
Licensing & Regulatory Sub-Committee

10 October 2022

Name of Cabinet Member:

Not applicable

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Director of Street Scene and Regulatory Services

Ward(s) affected:

Upper Stoke

Title: Application for a Premises Licence under the Gambling Act 2005

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive Summary:

The purpose of this report is to consider an application for a New Bingo Premises Licence under the Gambling Act 2005 for Merkur Slots, 241 Walsgrave Road, Coventry, CV2 4BB.

Recommendations:

The Sub-Committee is recommended to consider whether to:

1. Grant the application as requested.
2. Grant the application subject to such conditions that are necessary to promote the Licensing Objectives.
3. Refuse the application wholly or in part where it is necessary in order to promote the Licensing Objectives

List of Appendices included:

1. Premises Licence application
2. Operational Standards Document
3. Gaming Machine Proposed Plan
4. Plan of Premises
5. Representations
6. Location Plan
7. Hearing Procedure Note
8. Bingo Mandatory Conditions
9. Gambling Policy - Statement of Principles

Other useful background papers:

Gambling Commission's Guidance to Licensing Authorities

It is a statutory obligation of the Sub-Committee to take into account the Gambling Commission's Guidance to the Gambling Act 2005 before reaching a decision.

Gambling Policy Statement of Principles

The Council will have regard to the policy when making a decision on applications made under the Act.

Other Useful documents

None

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

Not applicable

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

Not applicable

Report title: Premises Licence Application

1. Context (or background)

1.1 The Gambling Act 2005 requires Coventry City Council, as the Licensing Authority, to carry out its various licensing functions so as to promote the following three Licensing Objectives:

- preventing gambling from being a source of crime or disorder, being associated with crime or disorder, or being used to support crime;
- ensuring that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way; and
- protecting children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling

1.2 A Premises Licence application for Merkur Slots was received on 25 May 2022. The application is requesting a Bingo Licence to operate Monday to Sunday 09:00 – 00:00 Midnight.

1.3 There are no restrictions on access to gaming machines in bingo premises.

1.4 Three representations from (other persons) have been received to the application (outlined in paragraph 3.3).

1.5 The Gambling Act 2005 requires the Council to publish a ‘Gambling Policy Statement of Principles’ which sets out the policies the Council will have regard to and apply to promote the Licensing Objectives when making a decision on applications made under the Act. The Policy will be available at the hearing for reference purposes.

1.6 It is essential that the Sub-Committee takes into account the government’s guidance to the Gambling Act before reaching a decision. The applicant, Responsible Authorities, or any other persons, should bring to the Sub-Committee’s attention any relevant paragraphs. However, it is suggested good practice for Members of the Sub-Committee to read the relevant paragraph(s) of the guidance prior to the hearing.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

2.1 There are three courses of action available to the Sub-Committee in relation to this application:

- (i) Grant the application as requested. If the Sub-Committee consider that granting the application would not undermine any of the Licensing Objectives, it should be granted in full as submitted. This would be granted subject to mandatory conditions and conditions consistent with the applicant’s operational standards, and any other conditions agreed by the applicant as part of the consultation / mediation process. Any conditions to be attached to a licence must be appropriate to promote the Licensing Objectives.
- (ii) Grant the application as above, but the Sub-Committee could impose extra conditions as it thinks fit, or make amendments to the operating schedule conditions, and/or proposed hours. This option may include adding any conditions suggested by other parties at the hearing, including the applicant. Any conditions to be attached to a licence must be appropriate to promote the Licensing Objectives.
- (iii) If the Sub-Committee concludes that no additional conditions would ensure that the Licensing Objectives would be upheld, then the whole application should be rejected.

- 2.2 Your officer recommends option (i).
The reason for this recommendation is that the applicant has submitted a robust Operational Standards document and a Local Area Risk Assessment that outlines in detail how the Licensing Objectives will be upheld.

