

MERKUR CASINO, 59 SUMMER STREET, ABERDEEN

LICENSING BOARD – 23RD SEPTEMBER 2025

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**Highlighted Extracts of the Gambling
Commission's Guidance to Licensing
Authorities**

distinguish considerations made under the Act from those relevant to alcohol licensing, public entertainment or late night refreshments.

Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005

4.6. The position in Scotland is similar, with procedures and decision making requirements under both the [Licensing \(Scotland\) Act 2005 \(opens in new tab\)](#) and the Act. The same care must be taken by licensing authorities in Scotland to consider only those issues which are relevant to matters under the Act in their decision making, and to ensure that they follow the prescribed procedures under the Act.

Other provisions and legislation

4.7. Conditions on premises licences should relate only to gambling, as considered appropriate in light of the principles to be applied by licensing authorities under s.153 of the Act. Accordingly, if the Commission's [Licence conditions and codes of practice \(LCCP\)](#) or other legislation places particular responsibilities or restrictions on an employer or the operator of premises, it is not necessary or appropriate to impose similar conditions on a premises licence issued in accordance with the Act.

4.8. Similarly, where other legislation confers powers on inspection and enforcement agencies in relation to separate activities or concerns, the Act does not affect the continued use of such powers, for example, the powers of an environmental health officer in respect of statutory nuisance under the [Environmental Protection Act 1990 \(opens in new tab\)](#).

3 Licensing authority decisions

4.9. S.153 provides that licensing authorities shall aim to permit the use of premises for gambling in so far as they think it is:

- a. in accordance with any relevant code of practice under s.24
- b. in accordance with any relevant guidance issued by the Commission under s.25
- c. reasonably consistent with the licensing objectives (subject to a and b above),
- d. in accordance with the licensing authority's statement of licensing policy (policy statement) (subject to a to c above).

4.10. Therefore, a licensing authority has no discretion in exercising its functions under Part 8 of the Act, to grant a premises licence where that would mean taking a course which it did not think accorded with the guidance contained in this document, any relevant Commission code of practice, the licensing objectives or the licensing authority's own policy statement.

Delegations

4.11. The decision making powers of licensing authorities may be delegated, as set out in s.154 of the Act for England and Wales and s.155 for Scotland. Decisions that are delegated to a licensing committee, may be further delegated to a sub-committee, which may then arrange for the decision to be taken by an officer of the authority.

4.12. It is open to licensing committees to choose not to delegate decisions. An important consideration in determining whether any particular decision should be delegated will be whether delegation might give rise

to a risk of judicial review challenge, particularly on the basis of appearance of bias.

4.13. The tables at [Appendix G](#) set out a summary of licensing authority delegations permitted under the Act for England and Wales, and for Scotland.

Part 5: Principles to be applied by licensing authorities

1 Licensing objectives

5.1. In exercising their functions under the Act, particularly in relation to premises licences, temporary use notices and some permits, licensing authorities must have regard to the licensing objectives set out in s.1 of the Act, namely:

- 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
- protecting children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling.

5.2. It is expected that the licensing authority will have set out their approach to regulation in their policy statement, having taken into account local circumstances. This is dealt with in more detail at [Part 6 of this guidance](#).

Objective 1 : Preventing gambling from being a source of crime or disorder, being associated with crime or disorder or being used to support crime

5.3. Among other matters, licensing authorities may need to consider the location of premises in the context of this licensing objective. For example, in considering an application for a premises licence or permit that is in an area noted for particular problems with disorder, organised criminal activity etc, the licensing authority should think about what, if any, controls might be appropriate to prevent those premises being associated with or used to support crime. That might include conditions on the premises licence, such as a requirement for door supervisors. The requirement for conditions might be determined by the operator's own risk assessment or the local area profile carried out by the licensing authority, as detailed in [Part 6 of this guidance](#). A non-exhaustive list of licence conditions is provided at [Part 9 of this guidance](#).

5.4. A licensing authority will need to consider questions raised by the location of gambling premises when:

- formulating its statement of licensing policy
- receiving relevant representations to an application
- dealing with applications as a responsible authority in its own right considering applications before it.

5.5. In the context of gambling premises licences, licensing authorities should generally consider disorder as activity that is more serious and disruptive than mere nuisance. Factors to consider in determining whether a disturbance was serious enough to constitute disorder would include whether police assistance was required and how threatening the behaviour was to those who could see or hear it. There is not a

clear line between nuisance and disorder and the licensing authority should take the views of its lawyers before determining what action to take in circumstances in which disorder may be a factor.

5.6. Regulatory issues arising from the prevention of disorder are likely to focus almost exclusively on premises licensing, rather than on operating licences. However, if there are persistent or serious disorder problems that an operator could or should do more to prevent, the licensing authority should bring this to the attention of the Commission so that it can consider the continuing suitability of the operator to hold an operating licence.

5.7. Of course, licensing authorities are experienced in making judgements in relation to the suitability of premises, particularly those for which they have responsibilities under the [Licensing Act 2003 \(opens in new tab\)](#) and the [Licensing \(Scotland\) Act 2005 \(opens in new tab\)](#), in which context they have wider powers to also take into account measures to prevent nuisance.

