

## GENERAL LICENSING COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 2 December 2025

**PRESENT** – Councillors Kane (Chair), Ali, Mrs Culley, Curry, Dulston, Lawley, Lee, Mahmud, K Nicholson and Toms

**APOLOGIES** – Councillors Crumbie, Donoghue and Haszeldine,

**ABSENT** – Councillors Ray

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE** – Councillors

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE** – Jim Langley (Principal Lawyer - Litigation), Brian Murray (Assistant Licensing Manager), Sgt C Dickenson (Durham Constabulary), Tom Mann (Licensing Enforcement Officer), James McAllister (Democratic Officer), Marc Atkins (Lawyer (Litigation)) and Anthony Hall (Superintendent Registrar)

### **LG15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

### **LG16 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THIS COMMITTEE HELD ON 21 OCTOBER 2025**

Submitted – the Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of the General Licensing Committee held on

**RESOLVED** – That the Minutes of the meeting of the General Licensing committee held on 21 October 2025 be approved as a correct record.

### **LG17 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE GENERAL LICENSING SUB COMMITTEE HELD ON 21 OCTOBER 2025**

Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of the General Licensing Sub-Committee held on 21 October 2025.

**RESOLVED** – That the Minutes of the meeting of the General Licensing Sub-Committee held on 21 October 2025 be approved as a correct record.

### **LG18 APPLICATION FOR/RENEWAL OF LICENCE FOR PREMISES TO BE APPROVED AS A VENUE(S) FOR MARRIAGES AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS - HALL GARTH HOTEL**

The Assistant Director, Law and Governance and Proper Officer for Darlington Registration District, submitted a report which invited Members to consider an application for the renewal of a licence to be an approved venue for civil marriages and civil partnerships in accordance with the provisions of:

(a) The Marriage Act 1949 (as amended by the Marriage Act 1994);

- (b) The Civil Partnership Act (2004);
- (c) The Marriage and Civil Partnerships (Approved Premises) Regulations 2005 and 2021; and
- (d) The Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act (2013).

The Superintendent Registrar spoke to this report, and informed the Committee that the hotel's current approved premise licence is due to expire on 9 January 2026, and that the Hall Garth Hotel is seeking a renewal of its licence as an approved venue for civil marriages and civil partnerships to commence for three years following expiry of its existing licence from 10 January 2026 until 10 January 2029.

The Superintendent Registrar provided the Committee with further context surrounding the venue, maintaining that the venue is extremely popular for ceremonies, and has an important role to play on the local and regional economy, attracting couples and their guests for weddings locally, regionally and nationally. The hotel has bookings for weddings for 2026, 2027 and 2028 which would require a continuation of its licence of civil marriages and civil partnerships beyond 9 January 2026.

**RESOLVED** - That that a licence as an approved venue for civil marriages and civil partnerships be granted to The Hall Garth Hotel, Darlington, for three years from 10 January 2026 to 10 January 2029 and that the places designated where civil marriages, and civil partnerships can take place and maximum capacity in those designated areas be:

Summerson Suite - 220  
Brifferton Suite - 120  
Residents Lounge - 25  
Stables Bar Conservatory - 40  
Restaurant - 40  
Conservatory - 50  
The Lounge – 30  
The Secret Garden Gazebo – 6 (unlimited guests outside of the gazebo).

**LG19 APPLICATION FOR/RENEWAL OF LICENCE FOR PREMISES TO BE APPROVED AS A VENUE(S) FOR MARRIAGES AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS - WALWORTH CASTLE HOTEL**

The Assistant Director, Law and Governance and Proper Officer for Darlington Registration District submitted a report (previously circulated) to give consideration to an application for the renewal of a licence for the Walworth Castle Hotel to be approved as a venue for Civil Marriages and Civil Partnerships in accordance with the provisions of The Marriage Act 1949 (as amended by the Marriage Act 1994); the Civil Partnership Act (2004); the Marriage and Civil Partnerships (Approved Premises) Regulations 2005 and 2021; and the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act (2013).

The submitted report gave a summary of the Walworth Castle Hotel as an approved venue; the designated rooms and maximum capacity for each room for civil marriage and civil partnerships.

The Superintendent Registrar spoke to this report, and informed Members that The Walworth Castle Hotel is one of Darlington's most popular venues for civil marriage and civil partnerships with ceremonies having always worked successfully and there have been no

issues for the duration of this current licence which would adversely affect this application.

The Superintendent Registrar provided the Committee with further context relating to the venue, noting that The Walworth Castle Hotel has maintained its popularity as a venue for civil marriage and civil partnership ceremonies for many years and the hotel has an important role to play on the local and regional economy, attracting couples and their guests for weddings locally, regionally and nationally. The hotel has bookings for weddings for 2026, 2027 and 2028 which would require a continuation of its licence of civil marriages and civil partnerships beyond 8 January 2026.

**RESOLVED** – That the licence for the Walworth Castle Hotel as an approved premise for civil marriage and civil partnerships be granted for three years from 2025 or a further three years from 2025 and that the places designated where civil marriage and civil partnerships can take place indoors at the premises and the maximum of numbers of persons who can attend those marriage and civil partnerships continue to be:

Reception Lounge - 40

Ballroom Lounge/Breakfast Room - 40

Ballroom - 100

Cardinals Court - 120

Hansards Restaurant - 80

King James Suite - 80

Library Tower - 10

Prince Bishops Room - 45

Dungeon – 50 (access via stairs only)

Lady Palmer's Pavilion – 6 and unlimited guests outside of pavilion.