

Minutes of a meeting of the Licensing & Gambling Acts Casework Sub- Committee on Wednesday 6 August 2025

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Committee members present:

Councillor Ottino

Councillor Jupp

Councillor Yeatman

Officers present for all or part of the meeting:

Uswah Khan, Committee and Member Services Officer

Alison Daly, Team Leader Lawyer

Katie Thorp, Senior Licensing Compliance Officer

Tanaka Merralls, Trainee Solicitor

John Ali, Licensing Compliance Officer

74. Election of Chair for the hearings

Councillor Ottino proposed Councillor Jupp as Chair for the meeting; Councillor Yeatman seconded.

Councillor Jupp was elected as Chair for the duration of the meeting.

75. Apologies for absence

None.

76. Declarations of Interest

None.

77. Procedure for the hearing

The Sub-Committee noted the relevant procedure for the hearing.

78. Application for a New Premises Licence – NOVOCO UK Ltd, Cutteslowe Park and Sunnymead Park, Oxford, OX2 8NP

Mr Crew and Mr McNeill joined the meeting.

The Chair welcomed all attendees. The Sub-Committee and officers introduced themselves.

The Chair outlined the procedure for the hearing.

The Supervising Senior Licensing Officer presented the report, noting the requirement for members to determine an application submitted by NOVOCO UK Ltd for a New Premises Licence in respect of Cutteslowe Park and Sunnymead Park, Oxford, OX2 8NP. The Supervising Senior Licensing Officer summarised the report, stating that applicant applied for a one, three-day event called Campfire Country, Beatmasters and We Love It Festival, every year with the proposed dates for 2025 of 22 to 24 August 2025, with the following licensable activities:

- Sale of Alcohol (on sales only), Live Music, Recorded Music, Performance of Dance, Entertainment Similar to Music or Dance: Friday to Sunday 12:00 hours to 22:00 hours each day.

The Sub-Committee understood that a copy of the application could be found in appendix one, with details of both the application and the steps that the applicant intended to take to promote licensing objectives.

The Supervising Senior Licensing Officer explained that there were no representations received from Responsible Authorities, and the applicant had agreed conditions with Thames Valley Police (TVP). A copy of the agreed conditions with TVP were found in appendix two of the report. The Supervising Senior Licensing Officer further added that they had received 4 representations from Interested Parties which can be found in appendix three. A map detailing the applicant's premises and the surrounding area was enclosed in appendix four.

The Sub-Committee were reminded of its responsibilities under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (to co-operate in the reduction of crime and disorder in Oxford) and the Human Rights Act 1998 (which guarantees the right to a fair hearing for all parties in the determination of their civil rights, and also provides for the protection of property, which may include licences in existence, and the protection of private and family life) when considering the fair balance between the interests of the applicant and the rights of local residents. Any decision taken by the Sub-Committee must be necessary and proportionate to the objectives being pursued.

Members were also reminded that whenever they make a decision under the Licensing Act 2003, they have a duty to act with a view to promoting the licensing objectives, and only issues relation to the four licensing objectives should be considered and appropriate weight given to the importance and relevance of each representation.

The Chair welcomed the Panel to ask questions.

Councillor Jupp asked if there's a specific timeframe for agreement on the dates of the future events, to which the Supervising Senior Licensing Officer clarified that it should be no later than three months before the event as an agreed condition with TVP.

The Chair invited the applicant to present to the Sub-Committee.

Mr McNeill presented a new premises license application on behalf of Novoco UK Ltd, stating that they had successfully hosted four previous events (Edinburgh, Swansea, Hull and Norwich) without any issues. Friday is a Country event with tribute acts and originals acts, Saturday is a dance led event which is 18+ event, and Sunday is a family tribute festival. Mr Crew addressed concerns about noise, explaining that the stage would be situated away from residential properties, with a residential letter and hotline provided to mitigate issues. Additionally, cones would be placed to prevent obstructing access to nearby residents driveways, and the event would promote park-and-ride to ease traffic congestion.

The Chair invited questions from the Sub-Committee.

