

The Highland Licensing Board

Meeting – 23 June 2026

Agenda Item	9.3
Report No	HLB/62/26

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

Fort William Premier Inn, Airds Way, An Aird, Fort William, PH33 6AN

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 premises are located on the outskirts of Fort William town centre and consist of a standalone bar and restaurant known as Loch lall Brewers Fayre, together with the adjacent Premier Inn hotel accommodation. Whilst a significant proportion of customers stay at the neighbouring Premier Inn, the premises are also open to the general public.

2.0 Current operating hours

2.1 The premises currently enjoys the following operating hours:

On sales:

Monday to Saturday: 1100 hours to 0100 hours

Sunday: 1200 hours to 0100 hours

Off sales:

Monday to Saturday: 1000 hours to 2200 hours

Sunday: 1200 hours to 2200 hours

3.0 Summary of variation application

3.1 Variation sought

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

The existing Loch lall Brewers Fayre building is to be demolished and replaced with a new two-storey building which will be linked to the existing hotel accommodation block. The revised layout is detailed in the updated licensing plans supporting the major variation application.

(1) Operating plan:

- Amendment to commencement time for on-sales on Sundays: 11:00 hrs (previously 12:00 hrs).
- Amendment to commencement time for off-sales on Sundays: 10:00 hrs (previously 12:00 hrs).
- Internal capacity within the bar/restaurant will be reduced from 213 to 130 persons.
- Updated premises capacity as follows:
 - On-sales: 130 persons (previously 213 persons)
 - Off-sales: 1 m² (previously 5.5 m²)
 - Bedrooms: 363 (previously 309)
- Amendment to narrative at Q5 of operating plan to permit opening of the food and beverage area from 06:30 hrs.

(2) Layout plan:

Revised layout plan incorporating the following alterations:-

- Reduction in the operational area within the restaurant/pub.
- Creation of a two storey annex with an additional 18 bedrooms and a new food and beverage area.
- New site plan reflecting new annex and path linking food and beverage area to annex.

(3) Premises description:

Update description of premises to reflect above amendments as follows:

- Hotel standing within its own grounds with dedicated parking area and incorporating, within the hotel, a food and beverage area open to both residents and members of the public.

4.0 Background

- 4.1 On 20 March 2026 the Licensing Board received an application for a major variation of a premises licence from Whitbread Group plc, per John Gaunt and Partners, 372 Cemetery Road, Sheffield, S11 8FT.
- 4.2 The application was publicised during the period 19 May until 9 June 2026 and confirmation that the site notice was displayed is awaited. The Clerk will provide a verbal update.
- 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 the publication and consultation process, no timeous objections or representations have been received.

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service have confirmed that it has no objections to the application but has requested that all fire safety measures are in place prior to occupation of the new rooms.

The Board has shared this information with the applicant's agent.

- 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: www.highland.gov.uk/hlb_hearings

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.

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.

5.2 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.

5.3 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.

5.4 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.

6.0 Licensing Standards Officer

6.1 The LSO has provided the following comments:-

- (i) The premises are a hotel standing within its own grounds with dedicated parking area, and incorporating, within the hotel, a food and beverage area operation open to both residents and members of the public.
- (ii) The application is within Highland Licensing Board policy.
- (iii) The application is consistent with the Licensing Objectives.
- (iv) No objections have been received in respect of the application and the applicant's agent has been advised of the comment received from the Fire Authority as outlined at para 4.5 above.
- (v) I have no objections 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 will continue to apply and no additional local conditions are considered necessary.

8.3 Special conditions

No special conditions are considered necessary.

Recommendation

The Board is invited to determine the above 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/RSL/0730

Date: 10 June 2026

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