

**Minutes of the Meeting of the LICENSING AND PLANNING POLICY COMMITTEE
held at the Council Chamber, Epsom Town Hall on 23 September 2025**

PRESENT -

Councillor Peter O'Donovan (Chair); Councillor Neil Dallen (Vice-Chair); Councillors Alex Coley, Julian Freeman, Rob Geleit, Shanice Goldman, Christine Howells (as nominated substitute for Councillor Steve Bridger), Phil Neale, Humphrey Reynolds and Clive Woodbridge

Absent: Councillor Steve Bridger

Officers present: Rod Brown (Head of Housing and Community), Paul Holliday (Principal Licensing Officer) and Phoebe Batchelor (Democratic Services Officer)

8 QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

No questions or statements were received from Members of the Public.

9 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or other registrable or non-registrable interests were made by Members with respect to any items to be considered at the meeting.

10 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Committee confirmed as a true record the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 3 July 2025 and authorised the Chair to sign them.

11 MINUTES OF LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE

The Committee received the Minutes of the Meeting of the Licensing Sub-Committee held on the 16 July 2025.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (1) Receive the Minutes of the Meeting of the Licensing Sub-Committee held on the 16 July 2025 and authorise the Chair of the Sub-Committee meeting to sign them as a true record of that meeting.**

12 REVIEW OF STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES UNDER THE GAMBLING ACT 2005

The Statement of Principles under the Gambling Act 2005, constitutes the Council's policy on how applications for Gambling Premises licences are considered and regulated. The Act requires the Council to review and readopt a statement of principles at least once every three years and to consult on the draft before it is adopted. The Committee received a report seeking approval to go out to consultation on an updated draft Statement of Principles.

The following matters were considered:

- a) **Data Source.** A Member of the Committee asked which data sources were used to evidence the statement that 'there have been no reported issues'. The Principal Licensing Officer informed the Committee that the police data reports and EEBC reports were considered and there have been no complaints received. He continued to explain that as part of the public consultation, Surrey County Council Public Health will be consulted. At present SCC Public Health have informally raised that they have not identified this area as being of particular concern.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (1) Approve the draft Statement of Principles under the Gambling Act 2005 for public consultation.**

13 REVIEW OF STATEMENT OF POLICY LICENSING ACT 2003

The Statement of Policy under the Licensing Act 2003, constitutes the Council's policy on how authorisations for alcohol, regulated entertainment, and late-night refreshment is considered and regulated. The Act requires the Council to review and readopt a statement of policy at least once every five years and to consult on the draft before it is adopted. The Committee received a report seeking approval to go out to consultation on an updated draft Statement of Policy.

The following matters were considered:

- a) **Version Control.** A Member of the Committee raised that there is an empty box on page 2 of the policy which is titled key changes. The Member asked why the key changes from the previous policy were not referenced here. The Principal Licensing Officer explained that the new stress area policy is different from the previous zoning policy, and as such is the first version so there are no changes to detail in the version control box on page 2. The Principal Licensing Officer explained that any changes made to the policy post publication, will be detailed in the version control box, for example, if a body referenced in the policy, changes its name. This enables the Council to update the policy with minor changes without needing to reconsult on the entire document and also keeps a clear record of what changes have been made and when.

- b) **Delay to review policies.** A Member of the Committee asked why there has been such a delay in review the policies. The Principal Licensing Officer explained that EEBC experienced a large increase in Taxi and Private Hire licence applications over the last few years, and due to resource constraints, the Licensing Team were focused on responding to and processing the high volume of applications received. The Principal Licensing Officer informed the Committee that the Licensing Team have now been given additional resources, at the same time the licence applications have levelled out, which has allowed the team to carry out the necessary policy review work.
- c) **Licensing Applications.** A Member of the Committee asked if there were any material changes which would affect any licensing applications which have been considered recently. The Principal Licensing Officer explained that any applications within Epsom Town that have gone to sub-committee and that would have been subject to the zoning policy, any issues with respect to that policy have been highlighted within the report and dealt with at that time. The Principal Licensing Officer informed the Committee that there is no concern that there are any issues regarding the applications that were considered whilst the previous policy was in need of review.
- d) **Policy Content.** A Member of the Committee raised that they do not see any wording in the policy that details CCTV requirements, in regard to camera type, coverage hours, image retention and visibility to patrons. The Member highlighted that a minimum standard is not prescribed in the policy. The Member also stated that the policy does not mention drink spiking prevention measures, such as training staff to spot and prevent spiking and drink covers or testing. The Member stated that there is no requirement in the policy for detailed dispersal plans. The Principal Licensing Officer responded to explain that within Appendix 1 and 6, there is reference to both dispersal and spiking, and applicants within the stress area would be expected to consider whether measures would be necessary. The Principal Licensing Officer also explained that Model Conditions have been drafted and will be on the Council's website, which provide wording that would be helpful for applicants and premises looking to adopt measures to address the aforementioned issues to implement. The Principal Licensing Officer made clear that applicants get to tailor their application and consider the risks and appropriate measures which are specific to their premises when applying, the wording and conditions in the policy are suggestions, but cannot be enforced, as the Licensing Act is a permissive regime. The Principal Licensing Officer highlighted that the Police and Public Health bodies will be invited to participate in the consultation and propose any further additions or amendments. The Principal Licensing Officer informed the Committee that if an application is made and within that they have an operating schedule where they say the steps they're going to take to address the licencing objectives, including the conventional crime disorder and public safety and it is within their gift to say what measures they're going to put in place, and no one objects to

the application, and that's including members of the public, but also the responsible authorities that include the police and health bodies and so on, then the licence is granted as applied for.