Councillor Ottino raised a question about the timing of alcohol sales, asking if there was enough time between the last performance and alcohol service. Mr Crew confirmed that alcohol sales would stop 30 minutes before the end of the show, with music finishing by 10pm. The bars would be closed slightly before 10pm.

The Trainee Solicitor asked if someone wanted to buy at 9.55pm, what time are you going to stop selling alcohol. Mr Crew said that they close the bars before the end of the show, usually at around 9:30pm, although there are still people at the event, they are not selling alcohol up until the event finishes.

Councillor Ottino asked about additional documentation since the application. Mr Crew confirmed they have submitted all necessary documents, and depending on the meetings outcome, a pre-briefing meeting had been arranged.

Councillor Jupp pointed out two inconsistencies in policies regarding event closures and asked how the event times were decided, specifically LH 7 which states you are not allowed to let anyone in one hour before the end of the licensable activities, and LH 5 which states you should cease all licensable activities no later than 30 minutes before the closure of the event. Mr Crew explained that their nationwide events typically ran until 10pm to allow the public to enjoy the event and to minimise disruption to local residents, with public transport available.

Councillor Ottino asked about the traffic management plan, particularly concerning the resident concerns about blocked roads. Mr Crew assured that no parking would be allowed near residencies, with pre-event warnings, signage and security staff guiding attendees.

Councillor Jupp asked if they had been invited back for any future events in the previous locations to which Mr Crew responded that the events team at the site had invited them, with provisional dates set for next year.

Councillor Ottino asked about staff training policies. Mr Crew responded that the security company provide in-house staff training, and the medical team also collaborates. They also conduct risk briefing sessions before each event.

Councillor Jupp inquired about policies for removing people from the event. Mr Crew explained that individuals who needed to be removed would be safely escorted home by taxi or a friend, emphasising the duty of care provided.

Councillor Ottino asked where staff parking and camping would be, and Mr Crew said the staff area would be behind the stage, with a small number of staff camping in the back-of-house area.

Councillor Jupp asked about ticket sales. Mr McNeill responded that for Friday, 2500 tickets had been sold, with 700 for Saturday and 650 for Sunday.

Councillor Yeatman asked about the concerns from residents relating to the park and car park. Mr Crew explained that vehicles would only access the site via Harbour Road, with security monitoring the traffic, there would be clear signage, and event vehicles would only be allowed to park on tarmac. They also planned to use hazard lights on vehicles and keep speed to 5mph.

Regarding lighting, Councillor Yeatman raised concerns about darkness. Mr Crew clarified that additional tower lights would be installed along walking routes, but these would be switched off by 11pm.

Councillor Ottino asked about managing the bridge exit, especially near the pond. Mr Crew confirmed that security staff would be stationed to guide people and discourage them from using alternate routes. Extra security would be on-site near the pond.

Councillor Jupp sought clarification around dancing activities. Mr Crew explained that Friday would feature line dancing and Saturday would include performances like fire dancers.

The Legal Advisor inquired about whether they would be putting on their own transport service, asking if buses would be used. The applicant stated that they don't plan to, as there is plenty of public transport that service the area. She also suggested considering more security staff due to the multiple exits, to which Mr Crew assured there would be one security staff member for every 100 attendees, with security staff positioned in the car parking, walking routes and near the pond. Since the event is expecting around 2500 people, a total of 25 security staff will be on site.

Councillor Jupp raised the issue of crowd noise and Mr Crew stated by the end of the event on Saturday, around 25% of attendees would remain, which would help stagger departures and reduce noise impact.

Councillor Ottino asked if the applicant had contacted bus services about the increased foot traffic. The applicant confirmed this would be followed up after the meeting.

The Supervising Senior Licensing Officer asked how quickly the site would be cleared after the event. Mr Crew confirmed the site would be cleared within 15 minutes.

Councillor Yeatman asked when the food service would stop. Mr Crew estimated that the main cleanup would be completed by Monday at 4pm, with continuous maintenance during the event and infrastructure removed by then.