5.8. In relation to preventing disorder, licensing authorities have the ability under s.169 of the Act to attach additional conditions to premises licences, and are entitled to include a requirement for door supervision, as provided for in s.178 of the Act. If a person employed on door supervision would be required to hold a licence issued by the [Security Industry Authority \(opens in new tab\)](#) (SIA), that requirement will have force as though it were a condition on the premises licence. Further information on conditions on premises licences can be found in [Part 9 of this guidance](#).

5.9. There are a number of voluntary initiatives that the gambling industry participates in to address issues such as underage access, staff safety and security. These change from time to time and licensing authorities are advised to check with local operators, for example when conducting inspections, as to which (if any) scheme the operator is a part of. For example, The Safe Bet Alliance's Voluntary Code of Safety and Security National Standards for Bookmakers. Further information can often be found on the websites of industry trade associations.

5.10. Licensing authorities do not need to investigate the suitability of an applicant for a premises licence, including in relation to crime. The issue of suitability will already have been considered by the Commission, because any applicant (except occupiers of tracks who do not propose to offer gambling themselves) will have to hold an operating licence from the Commission before the premises licence can be issued. However, if the licensing authority receives information during the course of considering a premises licence application or at any other time, that causes it to question the suitability of the applicant to hold an operating licence, these concerns should be brought to the attention of the Commission without delay.

Objective 2 : Ensuring that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way

5.11. Generally, the Commission would not expect licensing authorities to find themselves dealing with issues of fairness and openness frequently. Fairness and openness are likely to be a matter for either the way specific gambling products are provided and therefore subject to the operating licence or will be in relation to the suitability and actions of an individual and therefore subject to the personal licence. However, if licensing authorities suspect that gambling is not being conducted in a fair and open way this should be brought to the attention of the Commission so that it can consider the continuing suitability of the operator to hold an operating licence or of an individual to hold a personal licence.

5.12. In relation to the licensing of tracks, the licensing authority's role will be different from other premises in that track owners will not necessarily have an operating licence. In those circumstances the premises licence may need to contain conditions to ensure that the environment in which betting takes place is suitable. Further information can be found in [Part 20 of this guidance](#).

Objective 3 : Protecting children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or

exploited by gambling

5.13. In exercising their powers under s.153, licensing authorities should consider whether staff will be able to adequately supervise the gambling premises, as adequate staffing levels is a factor to consider regarding the prevention of underage gambling. The Commission would expect the operator and the licensing authority to work together to consider how any impediments to the supervision of premises might be most appropriately remedied. Supervision also applies to premises that are themselves not age-restricted (for example, bingo and family entertainment centre (FEC) premises) but which make gambling products and facilities available.

5.14. Where a licensing authority considers the structure or layout of premises to be an inhibition or potential inhibition to satisfying this licensing objective, the licensee should consider what changes are required to ensure the risk is mitigated. Such changes might include the positioning of staff or CCTV, the use of floorwalkers and the relocation of the staff counter to enable direct line of sight. Licensing authorities will need to consider the proportionality of changes to the physical layout in relation to other measures that could be put in place.

5.15. If the operator fails to satisfy the licensing authority that the risks are sufficiently mitigated, it may be appropriate to conduct a review of the premises licence.

5.16. In relation to casinos, the Commission has issued a code of practice on access to casino premises by children and young persons, as provided for by s.176 of the Act. The code of practice is available as part of the [Licence conditions and codes of practice \(LCCP\)](#) or as [Gambling codes of practice](#). In accordance with s.176 of the Act, adherence to the code will be a condition of the premises licence. Further information can be found in [Part 9 of this guidance](#) and [Part 17 of this guidance](#).

5.17. The Act does not seek to prohibit particular groups of adults from gambling in the same way that it prohibits children. The Commission does not seek to define 'vulnerable persons' but it does, for regulatory purposes, assume that this group includes people who gamble more than they want to, people who gamble beyond their means and people who may not be able to make informed or balanced decisions about gambling due to, for example, mental health, a learning disability or substance misuse relating to alcohol or drugs.

5.18. Licensing authorities need to consider, in relation to particular premises, whether any special considerations apply in relation to the protection of vulnerable persons. This could be a local risk that is reflected in the licensing authority's policy statement. Any such considerations need to be balanced against the authority's objective to aim to permit the use of premises for gambling.

2 Section 153 principles

5.19. S.153 of the Act provides that, in exercising its functions under Part 8 of the Act, a licensing authority shall aim to permit the use of premises for gambling in so far as it thinks it is:

- a. in accordance with any relevant code of practice under s.24 (the [LCCP](#))
- b. in accordance with any relevant guidance issued by the Commission under s.25 (this guidance)
- c. reasonably consistent with the licensing objectives (subject to a and b above)
- d. in accordance with the licensing authority's statement of licensing policy (policy statement) (subject to a to c above).

5.20. Whilst there is a presumption in favour of permitting the relevant premises to be used for gambling, the licensing authority may not do so unless satisfied that such use would be in accordance with this guidance, any relevant Commission code of practice, its own statement of licensing policy, and the licensing objectives.

5.21. In the unlikely event that a licensing authority perceives a conflict between a provision of a Commission code of practice or this guidance, and its own policy statement or view as to the application of the licensing objectives, the structure of s.153 makes it clear that the Commission's codes and this guidance take precedence.

