

COMMITTEE:	Licensing Board
MEETING DATE:	26 February 2026
BY:	Clerk to the Licensing Board
REPORT TITLE:	Extension of Licensed Hours for the Men's World Cup 2026 in USA, Mexico and Canada
REPORT STATUS:	Public

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek Board approval for the approach to extension of licensing hours required to permit licenced premises to show Scotland and other Home Nation fixtures at the FIFA World Cup 2026.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are recommended to:

- 2.1 Note the terms of the report and to consider the options set out for premises to be able to trade and show the Home Nation Fixtures during the 2026 FIFA World Cup.
- 2.2 To consider the options and approve either:
- 2.2.1 the General Extension under section 67 Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 set out in Appendix 1 of this Report; or
 - 2.2.2 the General Extension under section 67 Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 set out in Appendix 2 of this Report or
 - 2.2.3 the General Extension under section 67 Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 set out in Appendix 3 of this Report.
- 2.3 Delegate authority to the Clerk of the Licensing Board to consider, and grant extension of hours applications under section 68 Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 relating to fixtures at the FIFA World Cup 2026 with appropriate conditions as selected from those set out in Appendix 4 of this Report.

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 The FIFA World Cup 2026 (“**World Cup**”) is hosted by Canada, Mexico and the U.S.A. and due to time differences, a number of matches will either kick off or finish beyond licensed hours for many, if not all, licensed premises within the Board’s area.

3.2 The Scottish and English Men’s football teams have officially qualified for the World Cup while the Northern Irish and Welsh teams may still be able to qualify if they win their play-off games in March.

3.3 Scotland play three games in their group:

Sunday 14 June 2026: Scotland vs Haiti – kick off time 02:00 GMT

Friday 19 June 2026: Scotland vs Morocco – kick off time 23:00 GMT

Wednesday 24 June 2026: Scotland vs. Brazil – kick off time 23:00 GMT

England play three games in their group:

Wednesday 17 June 2026: England vs Croatia – kick off time 21:00 GMT

Tuesday 23 June 2026: England vs Ghana – kick off time 21:00 GMT

Saturday 27 June 2026: England vs Panama – kick off time 22:00 GMT

Northern Ireland and Wales still require to qualify before the date and time of their matches could be formally confirmed.

Should Scotland or any of the Home Nation Teams qualify from their group they will then progress into the knock-out stages of the tournament. The kick-off times for the knock out games are available however the actual match played would depend on route to qualification from the group.

Should Scotland qualify for the next round and finish second our understanding is that they will play in Mexico and that fixture will result in a 02:00 (GMT) scheduled kick-off time. In addition, if Scotland finish as one of the best ranked third placed teams they may also have a 02:00 (GMT) scheduled kick-off time.

It is not anticipated there would be any other fixtures with scheduled kick off of 02:00 (GMT) affecting any of the Home Nation Teams.

3.4 The qualification of the Scotland Men’s team to the World Cup represents the first time this century that the team has qualified. This is a magnificent achievement by the team that people across Scotland are very proud of and may be considered to be an event of national significance. It is also considered that as part of the United Kingdom the

qualification and participation of any of the home nation teams may also be considered to be an event of national significance.

- 3.5 Section 67 of the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 (the “**Act**”) provides a power for Licensing Boards to grant general extensions to licensed hours in connection with special events of local or national significance if they consider it appropriate to do so.
- 3.6 The Licensing Team have carried out consultation with the Licensing Trade and Police Scotland to understand their views on extending hours for World Cup games.
- 3.7 There was a clear and positive response from the Licensing Trade wishing to make use of any general extension permitted by the Board in relation to the World Cup.
- 3.8 Police Scotland were understanding of the significance of this event and wished to support a general extension but were also mindful of potential issues with prolonged drinking and anti-social behaviour, not solely but particularly around the Scotland vs Haiti game given the 02:00 GMT kick-off resulting in an expected finish of approximately 04:15-04:30 (with the exact time dependent on a number of variables including additional time added by the referee etc.). Police Scotland were also keen to take a preventative approach as opposed to a reactive approach and sought to promote the conditions set out in appendix 4 to any extension. It is however the view of the Clerk to the Licensing Board that there is no mechanism in the Act to apply conditions to a general extension of hours. Conditions could however be applied to any application for extended hours. In light of this approach Police Scotland requested that should the Board be minded to grant the proposed general extension that premises operators are:
 - 3.8.1 encouraged to notify the board who in turn can notify police which premises are proposing to use the general extension.
 - 3.8.2 reminded that the screening of these fixtures would not be considered a function under the operating plan.
 - 3.8.3 reminded that the provisions within their Premises Licence remain enforceable and they require to comply with the terms of the licence in particular the general extension does not apply to outdoor areas, these are still to be used consistent with the existing operating plan.
 - 3.8.4 reminder that best practice for late-night opening is to have a first aider and personal licence holder on the premises from 01:00 (GMT) onwards.
 - 3.8.5 reminder that premises should put in place a transport plan for staff to get home.
- 3.9 It is noted that there is a need for consistency in the approach to games and an acknowledgement that should Home Nations progress further

into the tournament a degree of flexibility would be required to allow viewing of further matches and to balance the licensing objectives along with the desire to view and support the national teams a hybrid approach is proposed by the Licensing Team.