Councillor Jupp asked about the staff involved in the cleanup process. Mr Crew confirmed that litter pickers and cleaning staff would take about 20 minutes to clear the area.

Councillor Ottino inquired why the applicant had applied for this license. Mr Crew responded that they had hoped to make the event a success and eventually invest in the area, with a focus on creating a positive, long-term relationship with the community.

Councillor Jupp asked about entry times and when tickets would be scanned. Mr Crew responded that they expected to finish entry for Friday by 7pm, Saturday by 5pm and Sunday by 3pm.

The Legal Advisor asked who the final decision-maker was. Mr Crew responded that decisions regarding security, medical services and health and safety were made by various staff, including the security and medical teams. The Legal Advisor further inquired about a commitment to repairing any damage to the site, to which the applicant

confirmed that the park team would handle any repairs, and they would address issues as needed.

The Chair invited the Supervising Senior Licensing Officer and the Applicant to make any final comments.

The Supervising Senior Licensing Officer said the Sub-Committee must take such of the following steps as it considers appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives:

- Grant the licence in accordance with the application.
- Modify the conditions of the operating schedule by altering or omitting or adding to them.
- Exclude or restrict from the scope of the licence any of the licensable activities to which the application relates.
- Reject the whole of the application.
- The Sub-Committee may also grant the licence subject to different conditions for different parts of the premises or the different licensable activities.

Mr Crew, Mr McNeill, the Supervising Senior Licensing Officer and the Licensing Compliance Officer left the meeting to allow the Sub-Committee to reach a decision.

The Sub-Committee debated and considered:

- Acknowledging concerns from the residents.
- That licensable activities must stop at 10pm, which conflicted with the current policy LH 5.
- A dynamic risk assessment was needed for ticket sales, stewarding the exit and staff numbers.
- More stewards would be required on the exit and residential road due to residents' concerns.
- Extra staff would be on the road for Friday and Saturday during the final hour.
- Giving significant weight to the agreed conditions with TVP.

Mr Crew, Mr McNeill, the Supervising Senior Licensing Officer and the Licensing Compliance Officer rejoined the meeting to hear the Sub-Committee's decision.

The Sub-Committee resolved to:

- **Grant** the licensable activities subject to conditions such as those set out in Licensing Policy LH5 – The Authority considers that licensable activities should normally cease not later than 30 minutes before final closure of the premises.
- Where alcohol sales must cease by 9:30pm, with other licensable activities continuing till 10pm as applied for.

- Only one stage, facing away from the residential area would be permitted.
- Conditions from TVP were agreed upon.
- A security staff ratio of 1:100 would be maintained at all times.
- A continuous risk assessment would be conducted to reallocate staff to areas where disturbances were likely to occur.

The Chair notified the applicant that they have 21 days to appeal the decision made during the hearing, via the Magistrates Court, from the date of receiving the decision notice.

Mr Crew and Mr McNeil thanked the Sub-Committee and left the meeting.

79. Application for a variation to a Premises Licence – Heat Afro Lounge, 282 Cowley Road, Oxford, OX4 1UR

Mr Mohammed Halilu, Samuel A Akinyemi, Mr Ken Adhere Rawlings and Mr Ebrima Jabbi joined the meeting.

The Chair welcomed all attendees. The Sub-Committee and officers introduced themselves. The Chair outlined the procedure for the hearing.

The Licensing Compliance Officer presented the report, noting the requirement for members to determine an application submitted by Heat Afro Lounge for a variation of a Premises License application in respect of 282 Cowley Road, Oxford, OX4 1UR.

