

**LICENSING ACT 2003 - Statement of Licensing Policy
(Draft 1 - July 2007)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Wyre Forest District lies at the most northern tip of Worcestershire, to the south and west of the West Midland conurbation. It is bounded by the councils of South Staffordshire, Dudley, Bromsgrove, Wychavon, Malvern Hills, Herefordshire and South Shropshire.
- 1.2 The Statement of Licensing Policy is intended to provide information and guidance to licence applicants, responsible authorities and interested parties on the general approach that the Council will take to licensing.
- 1.3 Specific details are provided by way of advice sheets, available from the Council web site or sent on request.

2. LICENSING POLICY STATEMENT

- 2.1 As a Licensing Authority, the Council has based this policy on the requirements of the Licensing Act 2003 and statutory guidance from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). This policy has effect from 7th January, 2008.
- 2.2 The Council has delegated its Licensing function to its Licensing and Environmental Committee, Sub Committees and Licensing Officers. In the remainder of this Statement of Licensing Policy they are referred to collectively as the 'Licensing Authority'.
- 2.3 The current scheme of delegation is available from the Licensing and Environmental Health Section.
- 2.4 The Licensing Authority will consult with interested parties and review the policy every three years – or sooner if this policy is impacting on the provision of regulated entertainment.
- 2.5 Where there are no representations (representations are objections that the Licensing Authority has accepted as relevant), applications will be granted with no hearing, subject only to any mandatory conditions detailed in the Licensing Act 2003 and to any conditions arising from the application form (if appropriate).

- 2.6 If there are representations that can not be resolved informally, the applicant and objectors will be invited to a public hearing. After considering submissions from applicants and objectors, the licensing sub-committee will make a decision in the light of this Statement of Licensing Policy and the Secretary of State's Guidance on the Act.
- 2.7 This policy applies to activities that the Licensing Authority has to licence by law, on licensed premises, by qualifying clubs and at temporary events. These are:
- retail sale of alcohol;
 - supply of alcohol to club members;
 - provision of entertainment to the public, or club members or with a view to making profit;
 - theatrical performance;
 - film exhibition;
 - indoor sporting event;
 - boxing or wrestling entertainment;
 - live music performance;
 - playing of recorded music;
 - dance performance;
 - provision of facilities for making music;
 - provision of facilities for dancing, and
 - supply of hot food and / or drink from premises between 23.00 to 05.00 hours.

3. DECISION MAKING PROCESS

- 3.1 The Licensing Authority will consider every application on its individual merits and will promote the four statutory licensing objectives:
- Prevention of crime and disorder
 - Protection of public safety
 - Prevention of public nuisance
 - Protection of children from harm.
- 3.2 The Licensing Authority will combine licensing with the full range of regulatory powers and policies to help achieve the licensing objectives. For example;
- Planning and environmental health powers for controlling development, health and safety and nuisance
 - Use of the power of the police, other responsible authorities, local residents and business to seek review of the licence or certificate in question

- Use of powers preventing public consumption and allowing confiscation of alcohol from adults and children in named parts of the district
- Positive measures to create safe and clean town centres including use of CCTV surveillance
- Police enforcement of general law concerning disorder and anti-social behaviour and specific law enabling instant closure of premises or temporary events where there is disorder, likelihood of disorder or noise nuisance
- Informing local transport policies as to the need to disperse people swiftly and safely, and
- 'Crime and disorder' policies and powers.

3.3 Licensing is not the primary mechanism for general control of nuisance and the antisocial behaviour of people once they are away from licensed premises.

4. INTEGRATING STRATEGIES

4.1 The Licensing Authority has consulted widely when deciding this policy, to ensure that it is integrated with all relevant local strategies, policies and initiatives.

4.2 The Licensing and Environmental Committee, when appropriate, will be informed of relevant County and local strategies. The report may include information relating to:

- local crime prevention strategies;
- needs of the local tourist economy;
- any cultural strategy for the area;
- employment issues in the area;
- any relevant planning matters so as to ensure the clear distinction between licensing and planning functions, and
- local relevant partnerships and their objectives.

5. LIVE MUSIC, DANCING AND THEATRE

5.1 The Licensing Authority recognises the need to encourage and promote live music, dancing and theatre for the wider cultural benefit of the community, and that providing consumers with greater choice and flexibility is an important consideration. It will balance these wider cultural benefits with the natural concern to prevent disturbance in neighbourhoods and the duty to promote the licensing objectives.

- 5.2 When a solution is not agreed at a hearing, conditions may be imposed on a licence. Such conditions will be appropriate, and the Licensing Authority will try to avoid indirect costs which may deter live music, dancing or theatre.
- 5.3 This policy will be reviewed if evidence is obtained that licensing requirements are deterring broader cultural activities and entertainment.

