

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

**LICENSING COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

Date: Wednesday, 22 October 2025

Time: 2.00pm

Place: Council Chamber

Present: Councillors: Lin Martin-Haugh (Chair), Alistair Gordon, Lynda Guy, Claire Parris and Loraine Rossati

Start / End Start Time: 2.00pm
Time: End Time: 3.45pm

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Lloyd Briscoe, Peter Clark, Coleen De Freitas, Robin Parker, Ellie Plater, Tom Plater, Ceara Roopchand, Carolina Veres and Tom Wren.

There were no declarations of interest.

2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Licensing Committee held on 19 December 2024 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3 LICENSING HEARINGS - PROCEDURES

It was **RESOLVED** that the Terms of Reference be noted.

4 APPLICATION TO VARY A PREMISES LICENCE - RITTYS PLACE, 6 BAKER STREET, STEVENAGE, SG1 3AL

The Committee considered an application for a variation to the Premises Licence for Rittys Place, 6 Baker Street, Stevenage, SG1 3AL.

The Council's Licensing Officer presented a report to the Committee outlining the application. The Licensing Officer advised that:

- 1) the provision of recorded music be amended from 07:00hrs to 23:00 hrs Monday to Sunday to 12:00-00:00 Monday to Sunday.
- 2) To replace Annex 2, Condition 5 "Music played at the Premises will be for background purposes only" with the following two conditions:

- a. Music shall be played at a level, so it does not cause a nuisance to the nearest noise sensitive Premises.
 - b. All doors and windows shall remain closed during regulated entertainment except for access and egress.
- 3) To allow for the sale of alcohol for consumption both on and off Premises.
- 4) To amend the opening times from 07:00-00:00 Monday-Friday to 12:00 – 00:00hrs Monday to Friday.
- 5) The provision of late-night refreshment (the provision of hot food and drink provided between the hours of 11pm and 5am) to change from being provided inside the Premises to both inside and outside for the purpose of delivery.

It was noted that the application was accepted by the Council as valid and duly made on 29 August 2025.

Representations had been received by Environmental Health, acting as the Responsible Authority, in relation to the Licencing Objectives. The Committee noted that the Council had facilitated mediation between the Applicant and the objectors. This resulted in the withdrawal of all but three public objections following the agreement of additional conditions with the Applicant.

The Environmental Health Officer confirmed that its representation had also been withdrawn after an additional condition was agreed with the applicant.

The Chair invited questions from all parties to the Licensing Officer regarding the contents of the report.

A question was raised regarding the nearest noise sensitive Premises. It was noted that the nearest residential properties were located on Grove Road. The Licensing Officer noted that the three remaining objections were residents from this location.

In response to a query, the Licensing Officer confirmed that other nearby premises operated under similar licences, although those serving food before 23:00 hours did not require one. It was further confirmed that the Council had not undertaken a noise impact assessment in relation to this Application.

A question was raised regarding the proposed restriction on deliveries to 22:00 hours, when other businesses locally operated later. The Licencing Officer explained that after considering the review, the applicant could apply variation until 23:00 hours.

Members questioned if there had been any evidence of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) in the area. The Licensing Officer stated there was no recent evidence of such issues, though one objector had provided Police reference numbers from over five years ago which had since been archived by the Police.

Members sought clarification regarding the sale of alcohol. It was noted that off-site

sales would be permitted, but was restricted to be supplied with a meal or takeaway only, in line with the agreed conditions.

The Chair invited the Applicant and Environmental Health to raise any questions to the Licensing Officer regarding their report. There were none.

The Chair then invited Environmental Health to present their case.

The Environmental Health Officer confirmed that their attendance was solely to answer any Committee questions, and reiterated that Environmental Health's concerns had been resolved through an amended condition agreed with the Applicant.

The Chair invited all parties ask questions to the Environmental Health Officer.

A question was raised regarding the background music, and if Environmental Health had recorded the noise levels from the Premises. In response, the Officer advised that it was not considered cost effective to do so, and that a noise limiter would have been ineffective for background music. It was further confirmed that incidental music played before 23:00 hours was exempt from licensing requirements but could still be addressed under other legislation if necessary.

The Environmental Health Officer explained the definition of public nuisance and having assessed the Premises, nearby dwellings, and proposed sound levels, concluded that it was unlikely the operation would give rise to a public nuisance.

The Chair then invited the Premises Licence Holder and their representative to present their case.

Mr Lavery spoke on behalf of the Applicant, addressing the Committee. The representative explained that the Premises operated as a restaurant showcasing Caribbean food and culture, creating a positive environment within the community.

Mr Lavery expressed that there had been no formal incidents of ASB or criminal activity linked to the Premises. It was noted that the Applicant had previously given evidence to support the Police in relation to an incident which originated from another venue, demonstrating his commitment to community engagement.

Mr Lavery then introduced the Applicant, Mr Moulton to address the Committee. Mr Moulton outlined his intention to further develop his business. The Applicant emphasised that the focus of the Premises was to provide a welcoming space for food and socialising rather than to generate noise.

Mr Moulton informed the Committee that he had over twenty years' experience in the security industry and around thirty years' experience working with young people. He reiterated his commitment to operating responsibly and had invited Members to visit the Premises to view the artwork and experience the restaurants atmosphere.

The Applicant noted that there had been no complaints or incidents of ASB associated with the Premises, and assured the Committee that he had no intention

of causing any disturbance or nuisance.

The Chair invited all parties to ask questions to the Premises Licence Holder and their representative.

A question was raised as to whether any residents had approached him in relation to the application. The Premises Licence Holder confirmed that one resident had been raising concerns about noise levels over several years. He explained that he had visited the resident's property in an effort to address the issue, but had been unable to hear any noise at that time. It was noted that the Premises currently closed at 22:00 hours, and therefore any disturbance was unlikely to have originated from the business after this time.

The Chair invited all parties to sum up.

The Environmental Health Officer confirmed that the application carried some potential risk, however the mediation process had resulted in the inclusion of appropriate conditions which effectively mitigated that risk. It was further noted that, should the licence be granted and any issues subsequently arise, established procedures were in place to address and resolve such matters.

The Applicant did not provide a summary.

It was **RESOLVED** that the premises licence would be granted with modifications.

REASON FOR DECISION

The Committee took careful account of all the written and oral representations, the Licensing Objectives, the Council's Licensing Policy and the statutory guidance.

It was noted that Environmental Health had initially raised concerns regarding potential noise issues, but confirmed these had been resolved through an amended condition agreed with the Applicant.

Three objections from local residents were noted primarily relating to noise, however the Committee observed that the objectors were not present to provide further evidence or to respond to questions.

The Committee acknowledged that the Premises was situated in an area with several other licensed venues and was not satisfied that any reported issues could be attributed solely to this Premises. No recent complaints had been received by the Council or Environmental Health.

The Committee also noted that the Licensing Authority did not operate a cumulative impact policy.

The Applicant confirmed that music would remain incidental to the food offering and expressed a commitment to maintaining good relations with neighbouring residents. The Committee was satisfied that any future issues could be addressed through existing enforcement powers.

Having considered all relevant matters, the Committee resolved to grant the Application with modifications, incorporating the additional conditions offered by the Applicant, as it was satisfied that the Licensing Objectives would not be undermined.

5 **URGENT PART I BUSINESS**

There was no Urgent Part I Business.

6 **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in Paragraphs 1 – 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act as amended by Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

2. That the reasons for the following reports being in Part II were accepted, and that the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

7 **URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

There was no Urgent Part II Business.

CHAIR