

The Highland Licensing Board

Meeting – 31 March 2026

Agenda Item	8.1
Report No	HLB/20/26

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

Premier Inn, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness, IV3 5TD

Report by the Clerk to the Licensing Board

Summary

This report relates to an application for a major variation of premises licence by Whitbread Group PLC, Houghton Hall Business Park, Porz Avenue, Dunstable, Bedfordshire, LU5 5XE.

1.0 Description of premises

1.1 The Premier Inn is situated in its own grounds approximately two miles from Inverness City Centre and close to the Caledonian Canal. It consists of 170 bedrooms with a restaurant and bar in a linked building and car parking on site.

2.0 Summary of variation application

2.1 Variation sought

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

The development which triggers this application is the creation of 53 additional bedrooms (from 119 to 170 rooms) at the site and a redesign of the existing food and beverage area. The internal capacity in the bar/restaurant is reduced (from 274 to 200). The alterations to the operating plan (capacity of the premises) are as follows:

On sales - 710 (formerly 853)
Off sales - 1m2 (formerly 12.7m2)

Capacity breakdown - Bar and Restaurant:

Internal - 200 (formerly 274)
External - 182 (formerly 182)

Accommodation:

510 (based on 3 persons per bedroom) (formerly 397)

In addition, the applicant seeks to draw forward the hour non-resident children and young persons may enter the premises to 06.00 hrs, in line with current

stated operational hours of the restaurant.

The principal alterations to the layout are as follows:

- (1) Reduction in the operational area within the restaurant/bar with consequential alterations of layout (including a reduction of off-sale display area).
- (2) Remodelling of existing bedroom accommodation to create two universal access bedrooms (and loss of net 2 bedrooms) and additional 14 bedrooms on third floor.
- (3) Creation of two storey annex with additional 41 bedrooms.
- (4) New site plan reflecting new annex and path linking food and beverage area to annex.

Description changed to read: "Hotel with some 170 bedrooms with a restaurant and bar in a linked building and with associated car parking on site.

The Hotel accommodation block is included within the ambit of the proposed licence for the purpose of the residents' exemption within the 2005 Act.

Finally, the applicant wished to update the stated postcode on the licence, from IV3 8TD to IV3 5TD (to match the postcode as recorded by the Scottish Assessors' Association and Royal Mail).

3.0 Background

- 3.1 On 12 January 2026 the Licensing Board received an application for a major variation of a premises licence from Whitbread Group PLC.
- 3.2 The application was publicised during the period 19 January until 9 February 2026 and confirmation that the site notice was displayed has been received.
- 3.3 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.
- 3.4 Notification of the application was also sent to NHS Highland and the local Community Council.
- 3.5 Further to this publication and consultation process, no timeous objections or representations have been received.
- 3.6 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:

www.highland.gov.uk/hlb_hearings

4.0 Legislation

4.1 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.

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.

4.2 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.

4.3 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.

4.4 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.

5.0 Licensing Standards Officer

5.1 The LSO has provided the following comments:-

Inverness West Premier Inn is situated on the outskirts of Inverness. Plans are in place for the creation of 53 additional bedrooms to bring the total to 170 rooms and for a redesign of the existing food and beverage area.

(i) Application for a major variation is sought following the major renovation and reconfiguration of the premises, to increase the licensed footprint to incorporate the extension of the premises and to expand the ability to sell alcohol within the operating plan.

(ii) Application is sought at Q6(c), (d) & (e) of the operating plan to amend the

children and young persons policy to reflect the current operation of the premises. The proposed policy is compliant with licensing legislation and aligns with the licensing objective protecting children and young persons from harm.

(iii) Application is sought at Q7 of the operating plan to amend capacities with the main change being a reduction in off sales capacity from the current 12.7m² to 1m² which remains well within the Highland Licensing Board policy for the consideration of overprovision.

(iv) Application is sought to amend the description of premises to read: "Hotel with some 170 bedrooms with a restaurant and bar in a linked building and with associated car parking on site'.

(v) Amended layout plans encompassing all changes have been submitted with the application.

(vi) The previously operating history of the premises has been incident free.

(vii) During the public consultation phase of this application, no objections or representations has been received by Highland Licensing Board.

(viii) The LSO is satisfied that should the Highland Licensing Board wish to grant this application, then there will be no threat to the licensing objectives.

6.0 HLB local policies

6.1 The following policies are relevant to the application:-

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

7.0 Conditions

7.1 Mandatory conditions

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

7.2 Local conditions

Existing local conditions will continue to apply and no additional local conditions are considered necessary.

7.3 Special conditions

No special conditions are considered necessary.

Recommendation

The Board is invited to determine the above application and if minded to grant the application, to agree the proposed local conditions detailed at para. 7.2 above.

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/INBS/497
Date: 18 March 2026
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