

**BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL**  
**LICENSING PANEL (LICENSING ACT 2003 FUNCTIONS)**

**10.00am 14 MAY 2025**

**VIRTUAL**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Councillors: Cattell, Hewitt and Pickett

**Officers:** Rebecca Siddell (Lawyer), Corrinne Hardcastle (Licensing Officer) and Shaun Hughes (Democratic Services)

**PART ONE**

**1 TO APPOINT A CHAIR FOR THE MEETING**

1.1 Councillor Cattell was appointed Chair for the meeting.

**2 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS**

**a) Declaration of Substitutes**

There were none.

**b) Declarations of Interest**

There were none.

**3 DRACULA'S HOUSE LICENSING PANEL (LICENSING ACT 2003 FUNCTIONS)**

3.1 The chair requested that all attendees introduce themselves to the meeting. The panel consisted of Councillors Cattell (Chair), Hewitt and Pickett.

3.2 The Licensing officer introduced the application to the panel.

Answers to Questions for the licensing officer

3.3 Councillor Hewitt was informed that the applicants were new owners and there had been no Temporary Events Notices applications. The previous license expired in 2022. It was noted that there were 13 other businesses selling alcohol in the area including Aldi and Co-op and there were no specialist alcohol sellers in the area.

3.4 Councillor Pickett was informed that there were 7 venues on London Road and 6 on Preston Road selling alcohol.

- 3.5 Councillor Cattell was informed that the Aldi, Co-op and Sainsbury's have licenses to sell alcohol, and both the Co-op and Aldi were open till 11pm.
- 3.6 Ward Councillor Shanks (objecting) was informed that the last granted alcohol license was in 2019.
- 3.7 Philip Wells (objecting) was informed that the percentage of Romanian alcoholic drinks would be difficult for the Police to measure.
- 3.8 Ivana Cimpoesu (applicant) was informed that the two alcohol license applications were refused between 2019 and 2025.
- 3.9 Ward Councillor Shanks (objecting) addressed the panel and stated that they had concerns about the amount of alcohol consumption on London Road. It was considered that the store was good for food but not for alcohol. The store is in the Special Stress Area so should be refused.
- 3.10 Ashok Reddy Lenkala (objecting resident) addressed the panel and stated that they live nearby, and the only parking was in Providence Place where people leave empty cans and bottles, urinate in the street and skateboard whilst drinking. There are 6 nearby off licenses that are very close to each other. The resident had no objection to the sale of food, just alcohol and they considered the area had declined in recent years with an increase in crime. They strongly objected to the application.
- 3.11 Madhavi Bodduluri (objecting resident) addressed the panel and stated that they objected to the application as there was already crime on London Road and this was against the licensing objectives. The resident considered Romanian beers to be strong which would leave to aggressive behaviour, which was not good for the bus stop customers outside the store.
- 3.12 Philip Wells (objecting) addressed the panel on behalf of 'London Road Brighton Local Action Team' and stated that they asked the panel to stick to the licensing matrix which assumes a no to alcohol licence applications unless there are exceptional circumstances. It was noted that the existing signage states off license even though the license has not been granted, and this shows a disrespect for the process.
- 3.13 Chandrakant Mehta (objecting) addressed the panel on behalf of the 'Black & Ethnic Minority Group' and stated that they used a meeting room nearby and members would find it challenging to use the bus stop if people were drinking alcohol there. Already people sit on nearby steps and drink. There are members of the street community on London Road, and they are sleeping in doorways. The panel were asked to refuse the application.

Answers to Questions asked of the objecting speakers

- 3.14 Councillor Pickett was informed by Ashok Reddy Lenkala that the worst times for anti-social behaviour was weekends and weekday evenings after 6pm.

- 3.15 Councillor Hewitt was informed by Philip Wells that the current signage states off licence. Rebecca Siddell confirmed that condition 6 stated no A boards, posters or placards should be displayed to attract attention to the sale of alcohol.
- 3.16 Councillor Shanks noted that the area was due for regeneration, and the funds would be coming from a s106 agreement for a recent nearby development granted planning permission.
- 3.17 Ivana and Ionut Cimpoesu addressed the committee as the applicants and stated that they did not mean to offend by advertising off licence, and this was a mistake. The banner outside the store was taken from another store in Horsham. All problems around anti-social behaviour relate to the selling and knowing when not to sell. The applicants want to work with the council and residents. The owners will not be working with UK providers as they will be importing products. This means alcohol will be more expensive. The applicants stated they knew when to say no and were very aware of what was going on in the street. Both of the applicants had worked previously in the industry at bars and Gatwick airport. The requested opening times seem short; however, most problems occur after 9pm when the store will be closed. The store is more grocery than alcohol.

Answers to questions for the applicants

- 3.18 Councillor Pickett was informed that the applicants would continue trading as a convenience/grocery store if the application is refused. 5% of sales of all sales is predicted for alcohol. The applicants are experienced at refusing and understand how to manage a challenging situation. Only food deliveries, no alcohol. The applicants were happy to sell only Romanian and no non-Romanian alcohol, and happy to amend the store signage.
- 3.19 Councillor Cattell was informed that the Horsham store was in the town centre near many pubs and off licences, they had no conditions attached to their permission in Horsham and teenage behaviours were the same.
- 3.20 Madhavi Bodduluri was informed that the store has security cameras covering the whole area, making shoplifting difficult. Shutters have been installed and cover the front of the store at night.
- 3.21 Ashok Reddy Lenkala was informed that the security cameras covered the whole store, there was always two members of staff on duty, and the alcohol would be stored behind the counter. The staff would be either the owners or the owners plus one parent.
- 3.22 Chandrakant Mehta was informed that all alcohol would be 100% behind the counter, with no self-service. It was thought there were no other Romanian stores in Brighton. Councillor Cattell noted that homeless persons can be helped by Streetlink and other groups.
- 3.23 Philip Wells was informed that the applicants were not aware of the Special Stress Area as they lived in Horsham. It was noted that the applicants wanted to retain the store if they refused an alcohol licence.

Summaries

- 3.24 Corrine Hardcastle summed up stating all parties had been heard and every application should be considered on its own merits.
- 3.25 Councillor Shanks noted the licensing objectives and requested the panel to refuse the application.
- 3.26 Philip Wells noted the Special Stress Area and considered the panel should decide.
- 3.27 Ashok only objected to the alcohol sales.
- 3.28 Madhavi Bodduluri considered there were no exceptional circumstances.
- 3.29 Chandrakant Mehta considered the store would add to problems if granted permission to sell alcohol.
- 3.30 The applicants understood the concerns raised and they wanted a family friendly environment as well. Happy to only sell Romanian alcohol and to take down the existing poster.
- 3.31 Rebecca Siddell stated they had looked at the conditions and were happy to amend to 100% Romanian alcohol only.
- 3.32 The Chair closed the meeting.

The meeting concluded at 12.26pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of