6. PROMOTION OF RACIAL EQUALITY

- 6.1 The Licensing Authority is committed to eliminating unlawful discrimination and promotion of equality of opportunity, and good relations between persons of different racial groups.
- 6.2 It recognises its obligations under the Race Relations Act 1976, as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

7. CONDITIONS

- 7.1 Unless there are relevant representations, the Licensing Authority must grant applications subject only to conditions consistent with the applicant's Operating Schedule and to any Mandatory Conditions prescribed in the Licensing Act 2003.
- 7.2 If there are relevant representations, the Licensing Authority will only impose conditions to promote the licensing objectives.
- 7.3 The Licensing Authority will use conditions issued in guidance by DCMS and reserve the right to impose unique conditions when necessary.
- 7.4 Where any licence conditions are applied, the Licensing Authority will tailor them to suit the particular premises. Those conditions will have regard to local crime prevention strategies and will only relate to matters that the licence holder can control. They will focus on the premises being used for licensable activities and the immediate vicinity of those premises.
- 7.5 The Licensing Authority will primarily focus on the direct impact of the activities taking place at licensed premises on members of the public living, working or engaged in normal activity in the area concerned.

- 7.6 The Licensing Law is not the primary mechanism for the general control of nuisance and anti social behaviour by individuals once they are away from licensed premises, and therefore, beyond the direct control of the individual club, or business holding the licence, certificate or authorisation concerned. Nonetheless, it is a key aspect of such control and Licensing Law will always be part of a holistic approach to the management of the evening and night time economy in the town centres.
- 7.7 The Licensing Authority will not duplicate requirements of other legislation in licence conditions, such as:
- duties imposed by health and safety or fire safety law, and
 - the requirement to obtain approval under town and country planning law for development or use of land.
- 7.8 Licensing Authority may consider adoption of a 'special saturation policy' for particular areas, if evidence is received of problems due to the overall number of licensed premises. It will follow the procedure for adopting such a policy outlined in the DCMS guidance.

8. LICENSING HOURS

- 8.1 The Licensing Authority will have a flexible approach to hours when alcohol can be sold or supplied. It will give more freedom to responsible licensees, but may impose stricter controls on particular licensed premises, such as those affecting residential properties.
- 8.2 The Licensing Authority will not generally restrict times when shops, stores or supermarkets can sell alcohol for consumption off the premises but may do so if the Police consider individual premises to be a focus of disorder and disturbance.

9. PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

- 9.1 The Licensing Act 2003 does not stop children having access to licensed premises of all kinds.
- 9.2 The Licensing Authority will not generally impose any conditions relating to the access of children to licensed premises, unless it is necessary for the prevention of harm to children. It will expect licence holders to restrict access by children where they think it is appropriate.

9.3 Following representations under any of the licensing objectives the Licensing Authority may decide that restrictions are necessary on premises where:

- there have been convictions of members of the current staff for serving alcohol to minors;
- there is evidence of underage drinking, or failure to operate in line with the Portman Group Code of Practice on naming, packaging and promotion of alcoholic drinks;
- there is a known association with drug taking or dealing;
- there is a strong element of gambling on the premises;
- entertainment or services of an adult or sexual nature are commonly provided or
- the main purpose of the premises is supply of alcohol for consumption on the premises.

9.4 Options that the Licensing Authority will consider may include:

- limitations on the hours when children may be present
- age limitations (below 18)
- limitations or exclusions when certain activities are taking place or on particular parts of premises, and
- requirements for accompanying adult.

9.5 The Licensing Authority will not impose conditions requiring the admission of children to any premise.

10. RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY AND CHILDREN

10.1 The Licensing Authority has nominated the Child Protection Planning and Review Unit, Director of Social Services, Worcestershire County Council, County Hall, Spetchley Road, Worcester WR5 2NP (Tel. 01905 763763) as being competent to act as the responsible authority in relation to the protection of children from harm.

11. CHILDREN AND CINEMAS

11.1 In the case of premises giving film exhibitions, the Licensing Authority expects licensees or clubs to include in their operating schedules arrangements for restricting children from viewing age restricted films according to the recommendations of the British Board of Film Classification .

12. GUIDANCE TO APPLICANTS

- 12.1 The Licensing Authority will provide detailed guidance for applicants and others involved in the licensing process, including contact details for responsible authorities.
- 12.2 To minimise likelihood of representations and subsequent sub-committee hearings, applicants and clubs should liaise with the responsible authorities when they are preparing Operating Schedules.

13. SEPARATION OF LICENSING, BUILDING CONTROL AND PLANNING FUNCTIONS

- 13.1 The Licensing Authority will make sure that there is a proper separation of licensing, building control and planning functions. The Licensing and Environmental Committee will report to the Committee dealing with planning matters where appropriate, to outline the situation relating to licensed premises in its area, including the general impact of alcohol related crime and disorder.

14. ENFORCEMENT

- 14.1 The Licensing Authority has established protocols with the West Mercia Constabulary about enforcement of the Licensing Act 2003 in licensed premises and will target inspection and enforcement at problem premises and higher risk activities.
- 14.2 The Licensing Authority will act in line with our Licensing Enforcement Policy, which follow the principles of consistency, transparency and proportionality.