MINUTES

of the

LICENSING COMMITTEE HEARING

held on 12th November 2026 at 10am

Present:

Councillor A. Thompson (Chair of Hearing)

Councillors H. Clark, L. Mascot and S. Shah

1. Apologies for Absence

No apologies for absence were received.

2. Declaration of Interests

All Members were reminded to declare any interests where appropriate in any items of business on the meeting's agenda. None were made.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 22nd October 2026 were confirmed as a correct record.

4. Licensing Act 2003 – Application for a Variation of a Premises Licence – New World Sound, Central Park, Chelmsford

The Committee considered an application to vary a premises licence under Section 34 of the Licensing Act 2003. The Committee also had regard to the representation made during the consultation period. This related to the promotion of the below Licensing objectives.

a) The prevention of crime and disorder
b) Public safety
c) The prevention of public nuisance
d) The protection of children from harm

The Committee were informed that the applicant had sought a variation to extend the days and hours during which licensable activities may take place, as detailed below, in comparison to the existing licence. It was noted the application did not specify a maximum number of days or events.

Day	Existing hours	Proposed hours
Monday	12:00–18:00	12:00–21:00
Thursday	Not authorised	15:00–22:30
Friday	16:00–23:00	15:00–22:30
Saturday	13:00–22:00	12:00–22:30

Sunday 13:00–22:00 12:00–22:30

It was noted by the Committee that there were three options available to them.

- Grant the variation as applied for.
- Grant the variation in whole or in part, with modifications to the licence conditions where appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives.
- Reject the application in whole or in part.

The below parties attended and took part in the hearing:

- Applicant
- Member of the public who had objected to the application

Officers informed the Committee that in response to the variation application, one representation had been received from two members of the public, on the grounds of the prevention of public nuisance licensing objective.

The applicant gave an overview of their application to the Committee. They highlighted their successful event over the August bank holiday weekend in 2026, which had involved partnership working with the Council's parks and licensing teams and the safety advisory group. The Committee heard that an extended event was sought for 2027 with slightly longer hours and the addition of licensable activities on the Thursday. They stated that the understood concerns raised, but would continue to work in partnership with responsible authorities to ensure the event could be carried out successfully and asked the Committee to approve the variation.

The Committee heard from the member of the public, who had objected to the application. They highlighted concerns in their representations including that music was hard to ignore, dba levels could be misleading, a lot of extra hours had been applied for and that 5 days of licensed activity was too much.

In response to the points raised by those objecting to the application and questions from the Committee, it was confirmed by the applicant that:

- The additional hours and day would help to make the event sustainable.
- They were happy to meet with the objector and record sound levels inside or outside their property, including offering a meeting with their acoustic consultants and that further engagement with resident would help to mitigate impacts.
- They had been advised by the Council's parks team that a longer event over one weekend, was preferred to two separate weekends.
- They would be happy to reduce the licensable hours from a 22:30 finish to a 22:00 finish on the Thursday, or to bring them in line with the 21:00 Monday finish time, but that would not be their preference.
- They operated a noise complaint hotline for residents to report issues, alongside specific procedures to deal with the management of bass levels.

The Committee thanked the attendees and officers for their input and advised that their decision would be made during the deliberation after the meeting. It was noted that due to the remote nature of the meeting, the decision would be circulated to all parties within a few working days via email.

The Committee gave careful consideration to the variation application and to the relevant representation both written and as expanded on in the course of the hearing. In addition, the Committee had due regard to the statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State under section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003 and to the Council's own Licensing Policy.

RESOLVED that the Director of Sustainable Communities be authorised to grant the variation application on the terms applied for **SUBJECT** to the limitation set out below.

Limitation

The licensable activities permitted on Thursdays shall cease no later than 22:00 hours.

(Note: At the hearing the applicant signified their agreement to this limitation.)

Reasons for decision

1. In reaching its decision the Committee gave careful consideration to the application including (i) the case put forward by the applicant at the hearing and (ii) the objections to the application which had been made in writing by the two local residents and which were amplified by one of them in the course of the hearing.

2. The Committee also had due regard to the statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State under section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003 and to the Council's own Licensing Policy.

3. In determining the application, the Committee was mindful of the fundamental requirement (as set out in paragraph 9.43 of the section 182 guidance and reiterated by case law) that any determination made by it had to be evidence based and justified as being appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives.

4. The Committee gave due weight (as it was bound to do so) to the fact that none of the responsible authorities (which included Essex Police and the Council's Environmental Health department) had objected to the application.

5. The Committee recognised and accepted that two local residents who had objected to the application held strong and genuine concerns about the application for the extended hours and the addition of Thursday to the premises licence. They did not consider Central Park to be a suitable arena for such events.

6. However, the Committee could only determine the application within the relatively narrow constraints of Licensing Act 2003 regime.

7. This was an application for a variation of an existing licence, rather than the grant of a new licence, and historically the applicant could demonstrate that they had a track of successfully operating large music events at Central Park without serious incident or formal complaints being made to the Council alleging noise nuisance. The variation had also to be seen in the context of the stringent noise limitation and control provisions imposed under the current premises licence by way of conditions – see Annex 3 of the licence. The indications were that these controls were effective.

8. The Committee was also bound to note that only two objections (both from the same household) had been received to the variation application, notwithstanding the fact that there were many other residences located in the vicinity of Central Park.

9. The Committee did, however, harbour some concerns about the licensable activities carrying on until 22:30 hours on Thursdays, when Fridays were (normally) a working day for many people and also a school day. The applicant, in response to these concerns, had agreed to, in effect, reduce the hours applied for in respect of Thursdays to 22:00 hours. On balance, the Committee considered such reduction to be appropriate for the

promotion of the licensing objectives.

Informative

The Committee welcomed the applicant's offer (made in the course of the hearing) to meet with the objectors and record sound levels inside or outside their property, including offering a meeting with their acoustic consultants.

The meeting closed at 10.25am

Chair