5.22. In determining applications for premises licences, the Act explicitly sets out two principles that licensing authorities should **not** have regard to:

- s.153 makes it clear that in deciding whether or not to grant a licence, a licensing authority must not have regard to the expected demand for gambling premises that are the subject of the application
- s.210 (1) of the Act states that 'in making a decision in respect of an application...a licensing authority should not have regard to whether or not a proposal by the applicant is likely to be permitted in accordance with law relating to planning or building'.

5.23. A licensing authority is therefore afforded significant scope to exercise its powers under s.153 on the grounds that it does not encroach on the two principles set out above.

5.24. The requirements in s.153 are subject to the licensing authority's power under s.166 to resolve not to issue casino premises licences. This means that a resolution not to issue a casino premises licence applies regardless of the matters set out in s.153.

3 Codes of practice

5.25. The [LCCP](#) sets out the Commission's general licence conditions and associated codes of practice provisions under the Act. The codes of practice are set out within the second part of the LCCP.

5.26. To assist licensing authorities in determining premises applications and inspecting premises, all the [codes of practice](#) are also available as a single document. The codes specify a number of requirements, many of which relate to social responsibility issues, and these may be of particular interest where a licensing authority has concern about matters such as protection of the young and vulnerable. It should be noted that the codes also apply to situations in which the gambling being offered is not normally the responsibility of an operating licence holder. Examples include the code of practice for equal chance gaming and the code for gaming machines in clubs and premises with an alcohol licence.

4 Good practice in regulation

5.27. Under the [Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act 2006 \(opens in new tab\)](#), any person exercising a specified regulatory function has a legal duty to have regard to the statutory principles of good regulation in the exercise of the function ([Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act 2006 \(opens in new tab\)](#), section 21). These provide that regulatory activities should be carried out in a way which is transparent, accountable, proportionate, and consistent and should be targeted only at cases in which action is needed. The Commission has regard to these principles in relation to its responsibilities and also has regard to the requirements of the Regulators' Code (previously the Regulators' Compliance Code), Department of Business, Innovation and Skills⁵, 2014, issued under section 23 of the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act 2006 ([opens in new tab](#)). The purpose of the Code is to promote efficient and effective approaches to regulatory inspection and enforcement which improve regulatory outcomes without imposing unnecessary burdens on business.

5.28. The statutory principles of good regulation and the Code also apply to local authorities, who are under a statutory duty to have regard to them when fulfilling their regulatory functions under the Act. The

[Legislative and Regulatory Reform \(Regulatory Functions\) Order 2007 \(opens in new tab\)](#), was amended by the [Legislative and Regulatory Reform \(Regulatory Functions\) \(Amendment\) Order 2009 \(opens in new tab\)](#), which, amongst other things, extended the application of the 2007 Order to local authorities in Wales and Scotland exercising regulatory functions under the [Gambling Act 2005 \(opens in new tab\)](#) - see [Part 3 of this guidance](#) and [Part 7 of this guidance](#).

5.29. Guidance produced by Regulatory Delivery now replaced by the Office of Product Safety and Standards seeks to assist local authorities in interpreting the requirements of the Regulator's Code for example in delivering risk-based regulation in relation to age restrictions.

Age-restricted products and services framework⁶ sets out an agreed set of shared responsibilities and reasonable expectations for young people, their parents and carers, businesses, employees and regulators with regards to access to age restricted products and services. The document forms the foundations of the Age-restricted products and services: a code of practice for regulatory delivery⁷.

⁵ Now the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

⁶ [Age-restricted products and services framework \(opens in new tab\)](#)

⁷ [Age-restricted products and services: a code of practice for regulatory delivery \(opens in new tab\)](#)

5 Human Rights Act 1998

5.30. The Secretary of State has certified that the Act is compatible with the European Convention on Human Rights. In considering applications, and taking enforcement action under the Act, licensing authorities should bear in mind that they are subject to the [Human Rights Act 1998 \(opens in new tab\)](#) and in particular:

- Article 1, Protocol 1 – peaceful enjoyment of possessions. A licence is considered a possession in law and people should not be deprived of their possessions except in the public interest
- Article 6 – right to a fair hearing
- Article 8 – respect for private and family life. In particular, removal or restriction of a licence may affect a person's private life
- Article 10 – right to freedom of expression.

6 Other considerations

5.31. Licensing authorities should not turn down applications for premises licences where relevant objections can be dealt with through the use of conditions. In determining applications for premises licences and permits, a licensing authority may request as much information as it requires to satisfy itself that all the requirements set out at s.153 of the Act are met.

5.32. Licensing authorities must ensure that the application is in accordance with the relevant codes of practice, this guidance, the licensing objectives and the licensing authority's own policy statement. There is, therefore, significant scope for licensing authorities to request additional information from the applicant where they have concerns about both new applications and variations.

5.33. Where concerns remain, licensing authorities may choose to attach conditions to the premises licence. Further details are provided in [Part 9 of this guidance](#) and a non-exhaustive list of licence conditions is included at [Part 9 of this guidance](#) of this guidance.

