

COMMITTEE REPORT

LICENSING COMMITTEE

17 August 2026

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION & HOUSING

Application for Review of Premises Licence

Applicant: Cleveland Police

Premises Licence Holder: Mr Percy Quarcoo

Premises: Lounge Afrique, 25 Corporation Road, Middlesbrough, TS1 1LP

Application received: 27 July 2026

Summary of Current Licensable Activities:

Films, Recorded Music, Live Music, Performances of Dance, Late Night Refreshment, Sale of Alcohol on the premises

Hours for Licensable Activities:

9:00 to 2am Monday to Sunday (Films)

9.00am to 02:30am Monday to Sunday (Live Music, Performance of Dance, Late Night Refreshment, Sale of alcohol)

9.00am to 3am Monday to Sunday

1. Summary of Application

The purpose of this report is for Members to consider an application for a review of the Premises Licence in respect of Lounge Afrique following an application for a summary review of the premises licence made by Cleveland Police on 27 July 2026.

A report outlining the Police's application for summary review was considered by the Licensing Sub Committee on 28 July 2026, along with written representations submitted by the Premises Licence holder, who was unable to attend the hearing in person.

After considering the report, representations from Cleveland Police and the written representations submitted by the Premises Licence holder the Licensing Sub Committee decided to suspend the Premises Licence and

remove the Designated Premises Supervisor as an interim measure pending the full review hearing.

The full decision and reasons were as follows:-

1. *The Committee considered an application from the Police for a summary review of a Premise Licence in respect of Premises at Lounge Afrique, 25 Corporation Road, Middlesbrough TS1 1LP.*
2. *Under Section 53B of the Act, Licensing Sub Committee must consider whether it is necessary to take interim steps pending a full review where, in the Police's opinion, the Premises is associated with serious crime or disorder, or both.*
3. *The Committee therefore considered the report, the application, the certification made by the Superintendent, the representations made by the Police and the written representations of the Premises Licence Holder.*
4. *The Committee considered Sections 53A and 53B of the Act, it considered the Council's Licensing Policy and the Government Guidance.*
5. *The Committee considered it was necessary to take the following interim steps pending the determination of the full review of the Premises under section 53B of the Act:*
 - a. *To suspend the whole of the Premises Licence*
 - b. *To remove the Designated Premises Supervisor*
6. *The reasons for the decision are as follows:*
 1. *A serious incident occurred in the vicinity of the Premises between 01:30am and 02:30am on 18 July 2026. It is alleged that the Victim, a child, was subject to serious sexual offence, namely rape, whilst at or following their attendance at the Premises.*
 2. *The Premises were open and serving alcohol at the time when a group of individuals, who were under the age of 18, including the Victim, attended the Premises and gained entry on more than one occasion.*
 3. *CCTV footage shows the Victim, along with a group of friends enter the Premises without showing Photographic ID on two occasions. On one further occasion, on the same evening, the Victim and their friends was stopped by a member of the door staff. Upon showing ID, of some form, on their phones they were subsequently allowed to enter.*
 4. *The CCTV footage from inside the premises shows the Victim purchasing what is believed to be an alcoholic drink on at least two occasions.*
 5. *The CCTV further shows the Designated Premises Supervisor at the Premises, behind the bar, with underage individuals including the Victim, within the Premises drinking what appeared to be alcoholic beverages.*

6. *The Committee believe that the failure of the staff to properly adhere to the conditions, namely executing age verification, has subsequently put the victim at risk, which then later led to the serious incident.*
7. *The Committee considered the history of other allegations, that were submitted by the Police, including other reports of sexual assaults and spiking, as well as this serious incident, and determined that there was serious crime at the Premises.*
8. *The Committee considers it necessary, pending the determination of the review, to address the immediate problems with the Premises, in particular the likelihood of further serious crime.*
9. *The Committee considered the circumstances of the incident that has given rise to the application, as well as the Victim being under the age of 16, the ongoing criminal investigation and thus determined that the interim steps are proportionate to prevent further serious crime and to promote the licensing objectives.*
10. *The interim steps take place immediately.*
11. *There is no right of appeal against the interim steps.*
12. *A full review is required to take place within 28 days from the date of receipt of the Application by the Police.*
13. *If the Premises Licence Holder makes representations to the interim steps a hearing will be convened to hear those representations within 48 hours (not including any non-working day).*

On 30 July 2026 an application was received from the Premises Licence holder to review the Interim Steps imposed by the Licensing Sub Committee on 28 July 2026.

On 31 July 2026 Members of the Licensing Sub Committee met to consider the application to review the Interim Steps imposed. After considering a report and representations submitted by the Premises Licence holder, Members determined to maintain the Interim Steps imposed at the hearing on 28 July 2026 until the full hearing.

A copy of the report considered by the Licensing Sub Committee on 31 July 2026 is attached at Appendix A.

The full decision and reasons were as follows:-

1. *On 28 July 2026, the Committee considered an application from the Police for a summary review of a Premise Licence in respect of Premises at Lounge Afrique, 25 Corporation Road, Middlesbrough TS1 1LP.*
2. *Under Section 53B of the Act, the Licensing Sub Committee considered whether it was necessary to take interim steps pending a full*

review where, in the Police's opinion, the Premises is associated with serious crime or disorder, or both.

3. The Committee considered the report, the application, the certification made by the Superintendent, the representations made by the Police and the written representations of the Premises Licence Holder, who was not in attendance on the first occasion.

4. The Committee considered Sections 53A and 53B of the Act, it considered the Council's Licensing Policy and the Government Guidance.