The Licensing Compliance Officer summarised the report, stating that the applicant applied for the following:

Sale of Alcohol (On Sales Only)

- Current Hours: Sunday to Saturday 12:00 to 00:00 hours
- Proposed Hours: Monday to Wednesday 12:30 to 00:30 hours and Thursday to Sunday 12:30 to 01:30 hours

Late Night Refreshment (Indoors Only)

- Current Hours: Sunday to Saturday 23:00 to 00:00 hours
- Proposed Hours: Monday to Wednesday 23:00 to 00:30 hours Thursday to Sunday 23:00 to 01:30 hours

Recorded Music (Indoors Only)

- Current Hours: Sunday to Saturday 09:00 to 00:00 hours
- Proposed Hours: Monday to Wednesday 23:00 to 00:30 hours Thursday to Sunday 23:00 to 01:30 hours

Live Music (Indoors Only)

- New Activity Proposed: Monday to Wednesday 23:00 to 00:30 hours and Thursday to Sunday 23:00 to 01:30 hours

Opening Hours

- New proposed hours (not previously specified): Monday to Wednesday 12:30 to 01:00 hours Thursday to Sunday 12:30 to 02:00 hours

The Sub-Committee understood that a copy of the application could be found in appendix one, with details of both the application and the steps that the applicant intended to take to promote licensing objectives. The Licensing Compliance Officer stated that these measures would become enforceable conditions attached to the licence should the variation be granted.

The existing premises licence was attached to the report at appendix two.

The Licensing Compliance Officer explained that there were no representations received by Responsible Authorities and 1 representation from an Interested Party which can be found in appendix three.

A map detailing the applicant's premises and the surrounding area was enclosed in appendix four.

The Sub-Committee were reminded of its responsibilities under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (to co-operate in the reduction of crime and disorder in Oxford) and the Human Rights Act 1998 (which guarantees the right to a fair hearing for all parties in the determination of their civil rights, and also provides for the protection of property, which may include licences in existence, and the protection of private and family life) when considering the fair balance between the interests of the applicant and the rights of local residents. Any decision taken by the Sub-Committee must be necessary and proportionate to the objectives being pursued.

Members were also reminded that whenever they make a decision under the Licensing Act 2003, they have a duty to act with a view to promoting the licensing objectives, and only issues relation to the four licensing objectives should be considered and appropriate weight given to the importance and relevance of each representation.

The Sub-Committee were also reminded that they must make one of the following decisions which they consider to be appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives:

- To grant the variation in accordance with the application.
- To modify the conditions of the operating schedule by altering or omitting or adding to them.
- To exclude or restrict a licensable activity from the scope of the licence
- Reject the whole of the application

The Sub-Committee may also grant the licence subject to different conditions for different parts of the premises or the different licensable activities.

The Chair invited the applicant to present to the Sub-Committee.

Mr Akinyemi presented a variation application on behalf of Heat Afro Lounge for a variation to the existing premises license. He explained that he lived near the premises and never experienced any noise which disturbed his sleep. He stated that when the doors were closed, no sound could be heard from outside. Mr Halilu added that regarding the objection, he had offered to meet with the objector and considered additional soundproofing measures, but the objector declined and not agree to meet.

The Chair invited questions from the Sub-Committee.

Councillor Ottino asked whether the noise was monitored. Mr Halilu responded that they used an app to monitor noise and were willing to add this as a license condition.

Councillor Jupp inquired about the reason for the proposed extension of hours. Mr Halilu explained that the premises was the only African restaurant in the area, catering mainly to African clientele, who typically dined later due to cultural norms.

Councillor Jupp referred to the objector's description of loud bass music at night to which Mr Halilu denied.

Councillor Jupp raised further concern with previous noise complaints, but Mr Halilu responded that there had been none from the public.

Councillor Jupp asked about door closure, and Mr Halilu confirmed that doors were closed in the evening with a cut off time of 9pm. When asked how much noise could be heard outside when doors were shut, Mr Halilu said very little.

Councillor Jupp asked what type of music was played, and Mr Halilu responded it was Afrobeat.

Councillor Jupp asked the Licensing team whether any complaints had been received or whether there was any reason to believe the existing license was not being upheld. The Supervising Senior Licensing Officer confirmed that no complaints had been received by the Licensing department since Heat Afro Lounge took over the premises.

Councillor Ottino raised concern around nearby houses and the impact of extended hours on Thursdays and Sundays. Mr Halilu explained that on Thursdays, the African Caribbean University Society held events, expecting around 100 attendees.

