

Minutes of the meeting of Licensing Sub-Committee held at Online Meeting / Conference Room 2 - Herefordshire Council, Plough Lane Offices, Hereford, HR4 0LE on Wednesday 18 February 2026 at 11.30 am

Present: Councillor Polly Andrews (chairperson)
Councillors: Dave Davies and Peter Hamblin

Officers: Senior Lawyer - Civil Litigation and Principal licensing officer

39. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

40. NAMED SUBSTITUTES (IF ANY)

There were no substitutes present at the meeting.

41. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

42. REVIEW OF A PREMISES LICENCE IN RESPECT OF: LEDBURY CONVENIENCE STORE, 23 HIGH STREET, LEDBURY, HR8 1DS - LICENSING ACT 2003

Members of the Licensing Sub-Committee of the council's Planning and Regulatory Committee considered the above application, full details of which appeared before the members in their agenda and the reports published on 10 February 2026 and the supplement published on 10 February 2026.

The hearing was attended by the Premises Licence Holder ('PLH') Mr Mehmet Ozer. Also in attendance providing evidence were Mr Nik James Licensing Assistant, Mr Simon Turner of Herefordshire Council Trading Standards, PC G Gibbs and PC R O'Keeffe of West Mercia Police.

Prior to making its decision, the Licensing Sub-Committee heard from Mr James, Licensing Assistant who presented the report which outlined the options available to the Sub-Committee.

Mr Turner, representing Herefordshire Council Trading Standards, provided details of the application to review and history of visits to the premises. There had been a number of incidents since 2024 and complaints received regarding the sale of illegal vapes and underage vape sales at the premises. Trading Standards sought the revocation of the alcohol licence as it was felt that no further conditions could be imposed to promote the licensing objectives. Change of DPS would not effect any change in the day to day activities in the shop. The sale of illegal tobacco provided clear indication that organised crime was operating from the premises.

In response to questions from the sub-committee

- The sub-committee was informed of the quantity of illegal tobacco seized from the premises.
- Details of intelligence regarding the premises was provided to the sub-committee. This included detail of the test purchases undertaken resulting in underage sales and the seizure of illegal tobacco and vapes. 19 incidents since 2024 were raised which Trading Standards had used as evidence to support the application for a review of the premises licence.

West Mercia Police addressed the hearing and made the following principal points:

- WMP had conducted research on its internal systems and had produced results of one investigation of note; common assault reported at the premises. There had been an alleged assault by a member of staff. Following the incident the PLH had been contacted who did not provide the CCTV evidence requested.
- It was not felt that the PLH would uphold the licensing objectives.

The PLH spoke on his behalf, the following principal points were raised:

- The store had been shut for 3 months and no income had been derived to support his family.
- The PLH was sorry for the problems and would ensure that only his wife was employed to work in the store.

In response to questions from the sub-committee:

- The alcohol for sale was now properly displayed in the shop.
- Challenge 25 notices were now properly displayed in the shop.
- CCTV could be operated except one staff member.
- Detail of the alleged assault raised by the Police was provided and an explanation it had involved a regular customer to the premises who had been intoxicated.
- Following the fire inspection and the issues identified the landlord had undertaken repairs and further inspections were occurring.
- The PLH promised that the selling of illegal tobacco/cigarettes and vapes would not happen again.
- Staff were trained to challenge people when underage purchase attempts were made.

This concluded the evidence to be heard at the hearing.

Having carefully considered those matters brought before them and in reaching their decision, the Members had full regard to both the provisions of the Licensing Act 2003 (as amended by the Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006), the Guidance Issued under Section 182 and Herefordshire Council's statement of licensing policy.

DECISION

The Sub-Committee's decision following a review of premises licence is as follows:

The premises licence shall be revoked.

REASONS

The Sub-Committee has taken into account all the documentary evidence provided with the Application for Review brought by the Herefordshire Council Trading Standards Department.

The evidence was presented in a report by Mr Nik James Licensing Assistant, together with written and oral representations from West Mercia Police and Mr Turner of the Trading Standards Department.

The Sub-Committee further considered the submissions and evidence provided by the PLH, Mr Ozer.

The Sub-Committee notes the grounds for review were the prevention of crime and disorder and the prevention of children from harm.

The Sub-Committee noted that the premises was first licensed on 5 September 2023 as a convenience store.

It was further noted that on 15 August 2024, a member of Herefordshire Council's Trading Standards Team witnessed that some of the conditions the premises licence were being breached, namely:

- Alcohol licence not on display in the shop
- No Challenge 25 notices on display in the shop
- Staff member not able to operate CCTV system to replay footage etc at request.

As a result, on 24 September 2024, the Licensing Authority sent the PLH a breach of conditions letter detailing the conditions not being complied with.

In considering the evidence presented, the Sub-Committee noted that in the short time the premises had been licensed there had been a persistent undermining of the licensing objectives in the form of underage / age restricted sales, selling illegal and counterfeit products from the premises, failure to operate CCTV in accordance with the licence and the seizure of illegal foreign cigarettes and hand rolling tobacco being sold from the premises.

The evidence presented by the Trading Standards Department was detailed and of great concern to the Sub-Committee.

The Sub-Committee was particularly concerned that the premises was the subject of a Closure Order made in Hereford Magistrates Court on 24 November 2025 under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, to prevent continued criminal activity from the premises. The Sub-Committee noted a number of incidents highlighted in the report from Trading Standards involved underage sales.

The Sub-Committee considered the brief submissions made by the PLH and carefully took into account the length of time that the premises licence had been held.

The Sub-Committee was not persuaded by the submissions of the PLH which lacked detail and did not effectively address the evidence presented by the Trading Standard Department. The PLH failed to reassure the Sub-Committee that he was able to promote the licensing objectives.

The Sub-Committee considered there was clear evidence of a consistent failure to comply with the licensing objectives.

Taking into account the statutory guidance, the Sub-Committee was aware that where reviews arise and a Responsible Authority determines that the prevention of crime and disorder objective is being undermined, the case should be considered seriously.

The Sub-Committee carefully reviewed the evidence and balanced the submissions from all parties. The Sub-Committee's starting position is that undermining the licensing objectives is serious, particularly when there is evidence of criminal activity and failure to protect children from harm.

The Sub-Committee considered the options available to them. It was noted that Trading Standards did not consider there were any additional conditions that could be placed upon the licence to address the issues identified. It was further noted that both the Police and the Trading Standards Department, as Responsible Authorities, were recommending revocation of the licence.

The Sub-Committee was satisfied with the submissions made on behalf of the Responsible Authorities. The Sub-Committee was of the opinion that the PLH had not provided any evidence to show he was able to promote the licensing objectives.

The Sub-Committee concluded that the Review had been brought appropriately and the matters before them were significant and serious in nature involving criminal activity and failure to protect children from harm over an extended period of time.

The Sub-Committee was not convinced that the PLH will uphold the licensing objectives in the future.

Therefore, the Sub-Committee's decision is to revoke the Premises Licence.

The Sub-Committee considers this is a reasonable and proportionate decision to promote the licensing objectives.

The meeting ended at 12.35 pm

Chairperson