5. At the summary review, the Committee considered it was necessary to take the following interim steps pending the determination of the full review of the Premises under section 53B of the Act:

a. To suspend the whole of the Premises Licence

b. To remove the Designated Premises Supervisor

6. On 30 July 2026, the Premises Licence Holder made representations against the decision of the Committee and requested a hearing be held within 48 hours. As there had been a material change in circumstances, namely a number of steps that the Premises Licence Holder has implemented since the summary review, a hearing was listed for 31 July 2026.

7. At the hearing the Committee considered whether the interim steps are appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives; and determine whether to withdraw or modify the steps taken.

8. The Committee considered the submissions of the Premises Licence Holder, specifically that the Premises has put in place a new security team, ordered electronic ID scanners, begun to strengthen the safeguarding procedures, arranged further challenge 25 training, reviewed staff responsibilities/management procedures and started to implement safeguarding policies throughout the business.

9. The Committee considered the submissions of the Police who state a senior police officer certifies that in their judgment serious crime is associated with the premises. The Police state that there have been catastrophic failures from the Premises in their duty to promote the licensing objectives and comply with their licensing conditions.

10. The Committee further considered the Police's assertions that the Premises had started to put correct procedures in place to rectify issues, but that it is simply too early to be certain of the steps being fully fulfilled.

11. The Committee considered and understood the number of proposals that have been made by the Premises Licence Holder. However, the Committee were not satisfied that they were all implemented. The Committee note the new security team have not been fully engaged and that simply a preliminary meeting has taken place with the Owner of Alpha Security. The Committee note that the Premises Licence Holder concedes the new safeguarding training has not yet been provided to staff. The Committee note the ID

scanners are not yet in situ. The Committee also considered that the new proposed DPS is not yet engaged fully nor was the Premises Licence Holder certain of the proposed DPS' name.

12. The Committee, whilst they appreciate that the Premises Licence Holder has tried to remedy the issues, are not satisfied that these steps have all been actioned and have ensured the promotion of the Licensing Objectives.

13. The Committee consider the interim steps continue to be necessary to promote the licensing objectives and do not withdraw or modify the steps taken.

14. The interim steps continue.

15. There is no right of appeal against the interim steps.

16. A full review is required to take place within 28 days from the date of receipt of the Application by the Police, thus by 24 August 2026.

2. Legislation

The Licensing Act 2003 requires the Licensing Authority to carry out its functions with a view to promoting the four licensing objectives:

- The Prevention of Crime and Disorder
- Public Safety
- The Prevention of Public Nuisance
- The Protection of Children from Harm

The Licensing Authority must also have regard to its Licensing Policy and any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

Section 53 of the Licensing Act 2003 provides a procedure for a summary review of a premises licence by the Police for an expedited or 'fast track' review of a premises licence which authorises the sale of alcohol in cases where a senior police officer of the rank of superintendent or above gives a certificate indicating that in his/her opinion the premises are associated with serious crime and disorder or both. The procedure allows the licensing authority to respond by taking interim steps quickly, where appropriate, pending a full review.

Section 53 of the Licensing Act 2003 also makes provision for a Premises Licence Holder to make further representations to Members against any interim steps imposed at the Summary Review hearing. The Premises Licence Holder may do so at any time prior to the full review hearing. Where such representations are received a further hearing must be arranged within 48 hours to allow for these representations to be heard.

The Licensing Act also provides that the Licensing Authority must hold a full review of the premises licence and determine the review within 28 days after the day of the application for Summary Review made by the Police.

3. Consultation on review application

The premises licence holder, any responsible authority or any other person are permitted to make representations in respect of the review application following publication of a notice.

In response to the publication of the notice on 27 July 2026 a representation was received from Fiona Helyer on 5 August 2026 on behalf of Middlesbrough Council Licensing Service. (Appendix B).

Middlesbrough Council's Children's Services and Middlesbrough's Public Health have indicated that representations will be submitted by the end of the consultation period on 10 August 2026. These representations will be circulated upon receipt.

4. The Licensing Policy

Members are referred to the following relevant sections of the Council's Licensing Policy.

Prevention of Crime and Disorder	Page 20
Public Safety	Page 25
Prevention of Public Nuisance	Page 27
Protection of Children from Harm	Page 30
Reviews	Page 47

And any other sections of the Policy which Members consider to be relevant.

5. Guidance to the Licensing Act 2003

Members are referred to the following relevant sections of the Guidance.

Prevention of Crime and Disorder	Starting at paragraph 2.1
Public Safety	Starting at paragraph 2.7
Prevention of Public Nuisance	Starting at paragraph 2.15
Protection of Children from Harm	Starting at paragraph 2.22
Summary Reviews	Starting at paragraph 12.1
Economic Benefits	Starting at paragraph 1.18

Members may note that 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.'

Members may also consider any other sections of the Guidance that may be relevant.

6. Members' Options

Members may consider the following options:

- To modify the conditions of the licence.
- To exclude a licensable activity from the scope of the licence.
- To remove the Designated Premises Supervisor
- To suspend the licence for a period of not exceeding 3 months.
- To revoke the licence.
- Alternatively, Members may consider that it is not necessary to take any of the above steps and may issue an informal warning and/or or recommend improvement within a certain time period.

Any party to the hearing who may be aggrieved by the decision taken by the Licensing Sub-Committee would have a right of appeal to the Magistrates' Court.

Contact Officer: Tim Hodgkinson
Public Protection Manager (Licensing & Trading Standards)
Tel. 01642 728720

Contact Officer: Tim Hodgkinson, Licensing Manager
Tel. 728720