5.34. Licensing authorities should be aware that other considerations such as moral or ethical objections to gambling are not a valid reason to reject applications for premises licences. In deciding to reject an application, a licensing authority should rely on reasons that demonstrate that the licensing objectives are not being, or are unlikely to be, met, and such objections do not relate to the licensing objectives. An authority's decision cannot be based on dislike of gambling, or a general notion that it is undesirable to allow gambling premises in an area (with the exception of the casino resolution powers).

- where the premises include, or consist of, one or more buildings, the location of any external or internal walls of each such building
- where the premises form part of a building, the location of any external or internal walls of the building which are included in the premises
- where the premises are a vessel or a part of a vessel, the location of any part of the sides of the vessel, and of any internal walls of the vessel, which are included in the premises
- the location of each point of entry to and exit from the premises, including in each case a description of the place from which entry is made or to which the exit leads.

7.46. The Regulation states (other than in respect of a track) ‘...the plan must show the location and extent of any part of the premises which will be used to provide facilities for gambling in reliance on the licence’. However, licensing authorities may consider that this minimum requirement is not sufficient to satisfy them when determining if the application is in accordance with s.153 principles, namely the licensing objectives, this guidance and the Commission’s codes of practice – in particular the social responsibility codes – and the licensing authorities’ own policy statement. If the application and accompanying plan are insufficient, the licensing authority should ask for more information from the applicant.

7.47. The premises plan itself is only one means by which the licensing authority may seek reassurance that the requirements will be met. It may be that conditions attached to the premises licence regarding lines of sight between the counter and the gaming machines, staffing arrangements or security devices are a more effective method of doing so. Local circumstances and concerns, and the layout of a particular premises, will determine what is most appropriate for an individual application.

Notice of application

7.48. The Secretary of State and Scottish Ministers have made regulations (SI 2007/459: The Gambling Act 2005 (Premises Licences and Provisional Statements) Regulations 2007 and SSI 2007/196 for Scotland) requiring the applicant to publish notice of their application and to notify responsible authorities and other persons about the application. These also apply, with one or two modifications, in relation to applications for provisional statements and some ancillary applications that can be made in relation to a premises licence.

7.49. Notice must be given in three ways:

- a notice placed outside the premises for 28 consecutive days in a place where it can be read conveniently
- in a newspaper or newsletter of local relevance, on at least one occasion within ten days of the application being made
- to all responsible authorities, which includes the Commission, within seven days of the application being made.

7.50. A licence application, and any licence subsequently issued, is not valid if the relevant notifications have not been made.

6 Application for premises variation (s.187): ‘material change’

7.51. Previous guidance from [the Department for Culture, Media and Sport \(opens in new tab\)](#) and the Commission has been that an application for a variation will only be required where there are material changes to the layout of the premises. What constitutes a material change will be a matter for local determination, but it is expected that a common sense approach will be adopted. When considering an

application for variations, the licensing authority will have regard to the principles to be applied as set out in s.153 of the Act.

Representations

7.52. In dealing with an application, licensing authorities are obliged to consider representations from two categories of person, referred to in the Act as 'responsible authorities' and 'interested parties'. Representations from other parties are inadmissible. Further information on these categories can be found in [Part 8 of this guidance](#).

7.53. Having determined that the representation is admissible, the licensing authority must consider its relevance. Only representations that relate to the licensing objectives, or that raise issues under the licensing authority's policy statement, or the Commission's guidance or codes of practice, are likely to be relevant.

7.54. The licensing authority will also need to consider if representations are 'frivolous' or 'vexatious'. This is a question of fact and licensing authorities are advised to seek help from their legal advisers in interpreting these phrases although relevant considerations may include:

- who is making the representation, and whether there is a history of making representations that are not relevant
- whether it raises a 'relevant' issue
- whether it raises issues specifically to do with the premises that are the subject of the application.

7.55. The Commission does not routinely make representations on premises licence applications. However, the fact that the Commission has not made a representation on a particular premises licence application should not be taken as indicating the Commission's approval of that application. Exceptionally, where an application for a premises licence, or the operation of a current premises licence, raises matters of wider or national significance, the Commission will consider making representations or requesting a review.

Making a decision

7.56. As explained earlier, the licensing authority's primary obligation under s.153(1) is to permit the use of premises in so far as it thinks that to do so is:

- a. in accordance with any relevant code of practice issued by the Commission
- b. in accordance with any relevant guidance issued by the Commission
- c. reasonably consistent with the licensing objectives (subject to a and b above)
- d. in accordance with the licensing authority's statement of licensing policy (policy statement) (subject to a to c above).

7.57. Further information and guidance as to the meaning and effect of s.153 is set out at paragraph 5.19 above.

7 Consideration of planning permission and building regulations

7.58. In determining applications, the licensing authority should not take into consideration matters that are not related to gambling and the licensing objectives. One example would be the likelihood of the applicant

replaced by other conditions, given the requirements of s.153. Where the condition is more restrictive, the licensing authority should ensure that they have clear regulatory reasons for doing so.

9.24. Default conditions under the regulations set out above relate to particular categories of premises licence and details can be found in [Part 17 of this guidance](#) to [Part 22 of this guidance](#).

