

## The Highland Licensing Board

Meeting – 7 May 2024

<b>Agenda Item</b>	8.13
<b>Report No</b>	HLB/52/24

### Application for a major variation of premises licence under the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005

North Point Distillery, Murkle House, Forss Business and Energy Park, Forss, Thurso

#### Report by the Clerk to the Licensing Board

##### Summary

This report relates to an application for a major variation of premises licence by North Coast Distillers Limited t/a North Point Distillery in respect of North Point Distillery, Murkle House, Forss Business and Energy Park, Forss, Thurso.

#### 1.0 Description of premises

1.1 The premises is a working distillery with a retail shop selling off-sales alcohol and local produce. There is an on-sales tasting area in the still room. The premises are situated in an industrial estate at Forss Business and Energy Park in a detached building. The premises licence was granted on 11 November 2021.

#### 2.0 Current operating hours

2.1 The premises currently has the following operating hours:

##### On sales:

Monday to Sunday: 1000 hrs to 2200 hrs

##### Off sales:

Monday to Sunday: 1000 hrs to 2200 hrs

#### 3.0 Summary of variation application

##### 3.1 Variation sought

The applicant seeks to vary the premises licence as follows:-

- 1) amend the layout plan for the addition of a new tasting room and additional office space,
- 2) amend other activities provided on the premises,
- 3) substitute the premises manager.

## **4.0 Background**

- 4.1 On 19 March 2024 the Licensing Board received an application for a major variation of a premises licence from North Coast Distillers Ltd t/a North Point Distillery.
- 4.2 The application was publicised during the period 22 March to 12 April 2024 and confirmation that the site notice was displayed is awaited.
- 4.3 In accordance with standard procedure, Police Scotland, the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service and the Council's Community Services (Environmental Health) and Planning and Building Standards were consulted on the application.
- 4.4 Notification of the application was also sent to NHS Highland and the local Community Council.
- 4.5 Further to this publication and consultation process, no timeous objections or representations have been received.
- 4.6 The applicant must nevertheless be given the opportunity to be heard before the Board determines the application and has accordingly been invited to the meeting. The applicant has been advised of the hearings procedure which may also be viewed via the following link:

[https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/6399/licensing\\_hearings\\_procedure/licensing\\_board](https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/6399/licensing_hearings_procedure/licensing_board)

## **5.0 Legislation**

- 5.1 The Licensing Board must in considering and determining the application, consider whether any grounds of refusal apply and if none of them applies, the Board must grant the application.
- 5.2 Relevant grounds of refusal may be: -
  1. the grant of the application will be inconsistent with one or more of the licensing objectives;
  2. having regard to (i) the nature of the activities carried on or proposed to be carried on in the subject premises, (ii) the location, character and condition of the premises, and (iii) the persons likely to frequent the premises, the Board considers the premises are unsuitable for use for the sale of alcohol in accordance with the proposed variation;
  3. that the Board considers that, if the application were to be granted, there would, as a result, be overprovision of licensed premises, or licensed premises of the same or similar description as the subject premises, in the locality.

5.3 For the purposes of the Act, the licensing objectives are-

- (a) preventing crime and disorder,
- (b) securing public safety,
- (c) preventing public nuisance,
- (d) protecting and improving public health, and
- (e) protecting children and young persons from harm.

5.4 The Board only has power either to grant the application and make a variation of the conditions to which the licence is subject or to refuse the application.

5.5 If the Board refuses the application, the Board must specify the ground for refusal and if the ground for refusal relates to a licensing objective, the Board must specify the objective in question.

## **6.0 Licensing Standards Officer**

6.1 The LSO has provided the following comments:-

- a) The property known as North Point Distillery is an established distillery and visitor centre located in Forss Business Park, west of Thurso, Caithness
- b) The premises have operated with no adverse comment.
- c) This application is to increase the range of activities within the premises and to allow for guided tours and organised tastings within designated areas. The licensed area of the premises will also increase. The specifics of what is applied for are detailed elsewhere in this report.
- d) The activities sought are appropriate and suitable for the premises.
- e) The layout plan submitted complies with the required specifications.
- f) There would not appear to be any matter contained within the application that is inconsistent with the licensing objectives.
- g) During the period of public consultation, no objections were received.
- h) I have no objection to this application.

## **7.0 HLB local policies**

7.1 The following policies are relevant to the application:-

- (1) Highland Licensing Board Policy Statement 2023-28
- (2) Highland Licensing Board Equality Strategy

## **8.0 Conditions**

### **8.1 Mandatory conditions**

If the application is approved the mandatory conditions set out in Schedule 3 of the Act will apply.

### **8.2 Local conditions**

Existing local conditions apply.

**Recommendation**

The Board is invited to determine the above application and if minded to grant the application.

If the Board is minded to refuse the application, the Board must specify the ground for refusal and if the ground for refusal is in relation to a licensing objective, the Board must specify the objective in question.

Reference: HC/CSR/1972

Date: 23 April 2024

Author: G Sutherland

Background Papers: The Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005/Application Form.