

APPLICATION FOR REVIEW OF A PREMISE LICENCE ISSUED UNDER THE LICENSING ACT 2003 IN RESPECT OF 'STOKES STORES, 4 HOARWITHY ROAD, PUTSON, HEREFORD, HR2 6HA'.

Report By: Head Of Environmental Health And Trading Standards

Wards Affected:

St. Martins and Hinton

1. Purpose

To consider an application for a review of a premises licence in respect of Stokes Stores, 4 Hoarwithy Road, Putson, Hereford, HR2 6HA.

2. Background Information

Applicant	Paul West – Chief Constable of the West Mercia Constabulary, c/o Police Station, Bath Street, Hereford.	
Premise Licence Holder	Mrs Christine Ann Merrett, 20 Thompson Place, Whitecross, Hereford. HR4 0JP.	
Solicitor	N/K	
Type of application:	Date received:	28 Days consultation
Review	11 September 2008	9 October 2008

A notice advertising the review was placed on the premise prior to the start of the statutory consultation period and also displayed in the public area of the Licensing Authority (Bath Street).

3. Current Licence

The current licence allows: -

Sale by Retail of Alcohol

- On weekdays, other than Christmas Day, 8 am to 11 pm
- On Sundays, other than Christmas Day, 10 am to 10.30 pm
- On Christmas Day, 12 noon to 3 pm and 7 pm to 10.30 pm
- On Good Fridays, 8 am to 10.30 pm

There are no non-standard timings.

4. Summary of Application

The application for review relates to the following licensing objectives: -

- Prevention of public nuisance
- Protection of children from harm

5. **The grounds for the review are: -**

The premise has been the subject of eight separate test purchase operations since the start of the Licensing Act in November 2005. On three occasions sales to under age persons have occurred.

6. **The information provided to support this application is: -**

On 6 September 2006, Herefordshire Council's trading standards section and the West Mercia Constabulary carried out a test purchase operation at the premise.

A 16 year old was served alcohol without being challenged concerning her age.

The person who made the sale was issued with a fixed penalty notice.

On 15 December 2006 Herefordshire Council's trading standards section and the West Mercia Constabulary carried out a further test purchase operation at the premise.

A 15 year old female was served alcohol without being challenged about her age.

The person who made the sale was issued with a fixed penalty notice.

On the 12 August 2008 Herefordshire Council's trading standards section and the West Mercia Constabulary carried out a test purchase operation at the premise.

A 16 year old female was served alcohol without being challenged about her age.

The person who made the sale was issued with a fixed penalty notice.

The premise states that they operate the Challenge 21 policy.

7. **Summary of Representations**

Copies of the representations and suggested conditions can be found within the background papers.

West Mercia Police

Have since provided additional evidence in support of the application.

Trading Standards

Who have a responsibility for the protection of children from harm have made representation and have suggested to the Committee a number of conditions which may be applied to the premise licence.

Environmental Health, Fire Authority and Interested Parties.

No representations have been received.

8. **Committee's Responsibility**

The committee is responsible for promoting the four licensing objectives.

In determining the application with a view to promoting the licensing objectives in the overall interests of the local community, the licensing authority must give appropriate weight to:

- The steps that are necessary to promote the licensing objectives;
- The representations (including supporting information) presented by all parties;

- The Guidance issued to local authorities under Section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003
- The Herefordshire Council Licensing Policy

9. **Options: -**

- Take no action
- Take any of the following steps: -
 - (a) to modify the conditions of the licence;
 - (b) to exclude a licensable activity from the scope of the licence;
 - (c) to remove the designated premises supervisor;
 - (d) to suspend the licence for a period not exceeding three months;
 - (e) to revoke the licence;

and for this purpose the conditions of the licence are modified if any of them is altered or omitted or any new condition is added.

Where the authority takes a step mentioned in subsection (a) or (b), it may provide that the modification or exclusion is to have effect for only such period (not exceeding three months) as it may specify.

10. **Background Papers**

- a. Police Representation
- b. Trading Standard Comments
- c. Application Form
- d. Location Plan

Background papers are available for inspection in the Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford 30 minutes before the start of the hearing.