The Responsible Authorities who responded to the Consultation have not offered up further conditions because they consider the application to be suitably conditioned for the type of business model and operation intended at the premises, and if problems do occur then the Review procedure is available to both responsible authorities and any other persons.

- 2.3 The Sub-Committee are advised that they may depart from the officer recommendation if, having heard all the evidence, they believe it is appropriate to do so. Should the Sub-Committee decide to depart from the recommendation and choose an alternative option, they must provide full reasons for this decision, based on the promotion of the Licensing Objectives. This application should be considered on its own merits and all the circumstances taken into account before a decision is made.
- 2.4 The Sub-Committee must also be aware that licences can be reviewed at any time by any Responsible Authority or any 'other person', if it is considered that any of the Licensing Objectives have been undermined following the grant of the Premises Licence.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1 As prescribed by the Gambling Act 2005, the application has been out for consultation to statutory consultees (Responsible Authorities) and any other persons for 28 days in the form of a notice displayed on the premises, and a notice published in a local newspaper.
- 3.2 Responsible Authorities have received a copy of the application. Please see below responses received:

Responsible Authority	Response Received	Objections	Conditions Agreed
Licensing	Yes	No	-
Police	Yes	No	-
Environmental Protection	Yes	No	-
Fire Safety	Yes	No	-
Health & Safety	No	-	-
Planning	No	-	-
Safeguarding Children	Yes	No	-
HM Revenue & Customs	No	-	-
Gambling Commission	No	-	-

- 3.3 Three representations from other persons have been received (Appendix 6). The grounds for the representations is that the granting of a Premises Licence would undermine the Licensing Objectives of protecting children and other vulnerable people from being harmed or exploited by gambling, preventing gambling from being a source of crime or disorder, being associated with crime or disorder, or being used to support crime and ensuring that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way.
- 3.4 A mediation meeting has been offered and if accepted, the outcome will be presented at the Licensing & Regulatory Sub-Committee Hearing.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

4.1 The Appeal period is 21 days beginning on the date that the Appellant(s) receive notification of the decision of the Licensing Authority.

5. Comments from Chief Operating Officer (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Governance

5.1 Financial implications

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. However, there are possible cost implications if an appeal against the decision is made to the Magistrates Court and the decision of the Sub-Committee is not upheld.

5.2 Legal implications

The Gambling Act 2005 sets out how applications for Premises Licences should be dealt with where valid representations have been submitted. The Sub-Committee have to decide the outcome of the application taking into account the three Licensing Objectives.

In accordance with the provisions of the Act, if a Licensing Authority rejects in whole or in part, an application to grant a Premises Licence, the applicant may appeal against the decision, to a Magistrates' court within 21 days of receiving notification of the decision.

Similarly, where a person who made relevant representations in relation to the application contends that the licence ought not to have been granted or that alternative or additional conditions should have been imposed on the licence, they may appeal against the decision, to a Magistrates' court within 21 days of receiving notification of the decision.

6. Other implications

6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy

It is the Regulatory Services team's responsibility to ensure that members of the public in Coventry are not put at risk. This contributes to the Council's core aim of ensuring that citizens live longer healthier lives. The business' failure to uphold the Licensing Objectives may have an adverse effect on Public Safety and citizen's quality of life.

6.2 How is risk being managed?

If the application is not handled in line with the Gambling Act 2005, there is a risk of judicial appeals, reviews and associated costs.

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

None

6.4 Equalities / EIA

This decision will not affect the service provision and therefore details of the Equalities Impact Assessment are not relevant in this case.

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment

None

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

The Council recognises that the licensing function is only one means of promoting delivery of the above objectives and should not therefore be seen as a means for solving all problems within the community. The Council will therefore continue to work with the West Midlands Police, Community Safety Partnership, local people and those involved in child

protection (Coventry Safeguarding Children Board) to promote the common objectives as outlined.

6.7 Human Rights Act Implications

None

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