

**Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982
Procedure for Disposal of Applications for Licences**

Report by Director, Resources

1 Purpose of Report

This report outlines the procedure to be adopted for a Hearing; and this report should be considered along with each application.

2 Procedure for Considering Applications at Hearings

The Procedure for considering applications is as follows:-

- 1 The objectors are given the opportunity to explain the basis of their objection (copies of the representations have been previously circulated to the applicant).
- 2 The applicant and the Members are given the opportunity to question the objectors.
- 3 The applicant is given the opportunity to speak in support of the application; and respond to the comments which have been made.
- 4 The objectors and the Members are given the opportunity to question the applicant.
- 5 The objectors and then the applicant are given the opportunity to sum up.
- 6 The Committee take a decision on the matter in the presence of the applicant and the objectors. The Committee may first adjourn but only for the expressly stated purpose of seeking procedural or legal advice (normally from the Clerk or Legal Adviser) and not for the purpose of taking the decision in private. The reasons for making the decision should be explained when conveying the decision.

3 Disposal of Applications for Licences

In disposing of an application for the grant of a licence the Committee may:-

- (a) grant the licence unconditionally;

- (b) grant the licence subject to conditions; or
- (c) refuse to grant the licence.

The Committee may refuse an application for a licence if, in their opinion –

- (i) the applicant or any other person responsible for the management of the activity is not a fit and proper person to be the holder of the licence;
- (ii) the activity to which it relates would be managed by or carried on for the benefit of a person other than the applicant who would be refused the grant of such a licence if he made application himself;
- (iii) where the application relates to premises, those premises are not suitable or convenient for the activity having regard to –
 - (i) the location, character or condition of the premises;
 - (ii) the nature and extent of the proposed activity;
 - (iii) the kind of persons likely to be in the premises;
 - (iv) the possibility of undue public nuisance;
 - (v) public order or public safety; or
- (iv) there is other good reason for refusing the application.

Otherwise the Committee must grant the application.

If the Committee grant conditionally or refuse the application, the applicant has the right of appeal to the Sheriff. The Sheriff may uphold an appeal only if he considers that the Licensing Authority in arriving at their decision:-

- (a) erred in law;
- (b) based their decision on any incorrect material fact;
- (c) acted contrary to natural justice; or
- (d) exercised their discretion in an unreasonable manner.

There is no right of appeal against the Council's decision in relation to applications for Temporary Licences.

4 Spent Convictions

Where the Chief Constable intends to libel convictions which are 'spent', if the Committee agree that justice could not be done without disclosure of these, the spent convictions shall be heard and details will be circulated if so agreed.

5 Treatment of Fixed Penalties, Police Warnings and other Alternatives to Prosecution (ATPs)

In terms of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 certain convictions become "spent" after several years and cannot be considered by the Committee ie with the exception of taxi and private hire car drivers, which Licensing Authorities are permitted to consider.

Representations by the Chief Constable either objecting to applications or seeking suspension may also contain details of conduct of the applicant which are not convictions, classed as ATPs, the main types of which include (1) warnings given by the Police or Procurator Fiscal; (2) Conditional Offers and Compensation Offers made by the Procurator Fiscal under Section 302 of the Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1995; (3) a Fixed Penalty offered by the Police under Section 129 of the Antisocial Behaviour etc (Scotland) Act 2004; and (4) certain foreign warnings or fixed penalties.

ATPs are "spent"; warnings become "spent" as soon as they are issued; and the remainder are regarded as "spent" within three months of issue.

Most ATPs appearing on such objections will be "spent"; offences that resulted in ATPs which are "spent" cannot be considered by the Committee; and the exemption allowing the Committee to consider "spent" convictions do not apply to ATPs.

The Chief Constable can ask the Committee to consider "spent" ATPs, by exercising discretion under Section 7(3) of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, which permits the Committee to consider them if it is satisfied that justice cannot be done except by considering them ie subject to the driver being asked for a view as to whether the information should be submitted (and before the Committee decide whether or not to consider any ATPs).

Many road traffic offences are dealt with through the issue of Conditional Offers of Fixed Penalties under the Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988 which are not ATPs and therefore can be considered by the Committee.

Letters from the Chief Constable objecting to applications may also contain details of complaints and allegations against the driver which have not resulted in conviction or ATPs and details of pending criminal court cases; and as these are not convictions or ATPs, can be considered by the Committee.

6 Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to note the terms of the report.

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Background Papers: File CG 10.1 (RGA)
Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982.