Councillor Jupp questioned how public nuisance would be mitigated, and Mr Halilu stated they hired additional security. When asked how often security dealt with problem customers, the head doorman Mr Jabbi, explained that most of the clientele were working adults arriving after 10pm. He added that in the event of the DJ playing music too loud, he would ask them to turn it down. The Trainee Solicitor asked whether they received alerts from the noise monitoring app and Mr Halilu responded that they did.

The Trainee Solicitor further asked whether doors would remain closed at 9pm if the license was extended and they reaffirmed this.

Councillor Jupp asked whether IDs were checked at University events, and Mr Halilu confirmed that they were, with under 18s being asked to leave after 9pm.

Councillor Jupp further asked whether people tended to be noisy when leaving late at night. Mr Halilu responded that they had a crowd dispersal policy. He explained that the policy involved notifying customers 30 minutes before closing, staff training and his own participation with security to manage safe and quiet exits.

Councillor Ottino asked whether customers typically left before or after midnight and Mr Halilu responded that the premises was usually empty by 12:30am.

The Legal Advisor asked whether the applicant could assure the Sub-Committee that the venue was food-based. Mr Halilu affirmed that food was a significant part of the culture and the venue.

Councillor Yeatman asked whether further installations had been considered to address noise concerns, and Mr Halilu stated that they had soundproof doors.

Councillor Jupp asked whether there was audio in the garden and Mr Halilu responded there was a small speaker and that the garden had a roof that lifted.

Councillor Ottino asked about smoking arrangements. Mr Halilu explained that smoking was not allowed inside, but at the back when the roof was open it was accommodated.

The Supervising Senior Licensing Officer clarified that the garden area would still be classified as outdoor due to the openable roof.

The Chair invited the Licensing Compliance Officer, the Applicant and the Interested Party to make any final comments.

The Licensing Compliance Officer said in making its decision, members are reminded to have regard to the Home Office statutory guidance issued under section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003 and the Council's own Statement of Licensing Policy.

Mr Akinyemi and Mr Halilu had no further comments.

Mr Halilu, Mr Akinyemi, Mr Rawlings, Mr Ebrima Jabbi, the Supervising Senior Licensing Officer, and the Licensing Compliance Officer left the meeting to allow the Sub-Committee to reach a decision.

The Sub-Committee debated and considered:

- That the garden was classified as an outdoor space.
- That the proposed operating hours were acceptable.
- That a specific maximum decibel level must be agreed with Environmental Health, subject to adjustment should noise complaints be received.
- That all the external facing doors should remain closed during operational hours to minimise noise disturbance.

Mr Halilu, Mr Akinyemi, Mr Rawlings, Mr Ebrima Jabbi, the Supervising Senior Licensing Officer, and the Licensing Compliance Officer rejoined the meeting to hear the Sub-Committee's decision.

The Sub-Committee resolved to:

- **Grant** the application, subject to conditions such as the previous application of existing licensing conditions.
- the presence of a minimum of two licensed door supervisors on site from 10pm every evening.
- the requirement that all external-facing doors remain closed from 9pm onwards. Given the complaints and objections received
- the Sub-Committee emphasised the legal obligation that alcohol must only be served to people who are consuming food on the premises.
- Furthermore, no music shall be permitted in the back garden, as it is considered an outdoor area.
- To further mitigate noise and potential disturbance, the Sub-Committee recommended the installation of a self-closing mechanism on all external doors.

The Chair notified the applicant that they have 21 days to appeal the decision made during the hearing, via the Magistrates Court, from the date of receiving the decision notice.

Mr Halilu, Mr Akinyemi, Mr Rawlings, Mr Ebrima Jabbi, the Supervising Senior Licensing Officer, and the Licensing Compliance Officer thanked the Sub-Committee and left the meeting.

The meeting started at 6pm and ended at 9:40pm.

Chair

Date: Monday 15 September 2025

When decisions take effect:

Cabinet: after the call-in and review period has expired

Planning Committees: after the call-in and review period has expired and the formal decision notice is issued

All other committees: immediately.

Details are in the Council's Constitution.