not be announced at the end of the hearing unless there is a legal requirement to do so.
11. The Sub-Committee will deliberate in closed session and all parties will be advised of the outcome in a written Summary Decision. Unless otherwise required or permitted by Regulations, summary decisions will be made within a period of five working days of the last day of the hearing. The written summary of the decision (“Summary Decision”) will be sent to all the parties as soon as possible after the Decision has been made. The full Decision, setting out the reasons for the Decision, (Formal Notification) will be sent to the parties as soon as possible thereafter. The time limit for appealing will not commence until the Formal Notification has been sent to the parties.

Dated 15 April 2020