- 3.10 It is proposed that a general extension would be applied as set out in Appendices 1, 2 or 3 of this report. It is noted that with a kick-off of 23:00 (GMT) for the Scotland vs Morocco and Scotland vs Brazil these games are not likely to finish until 01:15-01:30 (GMT). In terms of Board policy, the proposal would extend the terminal hour of the majority of premises by 3 hours on Monday - Wednesday by 1 hour Thursday - Saturday and by 2 hours Sunday. Provision has also been made should there be unexpected delays to a fixture allowing premises to remain open until that fixture has concluded.
- 3.11 The general extension (proposed in appendices 1 and 2) would not apply to games such as Scotland vs Haiti where the kick-off time would result in opening beyond the hours permitted under the general extension. Accordingly, premises wishing to show the game (or any other game which may be played outside of the terminal hours set out in the general extension) would need to submit an extended hours application.
- 3.12 From the consultation it is noted that there was a reasonable number of premises who indicated they were considering opening and broadcasting the Scotland v Haiti game. In order to streamline the process it is proposed that the Board consider delegating authority to the Clerk to the Licensing Board to approve extended hours applications received provided there is agreement to imposing the conditions set out in Appendix 4 of this Report and that there are no concerns raised by either the Licensing Standards Officer or Police Scotland in which case they would be brought to the next Board to consider.
- 3.13 In order to ensure that applications can be fully considered and processed all extended hours applications should be received **NO LATER THAN** 1 May 2026. This will ensure that applications can be put before a Board should it not be capable to deal with under delegated authority. Any application received after 1 May but before 15 May can still be processed but should there be any issues, would not be able to be presented to a Board in time for the Scotland v Haiti fixture.
- 3.14 Notwithstanding the above the Board members are to be aware that should Scotland proceed from the group stages, and the scheduled kick-off for that fixture is 02:00 (GMT), there would be insufficient time for the Licensing Team to process any extended hours applications for that fixture.

The options available would be:

- to grant an extended hours application to those who already applied for the Haiti Fixture, and the premises have run a successful event, and delegate authority to approve without the usual processing from Licensing Officers

- to grant a general extension for that game should it occur. To do this may be seen to contradict the position taken for Haiti.
 - Grant a General Extension which would apply to the Haiti Game and should Scotland qualify to the next stage the 2am game as proposed in Appendix 2.
 - Grant General Extension for all Home Nation Fixtures as set out in Appendix 3.
- 3.15 The Licensing Team have set up a web page regarding the World Cup and will continue to keep the web page open with updates and reminders for those wishing to take advantage of any extension and the Board would advise premises to visit this page for updates regularly.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The General Extension would extend premises trading hours beyond the hours set out in the East Lothian Licensing Board Statement of Licensing Policy (1st November 2023 –31st October 2028) and the applications for extended hours may result in premises trading beyond the recommended consecutive trading hours.
- 4.2 Notwithstanding the above the Board may grant this if it feels there is a justification and an event of national importance. Noting that the Scottish Government Guidance sets the Scotland games as being of significant national importance.

5 RESOURCE AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Finance: None
- 5.2 Human Resources: None
- 5.3 Other (e.g. Legal/IT): None
- 5.4 Risk: None

6 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 **Select the statement that is appropriate to your report by placing an 'X' in the relevant box.**

An Integrated Impact Assessment screening process has been undertaken and the subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on: equality and human rights; tackling socio-economic disadvantages and poverty; climate change, the environment and sustainability; the Council's role as a



corporate parent; or the storage/collection of personal data.

7 APPENDICES

- 7.1 Appendix 1, 2 and 3 – Draft Board Statements – Draft Proposed General Extension for the World Cup
- 7.2 Appendix 4– proposed conditions for extended hours applications

8 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 East Lothian Licensing Board Statement of Licensing Policy (1st November 2023 –31st October 2028)

9 AUTHOR AND APPROVAL DETAILS

Report Author(s)

Name	Carlo Grilli
Designation	Clerk to the Licensing Board
Tel/Email	cgrilli@eatlothian.gov.uk
Date	16 February 2026

Appendix 1

PROPOSED DRAFT STATEMENT BY THE BOARD FOR THE GENERAL EXTENSIONS OF LICENSED HOURS

OPTION 1

STATEMENT BY THE BOARD FOR THE GENERAL EXTENSIONS OF LICENSED HOURS

In terms of section 67 of the Licensing Scotland Act 2005, the Board has determined that it is appropriate to grant a general extension of licensed hours for the 2026 FIFA World Cup (the “**Tournament**”).