Mandatory conditions

9.25. The following mandatory conditions apply to all premises licences:

- the summary of the premises licence issued by the licensing authority must be displayed in a prominent place on the premises. In England and Wales this must include a summary of the terms and conditions of the premises licence.
- the layout of the premises must be maintained in accordance with the plan that forms part of the premises licence.
- neither National Lottery products nor tickets in a private or customer lottery may be sold on the premises in England and Wales. Sale of National Lottery and private lottery tickets are prohibited in Scotland.

9.26. There are also mandatory conditions attaching to each type of premises licence controlling access between premises. There can be no direct access between one premises licensed under the Act and another premises licensed under the Act, with the following exceptions:

- between licensed betting premises
- between bingo premises and alcohol-licensed premises and/or clubs with a club gaming or club machine permit or family entertainment centres (FECs) and tracks
- between tracks and alcohol-licensed premises and/or clubs with a club gaming or club machine permit, FECs or betting premises and bingo premises
- between FECs and alcohol-licensed premises, bingo halls or clubs with club gaming or club machine permit and tracks.

Default conditions

9.27. S.169 of the Act gives licensing authorities:

- the ability to exclude from premises licences any default conditions that have been imposed under s.168
- the power to impose conditions on premises licences that they issue.

9.28. Licensing authorities should make decisions on conditions on a case-by-case basis, and in the context of the principles of s.153. They must aim to permit the use of premises for gambling and so should not attach conditions that limit their use except where it is necessary in accordance with the licensing objectives, the Commission's codes of practice and this guidance, or their own statement of policy. Conversely, licensing authorities should not turn down applications for premises licences where relevant objections can be dealt with through the use of conditions.

9.29. Licensing authority statements of policy will need to consider the local circumstances which might give rise to the need for conditions. Where there are specific risks associated with a particular locality, the licensing authority might decide to attach conditions to the premises licence to mitigate those risks. For example, local issues associated with a high crime rate may put a premises at risk of not being consistent with the licensing objectives, and specific conditions may be necessary to address the risk.

9.30. Where there are risks associated with a specific premises or class or premises, the licensing authority may consider it necessary to attach conditions to the licence to address those risks, taking account of the local circumstances.

9.31. Conditions imposed by the licensing authority must be proportionate to the circumstances which they are seeking to address. In particular, licensing authorities should ensure that the premises licence conditions are:

- relevant to the need to make the proposed building suitable as a gambling facility
 - directly related to the premises (including the locality and any identified local risks) and the type of licence applied for
 - fairly and reasonably related to the scale and type of premises
 - reasonable in all other respects.
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4 Conditions that may not be attached to premises licences by licensing authorities

9.32. The Act sets out certain matters that may not be the subject of conditions:

- s.169(4) prohibits a licensing authority from imposing a condition on a premises licence which makes it impossible to comply with an operating licence condition
- s.172(10) provides that conditions may not relate to gaming machine categories, numbers, or method of operation
- s.170 provides that membership of a club or body cannot be required by attaching a condition to a premises licence (the Act specifically removed the membership requirement for casino and bingo clubs and this provision prevents it being reinstated)
- s.171 prevents a licensing authority imposing conditions in relation to stakes, fees, winnings or prizes.

**Extracts from Hansard Parliamentary
Debate discussing the inclusion of the
prevention of public nuisance as a
Licensing Objective under the
Gambling Act 2005**

Hansard Extract

On 9 November 2004 (Standing Committee B) there was a debate in the House of Commons over whether to amend the Licensing Objectives to include "the prevention of public nuisance.) Below are the relevant paragraphs from Hansard.

The amendment was withdrawn. The following are material extracts from Hansard:

Column Number: 012

Mr Foster - Amendment to include prevention of public nuisance in Licensing Objectives:

Why is it important that we deal with that in the objectives? The answer is simple. As the Bill stands, the local authority is unable to take account of effects that may occur not in a new casino or on gambling premises, but further afield, outside those premises. It is crucial that local authorities have the opportunity to do so. Indeed, the Local Government Association said when it wrote to all Members about the Second Reading debate that the prevention of public nuisance should be a licensing objective:

"The licensing objectives set out in Clause 1 of the Bill do not address potential problems of nuisance arising in the street outside gambling premises. This is particularly likely late at night and when alcohol has been consumed. While the Environmental Protection Act 1990 places a duty on local authorities to deal with statutory nuisances arising from the premises itself, and to investigate residents' complaints, it is not possible to use this legislation to deal with street nuisance, even where the problem is directly attributable to a particular venue."

Use of the Environmental Protection Act for such matters is therefore not possible. The LGA goes on to say:

"This omission will seriously hamper the ability of councils to ensure effective management of the environment around gambling premises and provides residents with little scope to make representations should street nuisance occur. The LGA believes that a new licensing objective of the prevention of public nuisance should be added to Clause 1."

Column Number: 037

The Minister for Sport and Tourism *Mr Richard Caborn, addressing the amendment*

Some gambling premises (casinos and bingo clubs) are allowed to serve alcohol to their customers, and the Bill will not stop that happening. Their entitlement does not spring from gambling laws: as one or two of my hon. Friends have said, it comes from the licensing law itself. Casinos and bingo clubs in England and Wales get their entitlement from the Licensing Act 1964. However, by the time the Bill is on the statute book, the Licensing Act 2003 will have come into force. The equivalent licensing laws govern casinos and bingo clubs in Scotland. The 2003 Act includes the prevention of public nuisance as a licensing objective, understandably so given the unfortunate connection between excess alcohol intake and bad behaviour. That was referred to by a number of hon. Members this morning.

