

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

LICENSING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date: Monday, 22 December 2025

Time: 10.00am

Place: Council Chamber

Present: Councillors: Lin Martin-Haugh (Chair), Peter Clark, Coleen De Freitas, Claire Parris and Loraine Rossati

Start / End Time: Start Time: 10.00am
End Time: 12.10pm

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Lloyd Briscoe, Alistair Gordon, Lynda Guy, Robin Parker, Ellie Plater, Tom Plater, Ceara Roopchand, Carolina Veres and Tom Wren.

2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Licensing Committee held on 9 December 2025 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 FOR A TEMPORARY EVENT NOTICE AT THE ROYAL OAK PUB, STEVENAGE SG1 3RA

The Committee considered an objection to a temporary event notice (TEN) at The Royal Oak PH, Walken Road, Stevenage.

The Council's Licencing Officer introduced the report outlining the matter to determine a TEN for New Years Eve (31 December 2025) at 11pm and finishing at 1:30am on New Years Day (1 January 2026).

It was noted that the TEN would allow for a DJ in the main and sports bar area and would provide the authorisation of the sale of alcohol on and off the premises, regulated entertainment and late-night refreshments.

Officers noted that the TEN for this event referred to adopting conditions currently included in the Premises Licence.

The Chair then invited Environmental Health to present their case.

The Environmental Health Officer highlighted key points from their evidence and noted the long history of noise complaints from the Royal Oak. This was due to both the music from the venue and patrons outside. The premises was located close to residential properties and was not designed for amplified music.

The Environmental Health Officer noted that his involvement with the premises began in January 2025, when it was considered that the Premises Licence and operating schedule contained inadequate conditions.

It was noted that the Officer, Premises Licence Holder and McMullen & Sons Ltd had discussed a variation to the Premises License which was submitted and approved to introduce tighter controls.

The Environmental Health Officer explained that shortly after this a complaint was received regarding non-compliance with the new conditions, and following a site visit from the Officer, the manager at the time confirmed they were unaware of the updated conditions. It was noted that attempts at compliance were observed on later visits.

The Environmental Health Officer referred to the previous TENs considered by the Committee, which included an event for New Years Eve, where a counternotice was served. The Committee was advised that the current application did not seek to disapply the Premises Licence conditions and did not overlap with the licence as previous TENs had.

The Committee noted an update from the Officer on matters arising since the previous Committee meeting held on 9 December 2025. The Officer explained that they had written to Mr Gould who was the Designated Premises Supervisor (DPS) on 17 December 2025 explaining that under Section 106 of the Licensing Act 2003, he could propose a modification to the TENs to mitigate perceived risks.

The proposed modifications would have restricted regulated entertainment to what was already permitted under the Premises Licence, while allowing the sale of alcohol and late-night refreshments after 11pm. The Environmental Health Officer stated that their proposal was rejected.

The Officer further advised the Committee that an additional complaint had been received relating to the use of the outdoor space during the weekend of 19 December 2025.

The Environmental Health Officer explained that the Premises could support regulated entertainment, but required careful management due to its location and structure, and noted that the conditions must be implemented in practice to promote the Licensing Objectives.

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

The Committee sought clarification on the differences between the previous TEN for this date and the current one. The Licensing Officer confirmed that the current TEN proposed compliance with all Premises Licence conditions and extended regulated

activities from 11pm to 1:30am, rather than 7pm to 1am.

The DPS clarified that the sound mitigation measures had been installed at the Premises and explained the non-compliance with the new licence conditions had occurred because the updated Premises Licence had not been received.

In response to a question from the DPS the Environmental Health Officer confirmed that the proposal to modify the TEN was only to remove the additional time for regulated entertainment and not to remove all of the proposed activities under the TEN.

The Chair then invited Mr Gould to present their case.

The Committee then heard from Mr Gould the DPS on behalf of the applicant Park Valley Way Pub Company.

Mr Gould outlined his 15-year involvement with the Premises and that he respected the Committee's previous decisions in relation to previous TENs. He explained that the application was intended to allow the Premises to Celebrate New Year's Eve while complying with all conditions.

The Committee heard from Mr Gould that enforcement action by the Council had been inconsistent and that the Premises had made repeated efforts to comply with changing advice. This included relocating the smoking shelter, installing noise monitoring equipment and purchasing sound mitigation measures.

The Chair invited all parties to ask questions to Mr Gould.

Mr Gould explained that previous TENs had been approved, including following the service of an abatement notice. It was noted that ongoing complaints were linked to parking disputes with a neighbouring resident and expressed concern that refusal of the TEN would have serious consequences for the future of the Premises and his family.

In response to questions from the Committee, Mr Gould confirmed that he was willing to implement the Premises Licence conditions under the TEN. He advised that the event would be limited to 100 attendees, not including staff, which would be controlled by a ticketing system with entry required by 10pm. He confirmed that there would be a DJ connected to the noise limiter.

The Committee accepted that any inconsistencies between the Premises License conditions and those conditions proposed within the TEN were typographical errors, and the intention had been to comply fully with the Premises Licence conditions.

The Chair invited all parties to sum up.

Licensing Officers declined to provide a summary.

The Environmental Health Officer declined to provide a summary.

Mr Gould stated that the Premises hosted in excess of 100 events per year, totalling approximately 1,500 events during his tenure. This included 14 New Year's Eve events, none of which were previously objected. Mr Gould stated that he was the only consistent element in the operation of the Premises and referred to a lack of continuity within Licencing and Environmental Health.

It was **RESOLVED** to permit the TEN to proceed subject to the imposition of all of the Premises Licence Conditions except paragraphs 1 and 2 from annex 3.

REASON FOR DECISION

The Committee considered all written and oral representations, the Licensing Objectives, the Council's Licensing Policy and statutory guidance.

The Committee noted that it was not bound by its decision on the previously submitted TEN for the same date. The Committee also noted that it had heard directly from the DPS Mr Gould on this occasion which they had not previously.

The Committee noted the representations from the Environmental Health Officer and noted the long history of noise complaints relating to the Premises and the previous failures to utilise the noise limiter.

The Committee acknowledged Mr Gould's representations regarding the importance of the event, particularly given the significance of New Year's Eve for the hospitality sector.

The Committee considered the options available and concluded that the TENs would be permitted subject to the imposition of all Premises Licence conditions, with the exception of paragraphs 1 and 2 Annex 3. The Committee noted that any future non-compliance or complaints would be relevant to the consideration of any future licensing applications.

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