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Zoo Licensing: Applicant Guidance Notes

(Guidance for applicants on the process from Notices of Intention to full application and inspection)

Introduction

Under the **Zoo Licensing Act 1981**, any establishment (other than a circus or pet shop) where wild animals are kept for public exhibition must hold a **Zoo Licence** issued by the Council.

This document guides you through the stages of the licensing process, from giving notice of your intention to apply, through the formal application and inspection stages, to the final decision.

Overview of the Licensing Process

Stage	What You Need to Do	What the Council Will Do
Stage 1: Notice of Intention	Submit a written Notice of Intention, publish in one local and one national newspaper, and provide supporting documents (e.g., a site plan).	Acknowledge receipt and begin the statutory consultation process.
Stage 2: Consultation	Wait for the two-month notice period to expire.	Consult with prescribed bodies (Police, Fire Authority, DEFRA, adjoining authorities, etc.) and may arrange a preliminary inspection.
Stage 3: Full Application	Submit the formal application and pay the Council application fee (additional veterinary and Secretary of State inspection fees payable separately).	Arrange the formal zoo inspection and assess the application.
Stage 4: Inspection and Decision	Provide access and information during the inspection.	Consider the inspector's report and decide whether to grant, grant with conditions, or refuse the licence.

Stage 1: Giving Notice of Intention to Apply

Before you can submit a formal application for a Zoo Licence, you must give **at least two months' notice** of your intention to apply. This is a legal requirement under **Section 2 of the Zoo Licensing Act 1981**.

What You Must Do:

1. **Complete the Notice of Intention Form**
 - Email licensing@rossendalebc.gov.uk to request the form.
 2. **Publish your Notice of Intention in:**
 - **One local newspaper** (local to Rossendale)
 - **One national newspaper**
(*Ensure publications occur at least two months before submitting your formal zoo licence application.*)
 3. **Display the Notice at the proposed zoo site**
 - Must be displayed conspicuously where it is easily seen by the public.
 - Must remain displayed during the full two-month notification period.
 4. **The notice must identify as required by the Act**
 - The zoo's location
 - Types of animals and approximate numbers in each group
 - Arrangements for accommodation, maintenance, and welfare
 - Approximate number and roles of staff
 - Approximate number of visitors and vehicles to be accommodated
 - Number and position of access points to the premises
 - How required conservation measures will be implemented
 5. **Send a copy of the Notice to the Council**
 - Must be submitted **within one week** of the first newspaper publication.
 6. **Include a scaled site plan showing boundaries and layout to assist with inspection.**
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Evidence Required:

When submitting your full application, provide evidence that the Notice of Intention was correctly published and displayed:

- Copies of local and national newspaper publications.
- Photographs of the displayed site notice, or a signed statement confirming display for the full two months.
- A copy of the notice sent to the Council, including the submission date.
(*Keep copies for your records.*)

Stage 2: Consultation Process

After the notice is received, the Council will begin a **statutory consultation**.

Who We Consult:

The Council must consult with:

- Lancashire Police
- Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service
- The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (**DEFRA**)
- Any national institute concerned with zoos
- Any adjoining local authority if the zoo overlaps a boundary
- Members of the public who make written representations

What Happens Next:

- The Council may arrange a **preliminary inspection** during this period.
- You may be asked for additional information to support the consultation process.

Stage 3: Submitting a Full Application

After the two-month notice period has expired, you can submit your **full Zoo Licence application**.

A copy of the full Zoo Licence Application Form will be sent to the email address you provide once your Notice of Intention has been accepted. The full application can only be submitted after the two-month Notice of Intention period has elapsed.

The fee will be payable upon submission of your full Zoo Licence Application Form.
(*Veterinary and Secretary of State inspection fees will apply later in the process.*)

Stage 4: Inspection and Decision Process

Initial Inspection

Conducted by a **Secretary of State–approved zoo inspector** and a **Council officer**.

The inspection will assess:

- Animal welfare and accommodation
- Conservation and educational measures
- Health and safety standards
- Staffing, management, and record-keeping
- Visitor facilities and emergency protocols

After the Inspection:

The inspector will produce a written report with recommendations.

The Council will consider the report and decide whether to:

- Grant the licence
- Grant the licence with conditions
- Refuse the licence

You will be notified in writing of the decision and given a copy of the inspector's report.

After a Licence is Granted

Licensed zoos are subject to **regular inspections** to ensure ongoing compliance.

Inspection Types:

- **Annual inspections** – by Council Public Protection officers
(*These inspections are chargeable to the licence holder.*)
- **Periodic inspections** – by Secretary of State–appointed inspectors
(*These inspections, including any associated veterinary fees, are also payable by the licence holder.*)

Inspection fees and veterinary costs are charged to the licence holder.

You must:

- Maintain all welfare, safety, and record-keeping standards
- Notify the Council of any significant changes to animals, staff, or facilities
- Continue to comply with all licence conditions

Key Contacts

Public Protection (Licensing) Team

Rossendale Borough Council

Email: licensing@rossendalebc.gov.uk

Telephone: 01706 217777

Useful References and Links

Zoo Licensing Act 1981

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/37/contents>

DEFRA Guidance on Zoo Licensing

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/keeping-zoo-animals>

Secretary of State's Standards of Modern Zoo Practice

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/secretary-of-state-s-standards-of-modern-zoo-practice>