- e) **Public Consultation.** A Member of the Committee asked if residents were invited to participate in the consultation or if it was just open to statutory consultees. The Principal Licensing Officer made clear that the consultation is open to the public and will be run internally by Council Officers. The Principal Licensing Officer explained that the consultation will be posted on the Council's social media, website, and on noticeboards. The Principal Licensing Officer stated that copies will also be put in local libraries.
- f) **Policy Wording.** A Member of the Committee expressed that the wording used in the policy does not go far enough in insisting that the premises put measures in place for the safety of customers. The Member asked if the wording could be changed to be stronger, to make clear that the Council expects premises to put certain measures in place. The Principal Licensing Officer explained that the licensing act covers a wide range of premises, everything from a restaurant to a pub to a theatre, meaning that clearly some suggested measures in the policy are not appropriate or necessary for all premises and therefore the wording is purposefully suggesting conditions and measures, where appropriate, rather than demanding they be implemented. The Principal Licensing Officer explained that if Members wanted a policy that said you need to do X and Y or you won't be given a licence, there are evidential standards that have to be met, that the Council don't have the evidence for. The Principal Licensing Officer explained that the nature of the legislation is permissive and requires it to be phrased like that, and the onus is on the applicant to consider the risks under the licence objectives and take the steps they consider appropriate to mitigate the risks. The Principal Licensing Officer explained that the police, environmental health, and other responsible authorities will look at each application and if they think that the measures aren't sufficient, they are able to object, as well as any resident or business owner in the area. The Member suggested that instead of saying 'possible measures', the policy says, 'measures will be in place where appropriate'. The Principal Licensing Officer explained that if no objections are received, the licence is granted as applied for, therefore, it is up to the applicant to decide what is appropriate. The Vice Chair explained that if an objection on an application is received then it is referred to and decided by the Licensing Sub-Committee, which allows the Council to propose additional conditions on those applications, where appropriate. Another Member raised that they were supportive of stronger wording being used in the policy. The Principal Licensing Officer agreed to review the wording and strengthen where appropriate in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair before the policy goes out to public consultation.
- g) **Experience.** A Member of the Committee explained that their experience as a Street Pastor has enabled them to see first-hand what the

reasonable and reputable establishments in Epsom, which are more likely to experience issues, are doing to ensure they have robust approach in place to protect clients against spiking and other issues.

- h) **Stress Area.** A Member of the Committee raised that they believed the entirety of Upper High Street and Waterloo Road should be included in the Special Stress Area (SSA) as there are liquor retail premises on those roads beyond the current boundaries of the Special Stress Area. The Principal Licensing Officer explained that the previous zoning policy was not based on hard evidence and that has been a reason for its review and the proposed new Special Stress Area policy, which is based on evidence from the Police. The Principal Licensing Officer explained that Upper High Street and Waterloo Road could be included in the Special Stress Area, however, there is currently no evidence to support the need for their inclusion. The Member raised that the SSA should not just be based on where incidents have occurred, but where alcohol is sold, as this is a policy for licence holders, not for police activity. The Principal Licensing Officer reminded Members that the policy needs to be justified, based on evidence, and not burdensome to local businesses. The Member suggested that the evidence could be found through other sources, or other Police Zones data in Epsom.
- i) **Data.** A Member of the Committee asked if the data provided to draw the SSA is from 2022/23, and why there is not more recent data to use as an evidence base. The Principal Licensing Officer confirmed that the data is from 2022/23 and was collected in relation to the Police's Operation Chariot, and was the latest data provided to the Council from the Police. The Principal Licensing Officer confirmed that as part of the consultation, the Police will be asked to review and update the data.

- Councillor Coley proposed a motion to extend the Special Stress Area to include the entirety of Upper High Street and Waterloo Road.

Councillor Geleit seconded the motion.

The Committee voted (6 for and 4 against) and the motion was agreed.

- Councillor Neale proposed that the Principal Licensing Officer is nominated and authorised to make amendments to the policy wording, in consultation with Chair and Vice Chair, in order to ensure the wording is sufficiently robust, prior to the public consultation commencement.

Councillor Howells seconded the motion.

The Committee unanimously agreed the motion.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (1) **Approve the draft Statement of Policy under the Licensing Act 2003 for consultation, subject to the agreed amendments.**

14 URGENT DECISIONS

The Committee received a report detailing a decision taken by one of the Directors on the grounds of urgency, in compliance with the requirements of the Constitution.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

(1) Note the urgent decision taken and the reasons for that decision.

The meeting began at 7.30 pm and ended at 8.30 pm

COUNCILLOR PETER O'DONOVAN (CHAIR)