The relevant risks associated with licensing of pubs, bars and other premises on which alcohol is sold include noise and antisocial conduct, particularly at night. That has been referred to in connection with Guildford. Accordingly, it will be open to licensing authorities, when considering applications for casinos and bingo halls to be licensed premises under the 2003 Act, to take account of the public-nuisance risk just as they do when considering any other application. If any casino were to put its alcohol licence at risk by allowing public nuisance, it would almost certainly put its continued existence and its licence at risk. Therefore, it is unnecessary in the case of casinos and bingo clubs to duplicate provisions that are already in licensing law.

There is no intention of allowing other gambling premises, such as betting shops and machine arcades, to sell alcohol, and there is no reason to apply to them a nuisance test over and above the law on noise and other nuisance. There is no well-established association between betting and nuisance of the sort that unfortunately exists between alcohol and nuisance. We do not believe that

there is any reason to single out betting shops for special treatment in contrast to grocery shops, newsagents or any other shop.

There are provisions in the general criminal and civil law on the control of public nuisance. If they are not thought to be adequate, I am not expressing a Government view on this, the solution is to strengthen the general law, not to adopt specific measures for gambling premises on the basis of no

Column Number: 038

evidence of need. In practice, all licensed gambling premises are more likely to conduct themselves responsibly than the general run of premises, if only because they will have to satisfy not just the local licensing authority concerning their present licence, but the powerful gambling commission in relation to their operating licence.

Amendment No. 1 would be regulatory overkill. The official Opposition, who continually badger us about red tape and over-regulation, should reflect on their amendments in the light of my explanation. Amendment No. 1 would only reinforce the apprehension in the gambling industry that local authorities will be over-zealous in regulating premises, and I do not believe that those fears are well grounded. It would impact significantly on the matters that could be taken into account by local authorities and would go beyond what is reasonable. I cannot advise the Committee to accept it.

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200304/cmstand/b/st041109/pm/41109s02.htm>
<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200304/cmstand/b/st041109/am/41109s03.htm>

Extracts of Paterson's Licensing Acts

2025: Part 8 Para 5.158 – Premises

Licences

⁶ Standing Committee B, Thursday, 2nd December 2004 (Afternoon) Col 359.

Determination of application

[5.158]

In determining an application the licensing authority must hold a hearing¹ if:

- representations have been made by an interested party or responsible authority and have not been withdrawn;
- the authority intend to use their discretion under s 169(1) to attach a condition to a licence; or
- the authority intend to use their discretion under s 169 to exclude a default condition (ie a condition automatically attached to the licence under s 168 unless excluded by the authority in its discretion)².

A hearing may, however, be dispensed with if the applicant and any interested party or responsible authority who have made representations consents to this course³, or the authority think that the representations are vexatious or frivolous or will certainly not influence their determination of the application⁴. If the authority do propose to dispense with a hearing on these latter grounds they must as soon as is reasonably practicable notify the person who made the representations⁵, presumably to enable him to seek a remedy by way of judicial review if so advised.

Where the applicant for the premises licence is an applicant for an operating licence⁶ the authority cannot determine the application until the relevant operating licence has been issued⁷.

On considering an application for a premises licence (whether at a hearing or not) the licensing authority must either grant it or reject it⁸. In making that determination the licensing authority will be subject to the provisions of s 153 which sets out the principles to be applied by the authority in exercising all their functions under Part 8 GA 2005 (ie including, but not limited to, the grant or refusal of an application for a premises licence). Section 153(1) provides as follows:

"In exercising their functions under this Part a licensing authority shall aim to permit the use of premises for gambling in so far as the authority think it—

- (a) in accordance with any relevant code of practice under s 24,
- (b) in accordance with any relevant guidance issued by the Commission under s 25,
- (c) reasonably consistent with the licensing objectives (subject to paras (a) and (b)), and
- (d) in accordance with the statement published by the authority under s 349 (subject to paras (a) to (c))."

The subsection starts by imposing a general duty on the authority to 'aim to permit the use of premises for gambling' and then sets out a series of four factors which may, in any individual case, qualify or override the general duty. The first point to note is that the provision imposes a duty on the licensing authority: it must, subject to the qualifying factors, aim to permit the use of premises for gambling. What is the scope of this duty? It is suggested that there are two elements: first, it creates a presumption in favour of granting the premises licence since it is only if the licence is granted that the premises may lawfully be used for gambling. But the duty seems to go further than that. The verb 'to aim' is defined by the *OED*⁹ as meaning: '5. To calculate one's course with a view to arriving (at a point); to direct one's course, to make it one's object to attain. Hence fig To have it as an object, to endeavour earnestly'. The *Shorter OED*¹⁰ defines it as: '3. Direct one's course, make it one's object to attain, intend, try'. A person who 'aims' to achieve a result will usually take active steps to bring it about. The provision appears to place a duty upon the licensing authority to exercise their powers so far as is lawfully possible to achieve a position in which they can grant the premises licence and thus permit the premises to be used for gambling. The most obvious way in which the authority will be able to exercise their powers in this way will be by an imaginative use of their power to frame and impose conditions (see para 5.159 below) so as to overcome objections to the application which might, in the absence of suitable conditions, lead to the application being rejected. No doubt the authority could also, in a case where a licence application gave rise to issues which could not be addressed by suitably drafted conditions, seek to consider with the applicant whether amendments to the application might overcome the objections and enable it to be granted. However, it is also necessary to recognise that the language of s 153(1) stops short of being mandatory; 'aim to permit' provides a strong steer to look favourably on an application, but no more.