NOTES**RELEVANT, VEXATIOUS AND FRIVOLOUS REPRESENTATIONS**

9.8. A representation would only be “relevant” if it relates to the likely effect of the grant of the licence on the promotion of at least one of the licensing objectives. For example, a representation from a local businessman which argued that his business would be commercially damaged by a new licensed premises would not be relevant. On the other hand, a representation that nuisance caused by the new premises would deter customers from entering the local area and the steps proposed by the applicant to control that nuisance were inadequate would be relevant. There is no requirement for an interested party or responsible authority to produce a recorded history of problems at a premises to support their representations, and in fact this would not be possible for new premises. Further information for interested parties about the process for making representations is available in “Guidance for interested parties: Making representations” which can be found on the DCMS website.

9.9 The “cumulative impact” on the licensing objectives of a concentration of multiple licensed premises may also give rise to a relevant representation when an application for the grant or variation of a premises licence is being considered, but not in relation to an application for review which must relate to an individual premises.

9.10 It is for the licensing authority to determine whether any representation by an interested party is frivolous or vexatious on the basis of what might ordinarily be considered to be vexatious or frivolous. Vexation may arise because of disputes between rival businesses and local knowledge will therefore be invaluable in considering such matters. Frivolous representations would be essentially categorised by a lack of seriousness. An interested party who is aggrieved by a rejection of their representations on these grounds may challenge the authority’s decision by way of judicial review.

9.11. Licensing authorities should not take decisions on whether representations are relevant on the basis of any political judgment. This may be difficult for ward councilors receiving complaints from residents within their own wards. If consideration is not to be delegated, contrary to the recommendation in this Guidance, an assessment should be prepared by officials for consideration by the subcommittee before any decision is taken that necessitates a hearing. Any ward councilor who considers that their own interests are such that they are unable to consider the matter independently should disqualify themselves.

9.12 The Secretary of State recommends that in borderline cases, the benefit of the doubt should be given to the interested party making the representation. The subsequent hearing would then provide an opportunity for the person or body making the representation to amplify and clarify it. If it then emerged, for example, that the representation should not be supported, the licensing authority could decide not to take any action in respect of the application.

REVIEWS

11.7 Representations must be in writing and may be amplified at the subsequent hearing or may stand in their own right. Additional representations which do not amount to an amplification of the original representation may not be made at the hearing.

11.22 A number of reviews may arise in connection with crime that is not directly connected with licensable activities

Licensing authorities do not have the power to judge the criminality or otherwise of any issue. This is a matter for the courts of law. Some reviews will arise after the conviction in the criminal courts of certain individuals but not all.

Where a review follows a conviction, it would also not be for the licensing authority to attempt to go behind any finding of the courts, which should be treated as a matter of undisputed evidence before them.

11.25 There is certain criminal activity that may arise in connection with licensed premises, which the Secretary of State considers should be treated particularly seriously. These are the use of the licensed premises:

- for the sale and distribution of Class A drugs and the laundering of the proceeds of drugs crime;
- for the sale and distribution of illegal firearms;
- for the evasion of copyright in respect of pirated or unlicensed films and music, which does considerable damage to the industries affected;
- for the purchase and consumption of alcohol by minors which impacts on the health, educational attainment, employment prospects and propensity for crime of young people;
- for prostitution or the sale of unlawful pornography;
- by organised groups of paedophiles to groom children;
- as the base for the organisation of criminal activity, particularly by gangs;
- for the organisation of racist activity or the promotion of racist attacks;
- for unlawful gaming and gambling; and
- for the sale of smuggled tobacco and alcohol.

Section 52

(11) A determination under this section does not have effect—

- (a) until the end of the period given for appealing against the decision, or
- (b) if the decision is appealed against, until the appeal is disposed of.

Licensing Authority's power to exercise substantive discretionary powers.

The British Beer and Pub Association (2) The Association of Licensed Multiple Retailers (3) The British Institute of Inn keeping V Canterbury City Council.

Contesting the validity of the Licensing Policy that asks for certain requirements before the application has been submitted. In the summing up the Judge stated: The scheme of the legislation is to leave it to applicants to determine what to include in their applications, subject to the requirements of Section 17 and the Regulations as to the prescribed form and the inclusion of a statement of specified matters in the operating schedule. An applicant who makes the right judgement, so that the application gives rise to no relevant representations, is entitled to the grant of a licence without the imposition of conditions. The licensing authority has no power at all to lay down the contents of an application and has no power to assess an application, or exercise substantive discretionary powers in relation to it, unless there are relevant representations and the decision – making function under section 18 (3) is engaged.