

Minutes of the Meeting of the LICENSING AND PLANNING POLICY COMMITTEE held at the Council Chamber, Epsom Town Hall on 16 June 2026

PRESENT -

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

Absent: Councillor James Lawrence

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

1 QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

No public questions or statements were received before the deadline.

A Member of the Public submitted questions regarding agenda item 3, which were received after the public questions deadline. A response to the questions will be provided via email.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Neil Dallen declared they are a member of Epsom Business Improvement District (BID). He confirmed that he maintained an open mind in respect to the agenda business.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Committee confirmed as a true record the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 10 March 2026 and authorised the Chair to sign them.

4 COUNCILLOR AGENDA REQUEST - CUMULATIVE IMPACT ZONE

The Committee considered a Councillor's request to add an agenda item *"To explore and review the necessary work for a Cumulative Impact Zone regarding licensed premises in Epsom Town Centre."*

The following matters were considered:

- a) **Time.** The Chair asked how long it would take to commence a Cumulative Impact Assessment and deliver a Cumulative Impact Policy if the Committee chose to go down that route. He also noted that the request for the funding would need to go to Strategy & Resources Committee. The Principal Licensing Officer informed the Committee that the quote received a few years ago to complete a CIA was roughly £25,000. He estimated it would take a few months to complete a scoping exercise and go through a tendering and procurement process. The work would then need to be undertaken which would involve night time visits on at least three occasions, surveys of local businesses, conversations with the police, environmental health, and other responsible authorities, which could take a further few months. Once the work is complete, the data and recommendation would then need to be interpreted to produce a report to go back to the Committee. The Committee would need to decide if there was sufficient evidence to warrant considering a CIP and if so, adjust the Licensing Policy as necessary. If the Licensing Policy was proposed to be changed, there would need to be a full public consultation, normally lasting 12 weeks. The public consultation results would then need to be brought back to Licensing and Planning Policy Committee to decide whether to recommend the update Licensing Policy is adopted by Full Council. The Principal Licensing Officer explained it would unlikely be completed before vesting day.
- b) **Consultees.** A Member of the Committee asked who was consulted during the Licensing Policy public consultation and how were they consulted. The Principal Licensing Officer informed the Committee that inovem was the site that hosted the public consultation, which has been used for the Local Plan Reg 18 and 19 consultations. He explained that emails had been sent to all Councillors, Residents Associations, representatives of licenced businesses and trade bodies, the police, and public health among other consultees. He informed the Committee that it was displayed on the Council's website and put out on all the Council's social media platforms. The Council's communications team put out messages on social media over the 12-week consultation period. He explained the budget did not allow for a letter to be sent to each business and resident. The Member asked if hard copies were provided in any of the Council's public buildings, as required under the Equality Act. The Principal Planning Officer explained there were hard copies available at the Town Hall and Epsom Library.
- c) **Croydon and Merton.** A Member of the Committee raised that two nearby areas who have CIPs are Croydon and Merton. He commented that Epsom is not similar to nor should be compared to Croydon and Merton.
- d) **Item request.** A Member of the Committee asked Councillor Coley why they requested this item come to the Licensing and Planning Policy Committee. Councillor Coley explained that he learned about the special stress area as a member of the committee and sat on a licensing panel hearing where he was under the impression the special stress area

wouldn't make a great deal of difference. He explained that the Surrey Police consultation response gave the impression that there are no problems or complaints in Epsom Town Centre. He stated that the special stress area simply says that operators will be expected to 'pay special attention when drawing up' etc. and queried how operators demonstrate special attention. He explained his concerns, after speaking to local residents and the Business Improvement District, that Epsom Town Centre has gotten more out of control, with more incidents occurring at night. He explained another frustration was that the consultation response gave the impression that the existing licenced premises would be upset with a CIP, however, a CIP would not negatively impact their business because it would make it more difficult for competitors to get licensed. He explained he would like the possibility of commencing a CIA to be explored and reviewed as he does not believe the special stress area will be sufficient.

- e) **Town Centre.** A Member of the Committee raised that they volunteer as a Street Pastor during the night in Epsom Town Centre. He expressed support for the professionalism of the door staff outside most of the nightclubs and bars in Epsom Town Centre. He explained that Epsom Town Centre is becoming increasingly quiet and some late-night establishments are closing or struggling due to lack of patrons. Therefore, they do not think a CIA is necessary or the cost of it can be justified. The Vice Chair echoed these comments regarding Epsom Town Centre.
- f) **Recent events.** A Member of the Committee raised that due to recent events in Epsom Town Centre, the concerns raised by Councillor Coley should not be taken lightly. He asked Councillor Coley what exploring and reviewing a CIA entails. Councillor Coley explained he left what exploring and reviewing entailed up to council officers to decide what to offer members. He explained that exploring a CIA could be a briefing evening with a Licensing officer from Surrey Police, a public meeting, or the officer report. The Member asked the Committee and officers if any further action towards exploring or reviewing a CIA would be taken. The Chair stated that the report in front of Members sets out why a CIA and CIP are not necessary for Epsom Town Centre and no further exploration of the topic is needed at present. He explained that the updated policies, discussed and approved at Committee in March 2026, also provide sufficient protection and guidance for licensing matters.
- g) **Data.** A Member of the Committee asked if there is data to support the comments suggesting the Epsom Town Centre is getting quieter and safer. The Principal Licensing Officer explained that the in the initial report to consult on the licensing policy, crime and disorder statistics were obtained in relation to Epsom Town Centre. This data showed there is elevated levels of ASB and violent crime in Epsom Town Centre. However, he caveated by highlighting that Epsom is an urban town centre, and that would be expected. Officers identified particular areas where crime was heightened, and following discussions with members, it

resulted in the special stress area. That data is provided as a link in the original licensing policy report.

- h) **Cumulative Impact Policy.** A Member of the Committee asked if the Council needs to have a CIP in place. The Principal Licensing Officer explained there is no legal requirement to have a CIP. The Member asked if a CIP is in place, does it need to be updated every five years. The Principal Licensing Officer explained it needs to be updated every three years.
- i) **Early Morning Alcohol Restriction Order.** A Member of the Committee raised that in the statement of licencing policy, there is an Early Morning Alcohol Restriction Order (EMRO), and asked if this is something the council could consider. The Principal Licensing Officer explained they had not heard of a local council having one and believed it would be disproportionate for the area.
- j) **Licensing.** A Member of the Committee raised that they believe licensing works well in Epsom and Ewell. He expressed support for the fact that if an objection is received to a licensing application, it comes to a hearing.

Following consideration, the Committee resolved;

Unanimously to:

- 1) **Consider the agenda item in accordance with the Council's Constitution.**

(8 for, 2 abstaining) to:

- 2) **Endorse the officer recommendation that no action should be taken following consideration of this report.**

The meeting began at 7.30 pm and ended at 8.02 pm

COUNCILLOR PETER O'DONOVAN (CHAIR)