As to the list of qualifying factors, these are set out in s 153(1)(a)–(d). Section 153(1)(a) qualifies the duty to aim to permit use of premises for gambling to the extent that such use must be in accordance with any relevant code of practice issued by the Gambling Commission under s 24. That section requires the Gambling Commission to issue codes of practice about the manner in which facilities for gambling are to be provided (whether by the holder of a licence or by another person). In issuing a code of practice the Gambling Commission will be subject to a duty under s 22 to promote the licensing objectives. Accordingly any code of practice should be consistent with those objectives. Section 153(1)(b) qualifies the licensing authority's duty to aim to permit the use of premises for gambling to the extent that such use must be in accordance with any relevant guidance issued by the Gambling

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Commission under s 25. This section requires the Gambling Commission to issue guidance to local authorities¹¹ as to the manner in which they are to exercise their functions under the Act and the principles that they should apply in exercising those functions. Again the effect of s 22 is that in issuing such guidance the Commission will be under a duty to promote the licensing objectives, so again such guidance should be consistent with those objectives. The effect of all this is that any code of practice and any guidance to local authorities ought to promote the licensing objectives and no inconsistencies between the two should arise. On that basis codes of practice and guidance are placed (by s 153(1)(a) and (b)) as enjoying equal importance at the top of the hierarchy of factors set out in s 153(1)(a)-(d).

Next comes s 153(1)(c): this provides that the duty of the licensing authority to aim to permit the use of premises for gambling is qualified to the extent that such use must be reasonably consistent with the licensing objectives, but it goes on to provide that this condition is 'subject to paras (a) and (b)'. In principle there should, of course, be no conflict between (a) and (b) (which will both reflect the Gambling Commission's duty to promote the licensing objectives) and (c) (which will reflect the licensing authority's view of what the licensing objectives require). However the effect of the legislation appears to be that should there be any conflict between the two then the guidance set out in codes of practice or guidance emanating from the Gambling Commission will 'trump' any factors which the licensing authority themselves would otherwise have taken into account as relevant to the licensing objectives under s 153(1)(c).

Finally, s 153(1)(d) provides that the duty of a licensing authority to aim to permit the use of premises for gambling is qualified to the extent that such use must be in accordance with the authority's own statement issued under s 349. In preparing that statement the authority are not themselves expressly required to have regard to the licensing objectives, but they are obliged to have regard to guidance issued by the Gambling Commission under s 25 and such guidance deals, amongst other things, with the formulation by the authority of their licensing policy (see para AM5.6655). Since the s 25 guidance must itself promote the licensing objectives the effect should be that the authority's licensing policy will itself be consistent with those objectives so that it should not conflict with any code of practice or guidance issued by the Commission nor with the licensing objectives themselves. However, s 153(1)(d) provides that consideration of the licensing authority's own policy is 'subject to paras (a) to (c)' which appears to mean that in the case of an inconsistency a relevant Commission code of practice, relevant guidance or the licensing objectives themselves would 'trump' the authority's licensing policy.

In determining the application the authority may not have regard to the expected demand for the facilities which it is proposed to provide¹², nor may they have regard to the question whether or not the proposal is likely to be granted planning permission or building regulation approval¹³. Where the authority have resolved under s 166 not to issue casino premises licences an application for such a licence will, of course, necessarily fail and be rejected¹⁴.

Where the application is granted the authority must as soon as reasonably practicable give notice of the grant in the form prescribed to the applicant, the Commission, any person who made representations, the chief officer of police for any area in which the premises are wholly or partly situated and HMRC¹⁵ and must issue the licence to the applicant and must give him a summary of the terms and conditions in the prescribed form. If they have attached a condition to the licence under s 169(1)(a) or have excluded a default condition¹⁶ they must give their reasons¹⁷. If representations were made by an interested party or a responsible authority they must give their response to the representations¹⁸.

Where the application is rejected the authority must as soon as reasonably practicable give notice of the rejection in the form prescribed to the applicant and to the same parties as are entitled to be notified of a grant¹⁸. The notice must give the authority's reasons for rejecting the application¹⁹.

¹ As to procedure at hearings in relation to applications see SI 2007/173.

² GA 2005, s 162. See further para 5.159 below.

³ GA 2005, s 162.

⁴ GA 2005, s 162(3).

⁵ GA 2005, s 162(4).

⁶ Ie under GA 2005, s 159(3)(b).

⁷ GA 2005, s 163(2).

⁸ GA 2005, s 163(1).

⁹ *The Oxford English Dictionary* (2nd edn, 1989).

¹⁰ (5th Edn, OUP).

