
APPLICATION FOR THE GRANT OF A PREMISES LICENCE

Purpose of Report

1. To invite Members to consider and determine an application from Rockliffe Hall, Hurworth Place, Darlington, DL2 2DU for a new Premises Licence.

Summary

2. The application requesting the grant of a new Premises Licence was submitted to the Licensing Authority on 15 May 2026 by the applicant Rockliffe Hall Limited.
3. The applicant has requested the following indoor and outdoor activities:
 - Provision of regulated entertainment from 08:00 to 02:00
 - Films*
 - Indoor sporting events*
 - Live music*
 - Recorded music*
 - Performances of dance*
 - Anything of a similar nature to live music, recorded music or dance*
 - Provision of late-night refreshment from 23:00 to 02:00
 - Supply of alcohol from 08:00 to 02:00
4. During the 28-day consultation period, the Licensing Authority received 11 relevant representations from residents in relation to at least one of the four licensing objectives.
5. As these representations were not withdrawn following mediation, under Section 18 (3) of the Licensing Act 20023, the authority must hold a hearing to consider them before making a determination.

Recommendation

6. Members are requested to determine this application with a view to giving appropriate weight to:
 - Promoting the Licensing Objectives
 - Representations made by all parties
 - Guidance issued under Section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003

- Darlington Borough Council's Statement of Licensing Policy

Trevor Watson
Executive Director for Economy and Public Protection

Background Papers

The Licensing Act 2003

Section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003 (Revised February 2026)

The Licensing Act 2003 (Hearings) Regulations 2005

The Licensing Act 2003 (Premises licences and club premises certificates) Regulations 2005

Statement of Licensing Policy

Appendix 1 - Current licence

Appendix 2 - New application

Appendix 3 - Plans

Appendix 4 - Location and project overview

Appendix 5 - Public notice

Appendix 6 - Agreed condition with the police

Appendix 7 - Objections from residents

Appendix 8 - Extracts from Section 182 Guidance

Appendix 9 - Extracts from Statement of Licensing Policy

Contact officer - Colin Dobson

Extension: 405988

Main Report

Background information

7. Rockliffe Hall already holds a Premises Licence; however, with substantial redevelopment of the site, including an entirely new building, it was felt that a licence variation would be insufficient for their requirements and that a new licence was needed to reflect their business model. Whilst the concept of holding a second licence is not defined in the Licensing Act, it is a widely accepted practice for managing risk. It is, however, the intention of the applicant to surrender the current licence on the satisfactory grant of a new licence. A copy of the current licence is in **Appendix 1**.
8. Should this application be granted, until the current licence is surrendered, only one licence will be operational at any time, and the Premises Licence Holder must notify the Licensing Authority which licence it is operating under.
9. This application was made to the licensing Authority on 15 May 2026 and deemed to have been properly served and advertised in accordance with the Licensing Act Regulations. The consultation ended on 12 June 2026.
10. The applicant described the premises as:

“Hotel with spa and entertainment facilities, a restaurant, golf course and clubhouse”

11. A copy of the application can be found in **Appendix 2**, and the plans are attached in **Appendix 3**.
12. A map of the area and project overview is provided in **Appendix 4**.
13. Responsible Authorities under the Licensing Act 2003 were automatically notified of this application, and the public was made aware through notices on the premises and an advertisement in a local newspaper, a copy of which is in **Appendix 5**. Details were also published on Darlington Borough Council's website.
14. Any representation made must be deemed relevant by the Licensing Authority and relate to at least one of the four licensing objectives, which are:
 - Prevention of Crime and Disorder
 - Public Safety
 - Prevention of Public Nuisance
 - Protection of Children from Harm

Representations

15. No representations were made by any of the Responsible Authorities.

16. In response to this application, the police and the applicant agreed to transfer the conditions of the current licence to the new licence with slight amendments, with no representations being made by them. The agreed conditions are in **Appendix 6**.
17. The applicant confirmed there will be no outside music events, so Environmental Health had no objections to this application.
18. There were 11 objections to this application by members of the public who are all local residents, and parties to this hearing:
 - Stephen Garrett and Heidi Garrett
 - Rachel Pickles and Khalid Zaman
 - Peter Cheadle
 - Julia Steel and Shaun Steel
 - Daniel Arkle
 - Nigel Bainbridge and Ann Bainbridge
 - Ellen Timson and Andrew Hales
 - Stephen Leonard
 - Stephanie Leonard
 - Sandria Thomas
 - Bill Cunningham
19. All objections were deemed relevant and related primarily to the preventing public nuisance licensing objective in relation to noise. Three objections highlighted children in nearby residences who could be affected by disturbed sleep, thereby undermining the objective of protecting children from harm. One objection highlighted concerns in relation to possible crime and antisocial behaviour linked to the sale of alcohol. These objections are produced in **Appendix 7**.

Mediation

20. Residents and management of Rockcliffe Hall have demonstrated a willingness to negotiate a positive outcome throughout this process, and on 22 June 2026, a meeting was mediated by Assistant Licensing Manager Brian Murray; however, potential noise issues remain, notwithstanding that conditions in relation to previous noise complaints have been addressed within the current licence. At the time of writing this report, potential conditions were still being considered, and should any further information arise prior to the hearing, a supplementary report will be submitted for Members to consider.
21. The application requested the showing of films indoors and outdoors between 08:00 and 02:00 as part of the regulated entertainment. Rockcliffe Hall agreed that outdoor films would not be shown beyond 22:30.
22. In response to Mr Garrett's objection, Rockcliffe Hall Ltd. agreed to amend its application so that the external terrace areas shown on the attached plans shall cease to be used by residents and guests, save those who are smoking or vaping, at midnight. As already stated, they agreed that no outside music events would take place.
23. It should be noted that the current licence has a variety of hours covering its licensable activities. This includes terminal hours of 03:00 for the provision of dancing and recorded music outdoors. The terminal hour for activities requested on the new application will be 02:00.

Decision making

24. A licensing authority must have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State under Section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003. They may depart from it if they have reason to do so but will need to give full reasons for their actions.
25. Section 1.18 is a recent addition to the statutory guidance, which states that “when making licensing decisions, all licensing authorities should consider the need to promote growth and deliver economic benefits”.
26. Relevant extracts of the Section 182 guidance have been produced in **Appendix 8**.
27. Relevant extracts from Darlington’s Statement of Licensing Policy are in **Appendix 9**.

Options

- a) Grant the licence subject to conditions that are consistent with the operating schedule accompanying the application and the mandatory conditions set out in the Licensing Act 2003.
 - b) Grant the licence subject to modified conditions to that of the operating schedule, where the committee considers it appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives and the mandatory conditions set out in the Licensing Act 2003.
 - c) To exclude from the scope of the licence any of the licensable activities to which the application relates.
 - d) To refuse to specify a person on the licence as the Designated Premises Supervisor.
 - e) To reject the application.
28. The Sub-Committee is required to determine the application for the grant of a premises licence, considering the representations received.