

**BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL**

**LICENSING PANEL (LICENSING ACT 2003 FUNCTIONS)**

**10.00am 21 MAY 2026**

**VIRTUAL**

**DECISION LIST**

**Part One**

---

**Licensing Act 2003 – Licensing Panel Hearing Notification of the Determination**

**Licensing panel hearing held via Teams on Thursday 21st May 2026 in respect of the application for a new premises licence in respect of premises known as V&M Store, 62 North Street, Brighton BN1 1RH.**

The panel has considered all the papers, including the addendum and Applicant's written submission. It has listened carefully to all the points and submissions made. In reaching its decision, it has had due regard to the Council's Statement of Licensing Policy (SOLP) and section 182 guidance.

The application is for a new premises licence, authorising the sale of alcohol off the premises every day, 10:00 to 22:00 hours within a mobile and vape store. The application is within the City Safety Area (CSA) and therefore subject to the special policy as set out in the Statement of Licensing Policy.

Our policy states that, although no longer subject to a blanket presumption of refusal, all applications within the CSA will be scrutinised against the new Matrix Approach (set out at 3.4 of the policy) meaning that applications which do not comply with the Matrix are likely to be refused (and the Licensing Authority acting as a responsible authority will generally make relevant representations objecting to the grant of a licence in these circumstances). As explained further below, the Matrix Approach will not be applied inflexibly but the Licensing Authority will only depart from it in exceptional circumstances. Cumulative impact remains a significant concern due to the high concentration of licensed premises within the CSA. This is evident from the police data at Appendix E of the policy. The Matrix states that off licences are a 'no' in the CSA.

Representations were received from Sussex Police, and the Licensing Authority. The representations raised the licensing objectives of the prevention of crime and disorder, prevention of public nuisance, the protection of children from harm

and cumulative impact.

The police are concerned about further increasing the availability of alcohol in an area already suffering from high levels of crime and disorder, and many existing licensed premises. The location in North Street is a very busy city centre location, and the police do not think there are appropriate conditions to mitigate the risk of a further alcohol outlet in this area. There are no exceptional circumstances they can see to depart from the policy which they consider should be followed in this case.

The licensing authority expressed similar policy concerns acting as guardians of the policy. Concerns were also raised following a visit to the premises on 8th May 2026 when drug paraphernalia was found in the window display.

The applicant's licensing consultant representative addressed the panel. He explained the reason for the application and the economic need to introduce alcohol sales. The new S182 guidance stated that when making licensing decisions licensing authorities should consider the need to promote growth and deliver economic benefits. It was considered that the application was capable of being considered exceptional. All the alcohol would be displayed and sold within a tiny area behind the counter with no self-service. Alcohol would be ancillary to the main products of vapes and mobiles so it was not a conventional off licence. Staff would be well trained with personal licences, and the manager of the store was an ex-police officer. A digital alcohol sales monitoring and risk assessment system would be introduced for each sale to reduce risk in the CSA. No other premises used this system and it had been developed for Brighton to enhance safety. The applicants were also willing to reduce the sale of alcohol hours to 21:00 hours if considered necessary.

The panel and other parties were able to question the applicant and his representative and did so concerning whether the application was exceptional, the history of the premises, the percentage of alcohol sales, and the detail of the digital sales system which the police considered was based on assessments that would be expected from all responsible retailers.

The panel has carefully considered this application on its merits and in light of the concerns raised by the responsible authorities, and the submissions on behalf of the applicant. The panel does recognise and appreciate that the applicant has put forward a number of measures such as the digital sales monitoring system to take account of the location of the application within the CSA, and there was willingness to make further concessions. The panel also appreciates the economic context and concerns. However, the panel is very mindful of the location of these premises in the heart of the CSA in an area of high risk and one saturated with licensed premises. Although a small percentage of alcohol is proposed for sale it can still be considered an off-licence in terms of the Matrix and off sales are a key concern within the policy and considered high risk. Ultimately, the panel shares the concerns of the police and licensing authority and does not consider that exceptional circumstances have been shown to depart from the policy. A further outlet selling alcohol in this location is likely to add to issues already existing in the area and undermine the

licensing objectives and the conditions offered will not fully mitigate the risk. The application is therefore refused.