

Licensing Committee

Wednesday, 19th March, 2025

MEETING OF THE LICENSING COMMITTEE

Members present: Alderman Rodgers (Chairperson);
Alderman McCullough;
Councillors Abernethy, Anglin, Bradley,
T. Brooks, Collins, M. Donnelly, P. Donnelly,
Doran, D. Douglas, Kelly, McCann, McDowell,
McKay, McKeown and Ó Néill.

In attendance: Mr. K. Bloomfield, HMO Manager;
Mr. S. Hewitt, Building Control Manager;
Mr. K. McDonnell, Solicitor (Regulatory and Planning); and
Mrs. L. McLornan, Committee Services Officer.

Mr. Stephen Hewitt

The Chairperson advised the Committee that this would be the last meeting which would be attended by Mr. S. Hewitt, Building Control Manager, who would be retiring from the Council at the end of the month, after thirty-five years of service.

Members from all parties paid tribute to Stephen for the contribution he had made to the work of the Council and they wished him well in his retirement.

Apologies

No apologies were reported.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 22nd January, 2025 were taken as read and signed as correct. It was reported that those minutes had been adopted by the Council, at its meeting on 3rd February, 2025, subject to the omission of those matters in respect of which the Council had delegated its powers to the Committee.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were recorded.

Delegated Matters

**THE COMMITTEE DEALT WITH THE FOLLOWING ITEMS IN
PURSUANCE OF THE POWERS DELEGATED TO IT UNDER
STANDING ORDER 37(d)**

Licences Issued Under Delegated Authority

The Committee noted a list of applications for licences which had, since its last meeting, been approved under the Council's Scheme of Delegation.

**Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Licences
Issued Under Delegated Authority**

The Committee noted a list of applications which had been approved under the Council's Scheme of Delegation during January and February, 2025.

Restricted Items

The information contained in the reports associated with the following two items was restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Resolved – That the Committee agrees to exclude the members of the press and public from the meeting during discussion of the following item as, due to the nature of the item, there would be a disclosure of exempt information as described in Section 42(4) and Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Members were also reminded that the content of 'restricted' reports and any discussion which took place during closed session must be treated as 'confidential information' and that no such information should be disclosed to the public as per Paragraph 4.15 of the Code of Conduct.

**Application for a Renewal Licence to
operate a House of Multiple Occupation for
60 Sandymount Street; and**

**Application for a Renewal Licence to operate a
House of Multiple Occupation for 29 Colenso
Parade**

With the agreement of the Committee, the HMO Manager presented the details of the two applications together.

**Licensing Committee,
Wednesday, 19th March, 2025**

The HMO Manager outlined that, pursuant to the 2016 Act, the Council could only grant a licence if it was satisfied that:

- a) the occupation of the living accommodation as an HMO would not constitute a breach of planning control;
- b) the owner, and any managing agent of it, were fit and proper persons;
- c) the proposed management arrangements were satisfactory;
- d) the granting of the licence would not result in overprovision of HMOs in the locality;
- e) the living accommodation was fit for human habitation and –
 - i. was suitable for occupation as an HMO by the number of persons to be specified in the licence, or
 - ii. could be made so suitable by including conditions in the licence.

The Committee was advised that, when considering the fitness of an applicant, the Council must have regard to any offences concerning fraud/dishonesty, violence, drugs, human trafficking, firearms, sexual offences, unlawful discrimination in, or in connection with, the carrying on of any business; or any provision of the law relating to housing or of landlord and tenant law. It also permitted the Council to take into account any other matter which the council considered to be relevant.

The HMO Manager provided the Committee with the details of the application and the relevant background information.

The Members were advised that the NIHMO Unit had consulted with the Environmental Protection Unit (“EPU”), the Public Health and Housing Unit (“PHHU”) and the Enforcement Unit (“EU”), who had all confirmed that there had been no relevant enforcement action required in respect of either HMO in the last 5 years in relation to nighttime noise, day-time noise, rubbish accumulation/filthy premises or waste.

A number of Members stated that they wanted to defer the applications and requested that officers would bring the proposed wording of the conditions to be attached to the licences to a future meeting.

The HMO Manager advised the Committee that, if it was to defer the applications, it was required to have the permission of the owner/landlord before applications could be made to the Court.

The applicant and owner of the two properties was in attendance and confirmed that she was content for the applications to be made to the Court.

**Licensing Committee,
Wednesday, 19th March, 2025**

After further discussion, it was

Moved by Councillor O'Neill,
Seconded by Councillor McKay and

Resolved – That the Committee agrees:

- to defer the two applications and to apply to the Court for the required extension of time; and
- that officers would submit the proposed wording of conditions to be attached to the licences to the next meeting.

Chairperson