

For general release

REPORT TO:	LICENSING SUB COMMITTEE 24 September 2020
SUBJECT:	LICENSING ACT 2003 (HEARINGS) REGULATIONS 2005 PROCEDURES FOR LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE HEARINGS
LEAD OFFICER:	Executive Director, Place Department
CABINET MEMBER:	Cllr. Hamida Ali, Cabinet Member for Safer Croydon & Communities
WARDS:	ALL
CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT: This report details the recommended changes to the Licensing Sub-Committee hearings protocol by virtue of Covid-19 requirements.	
FINANCIAL SUMMARY: There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report.	
FORWARD PLAN KEY DECISION REFERENCE NO.: N/A	
1. RECOMMENDATIONS That the Chair of the Licensing Sub-Committee agree: 1.1 The revised protocol for Licensing Sub-Committee hearings as set out in full at Appendix 1. 1.2 That the decision be reported to the next available meeting of the Licensing Committee.	

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 This Report provides background to the request that the Chair of the Licensing Sub-Committee exercise delegated authority set out in Annex 1 to Part 5F of the Constitution to agree a change to the current Licensing Sub-Committee procedure to take account of remote hearings.

3. DETAIL

- 3.1 The purpose of the recommended changes are to facilitate the proper consideration of the application/s before the Licensing Sub-Committee. As a result of the coronavirus pandemic it has not been possible to hold Licensing

Sub-Committee hearings in person. The duration of disruption is unclear, and in the meantime, the Council wishes to continue to progress decision making.

- 3.2 Currently the Council's arrangements for Licensing Sub-Committee hearings do not specifically reference remote/virtual hearings although remote hearings are possible both under the provisions of the Licensing Act 2003 (Hearings) Regulations 2005 which govern Licensing Sub-Committee hearings under the Licensing Act but also by virtue of the introduction of new powers set out in The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 ('the Flexibility Regulations') which was introduced pursuant to the Coronavirus Act 2020 and allows for remote attendance at council meetings.
- 3.3. The Coronavirus Act 2020 ('the CV Act') is the government's main legislative change in response to the pandemic. Most of its provisions came into effect on 25 March 2020 but detailed further legislation in the form of statutory instruments and government guidance have been issued since that date and continue to be published.
- 3.4 The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 No. 392 ('the Flexibility Regulations') exercise powers set out in section 78 of the CV Act and make specific legislative provision for remote attendance at meetings including public and press access to those meetings. The Flexibility Regulations came into force on 4 April 2020 and apply to local authority meetings held on or before 7 May 2021.
- 3.5 The Chair of the Licensing Sub-Committee is authorised to vary the procedure which applies to Licensing Sub-Committee hearings in respect of any hearing if he/she considers that this would facilitate the proper consideration of the application or notice before the Licensing Sub-Committee. In addition, the Licensing Sub-Committee may waive, vary or modify any part of Part 5F protocol in relation to a particular case if it considers that this is necessary to ensure fairness to the Parties and/or proper consideration of the application in question, provided always that this does not result in any contravention of the Licensing Act 2003 (Hearings) Regulations 2005 ("the Regulations").
- 3.6 The proposed amendments are:
 - to make specific reference (in Note 3) to remote meetings and how this is defined
 - consequential wording alterations to incorporate the remote meeting arrangements
 - to provide (in paragraphs 19 and 20) that where a decision is required to be made at the conclusion of a hearing and members' deliberations, members will return from private deliberations to announce the decision and reasons. Where however the Regulations do not require a decision to be given at the conclusion of the hearing, it will be given to the Parties in writing within 5 working days following the conclusion of the hearing.

- 3.7 In light of the above, the Chair of the Licensing Sub-Committee is recommended to approve the amendments to Annex 1 to Part 5F as set out in Appendix 1 to this report.

4 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The work associated with it is contained within the departmental budget. This decision will enable officers and Members to be efficient and focus limited resources appropriately in a timely manner.
- 4.2 Approved by: Felicia Wright, Head of Finance - Place

5. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 The Head of Corporate Law and Litigation comments on behalf of the Director of Law and Governance that there are no additional legal implications arising from the recommendations beyond those set out in the body of the report.
- 5.2 Approved by: Sandra Herbert, Head of Litigation and Corporate Law on behalf of the Director of Law and Governance and Deputy Monitoring Officer.

6. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

- 6.1 The Human Resources impact of supporting the Licensing Hearings will be contained within the budgeted establishments of the Democratic and Legal Services and Licensing Teams.
- 6.2 (Approved for and on behalf of Sue Moorman, HR Director, by Jennifer Sankar, Head of HR Place).

7. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 7.1 The arrangements for the Licensing Hearings seek to ensure that all applicants and other interested parties receive a fair hearing and that the process is accessible to all groups within the community.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL AND DESIGN IMPACT

- 8.1 The effective implementation of the Licensing Act 2003 will contribute to an improved environment for local residents and other stakeholders.

9. LICENSING OBJECTIVES IMPACT

- 9.1 The licensing objectives contained in the Act are:
- the prevention of crime and disorder
 - public safety

- the prevention of public nuisance and
- the protection of children from harm.

9.2 The proposed amendments to arrangements for the Licensing Hearings seek to ensure that all applicants and other interested parties receive a fair hearing and that the process is accessible to all groups within the community whilst being mindful of the current restrictions as a result of Covid-19

10. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 The recommendations are to revise Annex 1 to Part 5F to take account of the need to undertake remote hearings as well as the legislative changes set out in the The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 which permit remote attendance at meetings to take place during the pandemic.

12. OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

12.1 The alternative options would be continue to hold Licensing Sub-Committee hearings but this would be a breach of the government's regulations regarding social distancing and would not be compatible with measures in place to stop the spread of coronavirus or not to alter the current provisions within Annex 1 of Part 5F. The latter is not considered to facilitate the proper consideration of the application/s before the Licensing Sub-Committee in the same way that the proposed amendments would do.

13. DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS

13.1 WILL THE SUBJECT OF THE REPORT INVOLVE THE PROCESSING OF 'PERSONAL DATA'?

NO

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:	None
APPENDICES:	ANNEX 1 - Procedure for Licensing Sub-Committee Hearings