For the duration of the Tournament, premises can remain open until 02:00 (GMT) for the purposes of televising any Home Nation¹ fixture which is scheduled to kick-off on or after 21:00 (GMT) but shall not apply to such fixtures scheduled to Kick-off on or after 01:00 (GMT). Should the permitted fixture run past 02:00 (GMT) premises may remain open until 30 minutes after the conclusion of the fixture.

This extension will only apply to licenced premises which have both on-sales and have stated within their operating plan that they show televised sports.

There is no obligation placed on licence holders to take advantage of these extensions should they not wish to do so.

The Board would like to remind all licence holders that the conditions of their Premises Licence remain in force for the duration of the extended hours and all relevant risk assessments should be conducted to ensure compliance with all licensing objectives during the period of extended hours.

For the avoidance of doubt this extension does not apply to the following fixtures:

- Scotland vs Haiti – kick off time 02:00 (GMT) on Sunday 14 June 2026.
- Any other Home Nation fixture which is scheduled to kick-off on or after 01:00

The Board invites extended hours applications to be submitted by premises licence holders.

¹ Home Nation includes Scotland, England, Northern Ireland and Wales

Appendix 2

PROPOSED DRAFT STATEMENT BY THE BOARD FOR THE GENERAL EXTENSIONS OF LICENSED HOURS

OPTION 2

STATEMENT BY THE BOARD FOR THE GENERAL EXTENSIONS OF LICENSED HOURS

In terms of section 67 of the Licensing Scotland Act 2005, the Board has determined that it is appropriate to grant a general extension of licensed hours for the 2026 FIFA World Cup (the “**Tournament**”).

For the duration of the Tournament, premises can remain open until 02:00 (GMT) for the purposes of televising any Home Nation² fixture which is scheduled to kick-off on or after 21:00 (GMT) but shall not apply to such fixtures scheduled to Kick-off on or after 01:00 (GMT). Should the permitted fixture run past 02:00 (GMT) premises may remain open until 30 minutes after the conclusion of the fixture.

Notwithstanding the above for any Scotland fixture which is scheduled to Kick-off at 02:00 (GMT) the premises may trade and remain open until 30 minutes after the conclusion of the fixture.

This extension will only apply to licenced premises which have both on-sales and have stated within their operating plan that they show televised sports.

There is no obligation placed on licence holders to take advantage of these extensions should they not wish to do so.

The Board would like to remind all licence holders that the conditions of their Premises Licence remain in force for the duration of the extended hours and all relevant risk assessments should be conducted to ensure compliance with all licensing objectives during the period of extended hours.

For the avoidance of doubt this extension does not apply to any other Home Nation (excluding Scotland) fixture which is scheduled to kick-off on or after 01:00

² Home Nation includes Scotland, England, Northern Ireland and Wales

Appendix 3

PROPOSED DRAFT STATEMENT BY THE BOARD FOR THE GENERAL EXTENSIONS OF LICENSED HOURS

OPTION 3

STATEMENT BY THE BOARD FOR THE GENERAL EXTENSIONS OF LICENSED HOURS

In terms of section 67 of the Licensing Scotland Act 2005, the Board has determined that it is appropriate to grant a general extension of licensed hours for the 2026 FIFA World Cup (the “**Tournament**”).

For the duration of the Tournament, premises can remain open until 30 minutes after the conclusion of any Home Nation³Fixture.

This extension will only apply to licenced premises which have both on-sales and have stated within their operating plan that they show televised sports.

There is no obligation placed on licence holders to take advantage of these extensions should they not wish to do so.

The Board would like to remind all licence holders that the conditions of their Premises Licence remain in force for the duration of the extended hours and all relevant risk assessments should be conducted to ensure compliance with all licensing objectives during the period of extended hours.

³ Home Nation includes Scotland, England, Northern Ireland and Wales

Appendix 4

Proposed Conditions to Apply for Extended Hours Applications

- The premises manager or a personal licence holder is in attendance throughout the event
- The event is by ticket only and is limited to tickets purchased/obtained in advance
- Last orders are called by 04:00 (GMT) and comprises of no more than one drink per customer

(Note: above condition to apply to the Scotland vs Haiti Fixture and for other events where appropriate a similar condition to be agreed by the Clerk to the Licensing Board)

- Staff ensure that customers are all advised to be considerate of others and leave quietly
- Any drink provided after 01:00 (GMT) shall be served in plastic cups or toughened glass or any other recognised safety product