

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **Licensing Panel**

Held in the Committee Room 1, Council Offices, Woodgreen, Witney, Oxfordshire OX28
1NB at 10.00 am on **Tuesday, 21 July 2026**

PRESENT

Councillors: Mark Walker, David Jackson and Tim Sumner

Officers: Lorna McShane (Planning Solicitor), Andrea Thomas (ERS Officer, Professional Services), Andrew Brown (Head of Democratic and Electoral Services) and Anne Learmonth (Democratic Services Officer)

Other Councillors in attendance: None

27 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

28 Declarations of Interest

Councillor David Jackson declared that his son worked for McDonald's restaurant in Lemington but he was not predetermined.

29 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

This was the first meeting of the Civic year, there were no minutes to sign.

30 Application for a new Premises Licence - I&A Restaurants Ltd T/A McDonalds for the premises located at Ducklington Lane in Witney

The Chair, Councillor Mark Walker welcomed everyone to the hearing and introduced the Panel in attendance which consisted of Councillors David Jackson and Tim Sumner.

The Chair asked for the Officers in attendance to introduce themselves, Andrea Thomas introduced herself as the Licensing Officer, Lorna McShane introduced herself as the Legal Officer, Laura Nieve (Paralegal), Anne Learmonth, Democratic Services Officer introduced herself and the Democratic Services Officers, Andrew Brown, Head of Democratic Services and Elections, Matt Taylor, Democratic Services Officer and Maria Harper, Democratic Services Assistant.

The Chair outlined the process the hearing would follow and explained that the Panel would be advised by the Council's Legal Adviser, and Committee Clerk.

The Chair reminded all parties to highlight only issues that relate to the Licensing Objectives should be considered that being:

- The prevention of crime and disorder;
- Public Safety;
- The prevention of public nuisance;
- The protection of children from harm.

The Chair announced that the Panel were in attendance to consider an application for a new premises licence application made by Mr Mark Loughheed, Operations Supervisor and Mr

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Alistair Smith, Operations Manager, in regard to McDonald's restaurant, Ducklington Lane, Witney.

The Licensing Officer outlined the application for a new premises licence made by A&I Restaurants Ltd trading as McDonalds. The application was for a new premises licence for the sale of late-night refreshments for the site in Witney. The opening hours were for 24 hours and restricted to drive through orders and deliveries between 2300 hours and 0500 hours, Monday to Sunday.

The matter was before the Licensing Panel due to representations from local residents, in Annexe C of the agenda pack.

The Licensing Officer brought the members attention to the licensing policy details that stated that the licencing authority will only apply terms and conditions to licences to promote 1 or more of the licensing objectives and are relevant to the application.

The Panel were asked to consider the application and determine whether to:

- Grant the application as requested.
- Grant the application subject to such conditions that are necessary to promote the licensing objectives.
- Refuse to specify a person in the licence as the premises supervisor.
- Refuse the application in whole or in part where it is necessary in order to promote the licensing objectives.

The Licensing Officer advised that the West Oxfordshire District Council Statement of Licensing 2021 – 2025 was reviewed and updated every 5 years. This was in the process of being reviewed and until the publication the current policy remained in place.

The Chair then invited Mr Smith and Mr Loughheed to address the Panel.

Mr Smith gave an overview of the application which proposed the controlled overnight operation for the drive-through part of the business and delivery couriers for the hours of 23.00 – 05.00. Mr Smith acknowledged the concerns of local residents but explained that the restaurant would not be open during the proposed hours to pedestrian customers. The application met the licensing objectives. No objections had been received from the responsible authorities. The restaurant's operating schedule had safeguards that included on site CCTV and courier controls in place to minimise public nuisances. Mr Smith asked the panel to respectively grant the application for the new premises licence.

The Chair invited questions from the Panel, which raised the following points:

- The Panel asked what was meant by Manager Supervision. Mr Smith explained that the shift managers had training to support and look after all staff members with regards to various customers and how they respond to the staff. The training covered both day and night shifts.
- The Panel asked for clarification regarding Courier Control. Mr Smith explained that over the past few years McDonalds had introduced home deliveries using 3 different courier companies. The couriers were not employed by McDonalds. For deliveries they used a mixture of cars, motorbikes and e-bikes. Mr Smith emphasised the importance of maintaining a good relationship with the companies providing the couriers and negative behaviour was not tolerated.

- The Panel asked why the application for 24 hours was made. The applicants explained that there was a good business case for longer opening hours for drive through and delivery. It would serve customers who work night shifts, or later hours, there was an app customers could use and with the location of the restaurant being near to the A40 it was convenient for customers who were looking for a stop off. The geographical area covered quite a distance including Carterton.
- The Panel asked about the numbers of customers throughout the week. Mr Smith explained that during the weekday's numbers were lower than Thursday to Saturday. On average it was expected that there would be 30 to 40 customers an hour at busier times. It was expected that the business will grow.
- The Panel asked if between midnight and 6am there would be an increased number of vehicles and activity in the area. Mr Smith explained that there would be no dine in customers and cars on the site during the week would be at a minimum. It was expected that the business during these hours would be slow to build up but management would monitor the situation as business increased.
- The Panel asked what measures would be taken to address any disturbance or public nuisance. Mr Smith explained that historically during the day there had been some problems during the hours of 3.30 – 5pm however there had been training for managers to deal with teenage customers. These problems had been resolved. The customers who attend the restaurant at the later hours 23.00-05.00, will be in cars for the drive though only. The restaurant part of the business will not be open at these times.
- The Panel asked what engagement with the local community had been done. Mr Smith confirmed that the local community had been listened to over matters such as litter and any other concerns that had been raised. There was a litter patrol and as the application was for the drive through only there would not be any customers on the premises. For safety reasons no pedestrian customers were served at the drive through area.

The Panel retired to determine the application.

The Panel returned and advised that they had considered all the documents relating to the application and taken into account what had been said during the hearing. They had listened carefully to the applicant and considered the local residents' comments and concerns. The Panel stated that they had also considered the Licensing Officer's presentation and the Council's licensing policy and statutory guidance.

The Panel accepted the submission of the Applicant and granted the application for a new premises licence as per the operating schedule. The Panel advised that the Council had the power to review the licence should any issues arise in the terms of operations.

Resolved that the application be granted for a

- I. New Premises Licence located at McDonalds, Ducklington Lane, Witney, Monday to Sunday; late night refreshments from 23.00 to 05.00 hours, and restricted drive through and deliveries between 23.00 to 05.00 hours.

The Meeting closed at 10.48am

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CHAIR