**The Gambling Act 2005 (Mandatory and
Default Conditions) (Scotland) Regulations 2007: Schedule 1**

**Part 1 – Conditions attaching to casino
premises licences**

**Part 5- Conditions attaching to converted casino premises
licences**

SCHEDULE 1

Regulations 4 and 5

Conditions attaching to casino premises licences

PART 1

Mandatory conditions attaching to casino premises licences

- 1.—(1) The principal entrance to the premises shall be from a street.
- (2) Any other entrance to the premises shall not be from premises that are used wholly or mainly by children, by young persons, or by both.
- (3) No customer shall be able to enter the premises directly from any other premises in respect of which a licence issued under Part 8 of the Act, or a permit issued by virtue of section 285 of, or Schedule 10 or 12 to, the Act, has effect.
2. A gap of at least 2 metres shall be maintained between any ordinary gaming table and any other equipment, apparatus or structure used by a person to gamble on the premises.
3. No more than 40 separate player positions may be made available for use in relation to wholly automated gaming tables at any time.
- 4.—(1) The rules of each type of casino game that is available to be played in the premises shall be displayed in a prominent place within the gambling area of the premises to which customers wishing to use facilities for gambling have unrestricted access.
- (2) This condition may be satisfied by placing a clear and legible sign displaying the rules within the gambling area of the premises, or by making available to customers leaflets or other written material containing the rules of the casino games available to be played in the premises.
5. Any ATM made available for use on the premises shall be located in a place that requires any customer who wishes to use it to cease gambling at any gaming table, gaming machine or betting machine in order to do so.

PART 2

Mandatory conditions attaching to regional casino premises licences

1. A notice shall be displayed in a prominent place at every entrance to the gambling area of the premises stating that no person under the age of 18 years is permitted to enter that part of the premises.
2. The gambling area of the premises shall not be capable of being seen from any part of the premises to which children, young persons, or both have access.
- 3.—(1) The premises shall contain a table gaming area the floor area of which is no less than 1000m².
- (2) Subject to sub-paragraph (3), in determining the floor area of the table gaming area, any number of separate areas within the premises may be taken into account.
- (3) Any separate area that comprises less than 12.5% of the minimum required table gaming area shall not be taken into account in determining the table gaming area.
- (4) No gambling shall be permitted in the table gaming area of the premises other than gambling on—

Status: This is the original version (as it was originally made). This item of legislation is currently only available in its original format.

(6) The rules of each type of bingo game that is available to be played in the premises shall be made available to customers in any part of the premises used for providing facilities for bingo and this requirement may be satisfied by—

- (a) displaying a sign setting out the rules,
- (b) making available leaflets or other written material containing the rules at each table; or
- (c) running an audio-visual guide to the rules prior to any bingo game being commenced.

7. No more than 40 separate betting positions may be made available for use in relation to a betting machine at any time.

PART 4

Mandatory conditions attaching to small casino premises licences

1. A notice stating that no person under the age of 18 years is permitted to enter the premises shall be displayed in a prominent place at every entrance to the premises.

2.—(1) The premises shall contain a table gaming area, the floor area of which is no less than 500m².

(2) Subject to sub-paragraph (3), in determining the floor area of the table gaming area, any number of separate areas within the premises may be taken into account.

(3) Any separate area that comprises less than 12.5% of the minimum required table gaming area shall not be taken into account in determining the table gaming area.

3. No gambling shall be permitted in the table gaming area of the premises other than gambling on—

- (a) casino games that are played on an ordinary gaming table or on a partially or wholly automated gaming table; and
- (b) real games of equal chance, other than bingo, played on a table.

4.—(1) The premises shall contain a non-gambling area which comprises no less than 250m².

(2) Facilities for gambling shall not be provided in the non-gambling area.

(3) At any time during which facilities for gambling are being provided on the premises, the non-gambling area shall contain recreational facilities that are available for use by customers on the premises.

(4) Lobby areas and toilet facilities may be taken into account in calculating the non-gambling area; but the non-gambling area shall not consist exclusively of lobby areas and toilet facilities.

5. A notice shall be displayed in a prominent place in any part of the premises used for providing facilities for betting, setting out the terms on which persons are invited to bet on the premises.

6. No more than 40 separate betting positions may be made available for use in relation to a betting machine at any time.

PART 5

Mandatory conditions attaching to converted casino premises licences

1. A notice stating that no person under the age of 18 years is permitted to enter the premises shall be displayed in a prominent place at every entrance to the premises.

2.—(1) This paragraph shall apply to premises which have a gambling area the floor area of which is no less than 200m².

(2) In determining the floor area of the gambling area, any number of separate areas within the premises shall be taken into account.

(3) The premises shall contain a non-gambling area, the floor area of which is no less than 10% of the floor area of the gambling area.

(4) Facilities for gambling shall not be provided in the non-gambling area.

(5) At any time during which facilities for gambling are being provided on the premises, the non-gambling area shall contain recreational facilities that are available for use by customers on the premises.

(6) Lobby areas and toilet facilities may be taken into account in calculating the non-gambling area; but the non-gambling area shall not consist exclusively of lobby areas and toilet facilities.

PART 6

Default condition attaching to casino premises licences

1. No facilities for gambling shall be provided on the premises between the hours of 6am and noon on any day.